
Writing Practices in Contemporary Egypt

an ethnographic approach

Ivan Panović

Balliol College
University of Oxford
Trinity 2011

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of DPhil in Oriental Studies
(approx. 101,000 words)

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Radmila.

*She doesn't know English, and she doesn't know Arabic.
And probably the only two words she can read in this
thesis are her name and mine.*

*I, in turn, have grown up to be where I am, know what I
know and do what I do thanks to her love, support and
understanding. And whatever I wrote in these few lines
here cannot express my gratitude.*

Writing Practices in Contemporary Egypt: an ethnographic approach

ABSTRACT

Ivan Panović, Balliol College

DPhil Thesis, Trinity Term 2011

This thesis is an ethnographically grounded description and interpretation of a variety of writing practices observable in an Arabic speaking community, primarily on the Internet. Working with, or in reaction to, the concept of *diglossia*, of which Arabic sociolinguistic setting is often cited as a textbook example, the majority of scholars have focused their attention on speech as a major site of language variation and mixing. Writing has been largely neglected. This thesis is a contribution to what I hope will become a growing number of works aimed at filling that lacuna.

I examine linguistic features of a number of, mostly non-literary, texts in contemporary Egypt where Modern Standard Arabic (*Fuṣṣḥa*) and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (*ʿAmmiyya*) constitute the theoretical poles of the diglossic continuum. The Egyptian sociolinguistic setting, however, is here understood as being defined and reconfigured by the increasing socio-economic importance of yet another linguistic variety – English.

The analysis of linguistic details is conducted with reference to a broader socio-cultural context and local language ideologies surrounding the production and reception of a rapidly growing number of texts that employ a variety of features and draw on different linguistic resources, thus often defying, in the outcome, the hegemonic ideological projection that writing is the domain of *Fuṣṣḥa*.

In order to offer an account of a dynamic, changing and diversified character of writing practices in present-day Egypt, illustrative examples are drawn from a number of different texts and domains of writing, including Wikipedia Masry, Twitter, Facebook, advertisements, online campaigns for political and social causes, as well as books. An inventory of linguistic resources variously employed by various writers in various circumstances is identified to contain re-combinations across three linguistic varieties, *Fuṣṣḥa*, *ʿAmmiyya* and English, and two scripts, Arabic and Latin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While I should be held responsible for all the shortcomings in this work, there are many people without whose help, critical insight, advice, support, hospitality and friendship this thesis would have never been finished. I am mostly indebted to my supervisor, Professor Clive D. Holes from the Oriental Institute at the University of Oxford for putting up with my long absences, yet being always ready to comment quickly and insightfully on my drafts that I would send him from time to... time... From the initial idea to its final form, this thesis has undergone a lot of changes in its aim, scope and approach. I thank Clive for his patience and for having more faith in my project than I did at times.

Professor Deborah Cameron and Dr Walter Armbrust, both from the University of Oxford, acted as my examiners on two occasions during my studies. Both times, my encounters with them were pleasant, yet intellectually stimulating and formative. I don't know if I've managed to translate at least a bit of their input into what I've written, but I'd be very happy if I have. Both of them are now my friends, and that is a real honour. I am immensely thankful to Debbie, who, just like Clive, simply decided to have faith in me even when I did not deserve it. Thank you for cheering me up and putting me back on track on those several occasions when I thought I'd better give up.

None of this would have happened had I not been awarded Clarendon, Dervorguilla and ORS Scholarships, jointly sponsored by the University of Oxford and Balliol College. Balliol is an amazing place. My research kept me away from it for the most part of my studies, but even from afar Balliol was always there for me. The College helped me out, financially and in other ways, on more occasions than I can remember. For this, my deepest and warmest thank you goes to my college advisor, Dean and Chaplain of the College, Dr Douglas Dupree. His support and kindness are exemplary. I also thank our

Academic Administrator Glynis Price, for patiently and efficiently dealing with my questions and requests. I thank our Senior Tutor, Dr Nicola Trott, whom I have actually never talked to in person, but whose approval of this or that request and application was always crucial.

At the Oriental Institute, I am particularly indebted to Bob Mahoney, Graduate Studies Assistant, for helping me and saving me at the last minute.

I want to mention several of my friends who are, or were, based in the United Kingdom and without whom my days spent there would have been really gloomy. Sandra Šćepanović, Luna Filipović, Zoran Milutinović, Alan Kennedy, Lawrence Schäfer, Paul Gledhill, Nathanael Stein, Stefan Bužarovski, Saška Petrova and Adam Talib are those wonderful people who were always there for me to provide shelter, help, advice or friendly and cheerful companionship over a pint. Thank you, guys.

Back home in Serbia, there is a small army of friends who have been my source of inspiration and strength. Here, I can only mention a few: Miloš Milenković, Jelena Novičić (akka Green Woman), Dalibor Mihajlović (moj Kum), Isidora Orlović, Vladimir Todorčić and the two who wander around the world just like I do – Milan Pilipović and Branka Sarić. I also thank our family friend Zoran Sazdović for his help and support. I am sure that my grandmother, baka Buba, brought me good luck; this thesis was defended on her birthday. I am sad that my other grandmother, baka Spasa, and my grandfather deka Kole have not lived long enough to be proud of me for this accomplishment. *The* friend to whom I owe the most, the one who has been my 'accomplice' since that afternoon in February 1999 when I sent out my first application ever to go and study abroad, up until the moment when she had to save me and put me through the final stage of writing up this dissertation (since by that time I had been completely broke) is the one-&-only Slavica Pavlović. Цаки, бејбе, 1001 хвала!

In Cairo, where I spent three years living, working and researching, there are many people to whom I am grateful for welcoming me, helping me, or simply for being my friends: Hussein Omar, Almir Tahirović, Emmanuelle Salgues, Camilo Gómez-Rivas, Agnes Czajka, Kat Whitley, Kevin, Professor Soraya Altorki, Alix Dunn, Amy Holmes, Professor Madiha Doss, Gerda Mansour, Dr. Emad Abdul-Latif, Professor Samia Mehrez, Humphrey Davies, Lucie Ryzova, Sherene Seikaly, Ahmed Al-Sabbagh, Abu Yasser, 3amm Mamdou7, Captain طارق, Nasser, علاء, and all the patient and friendly Egyptians who taught me a lot and made my life enjoyable.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

WRITE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN: a changing linguascope	2
1.1 قررت اني اكتب زي ما بفكر 2	2
1.1 What would Naguib Mahfouz say?.....	4
1.2. Diglossia, levels, continuum... - variation in speech	31
1.3. Variation and writing, variation in writing.....	44
1.4. The third player in the field.....	55
1.5. Franco.....	58
1.6. Glimpses into a changing linguascope.....	61

Chapter 2

WHEN FUṢḤA IS NOT ENOUGH: notes on campaigning online and offline.....	70
2.1 Bring the flag and leave your watch at home: a call for revolution	70
2.2 Before it happens to your mother or your sister – say no to sexual harassment.....	95
2.3 لأترقيع الدستور	99
2.4 While waiting for the elections: concluding remarks	111

Chapter 3

GOING ṢAMMI ALL THE WAY... or maybe not: the case of Wikipedia Masry	117
3.1 The beginnings of Wikipedia Masry	117
3.2 Debate around Wikipedia Masry	118
3.3 Masry – defining a language	121
3.4 “Bye bye to grammar?”: struggling with the name, struggling with the form.....	126
3.5 WM language ideology	129
3.6 From a personal point of view.....	131
3.7 The common cause.....	133
3.7.1 Write in Egyptian, please!	136
3.8 mafiš muškila: language planning and orthography.....	140
3.9 How maṣri is the “Masry” of Wikipedia Masry?: actual language outputs.....	146
3.10 Translating away.....	157
3.11 Practice meets ideology.....	162
3.12 Wikipedia Masry Exposed?: ideology meets practice	167
3.12 Vox populi, vox... mīn?.....	177
3.13 Producing knowledge, practicing language.....	181

Chapter 4

TWEET LIKE AN EGYPTIAN: micro-blogging, major mixing.....	185
4.1 Tweeting.....	202
4.2 Twitter in Egypt and the Arab world: some facts and figures.....	207
4.3 What's in a tweet? - facing a linguistic quandary	214
4.4 How “marginal” is tweeting?.....	219
4.5 From activism to broadcasting one's life: linguistic devices for putting 140 characters to work	224
4.5.1 A word on method	224
4.5.2 EgyTweets.....	225
4.5.3 Tweets as sites of code alternations.....	230
4.5.4 Types of tweets and intra-tweet mixing.....	233
4.5.5 Tweeting as conversation and conversational inter-tweet mixing.....	237
4.6 Language choices	242
4.6.1 Strictly monolingual tweeting.....	245
4.6.2 Bilingual tweeting as parallelism	252
4.6.3 Anything but monolingual.....	259
4.6.4 Occasional Arabic – native language as a marked variety.....	268
4.6.5 “Aljamiado” English? – encoding linguistic and cultural hybridisation	271
4.7 Twitter as a sociolinguist's observatory.....	280
4.8 From diglossia to translingualism: concluding remarks.....	287
APPENDICES	298
REFERENCES	325

From the first days of its history until now, Egypt has been known for what an author called its 'linguistic sophistication', that is for its tendency to preserve against change a language considered to be superior to the vernacular and the only one suitable for writing and culture.

Moustapha Safouan (2007: 76)

If Safouan is at all right when generalising like this, and if this is really what Egypt has been known for from the first days of its history, then I argue that it is not something Egypt will be known for in the future.

IP

Chapter 1

WRITE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

a changing linguascape

1.1¹ قررت اني اكتب زي ما بفكر

The Egyptian popular uprising started on January 25 and lasted for eighteen days. Throughout the country, very many Egyptians from all walks of life bravely and persistently called for bread, freedom, human dignity, social justice and the fall of the regime. On February 11, a symbolically very important result was achieved when Hosni Mubarak resigned as president after ruling the country for thirty years. Yet, as I am putting the finishing touches to this thesis in October 2011, there is a strong feeling among many people I know in Cairo that little has been achieved in terms of political, social and economic reforms, that the “remnants of the previous regime,” popularly referred to as *filūl*, are in many ways still strong and active, that many of those who are guilty of corruption and abuse of power have not been brought to justice, that security has not been restored, and that incidents of sectarian violence and human rights violations continue to plague the country. Therefore, Friday has remained the day of the week, almost every week, when demonstrators gather in Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo to react to concrete events, or to express their dissatisfaction with the overall situation in post-Mubarak Egypt, to put pressure on the interim government and – first and foremost – on the army, to whom Mubarak had handed over authority when he stepped down.

1 “I decided to write the way I think.”

On one such Friday, in April 2011, I was in Tahrir to observe the demonstrations and – given my interest in language in general, and writing in Egypt in particular – to take notes and photos of various signs and banners. Then, I spotted a man whom I recognised immediately. I had watched his TV shows many times, and seen the photo on the cover of one of his books which I have at home. I decided to approach him and introduce myself. He was friendly and funny, just like in his shows when he interviews “ordinary people” in the street. He asked me what it is that I do in Egypt, and I resorted to my usual, a bit imprecise but convenient short-hand explanation which I had used so many times before. I said I was a researcher interested in the use of ^ϕAmmiyya in writing. “Aah,” his face lit with a wide smile, “then I'm the right guy for you to talk to!” Having read both of his books, I already knew that...

Ahmad El Esseily (أحمد العسيلي) is an Egyptian TV and radio editor, director and host of several popular shows. In August 2009, Dar El Shorouk,² one of the leading Egyptian publishers, released his first book, *A Book Without a Title* (كتاب مالوش اسم), a collection of essays on a variety of topics. The book became an immediate success. In September 2011, its seventh, revised³ edition was still featured on the publisher's website as one of their best-sellers.

In the opening paragraphs of *A Book Without a Title*, El Esseily writes the following lines:

2 <http://www.shorouk.com/>

3 Or, “corrected” - "طبعة متظبّطة" – edition.

بعد أن قررت أخيراً أن أبدأ كتابة كتابي الأول.. وقعت في أول «حيص بيص».. ما كنتش عارف اكتب بالعامية ولا بالفصحى!.. مشكلة معضلة جداً.. الفصحى هي لغة القراءة والكتابة.. فيه طريقة واحدة لكتابة ونطق كل كلمة ممكن تستعملها.. بس العامية مش كده.. ممكن مثلاً تكتب «إتَّهرده» وممكن تكتب «النهارده» وممكن الاتين يبقوا صح، وممكن مايقوش.

الفصحى عندها قدرة أكبر على البلاغة بس العامية أقرب للقلب. الفصحى قد تتال إعجاب محبي اللغة العربية والمثقفين، بس العامية بتكلم كل الناس.

المهم من غير رغي يعني قررت اني اكتب زي ما بفكر، بالعامية. ولو فيه حاجة استعصت عليها، اكتبها بالفصحى.

Having finally decided to start writing my first book, I was already at sea. I didn't know should I write in ʿAmmiyya or Fuṣḥa!... A very baffling problem... Fuṣḥa is the language of reading and writing. There is only one way to write or pronounce a word you may use. But ʿAmmiyya is not like that. You can, for example, write the word “today” as “إتَّهرده” or “النهارده”, and both of them may be correct, or they may not be.

Fuṣḥa has a greater capacity for eloquence, but ʿAmmiyya is closer to the heart. Fuṣḥa might gain admiration of the intellectuals and those passionate about the Arabic language, but ʿAmmiyya speaks to all people.

So, without further ado – I decided to write the way I think, in ʿAmmiyya. And, if there was going to be something too resistant, to write it in Fuṣḥa.

(El Esseily 2009: 9)

1.1 What would Naguib Mahfouz say?

Several sociolinguistic issues, social representations and cultural predicaments surrounding the practice of writing and producing texts in contemporary Egyptian society have been neatly encapsulated in the quotation above.

To begin simply and simplistically, *A Book Without a Title* was published in a country where two varieties of Arabic coexist – one living, another one being kept alive. The living one is ʿAmmiyya, Egyptian Arabic, the native tongue of virtually all Egyptians. The alive one is the Arabic whose sociocultural life, not only in Egypt but throughout the Arab world, has for centuries been dependant on motivated efforts of native speakers of various local varieties to learn it better or worse, and use it more or less. It thus has a long and immensely rich written tradition; it is no one's native tongue and the domains in which it is used orally tend to be very limited, but is nevertheless perceived of and cherished by many as “the most eloquent Arabic” – *al-luġa l-ʿarabiyya l-fuṣḥā*, or simply Fuṣḥa.

In the quotation above, a young writer, living in an Arabic speaking community which is in sociolinguistic terms still most commonly described as *diglossic*, and where the hegemonic linguistic ideology presupposes that only one of the diglossic poles is (to be) *the* “language of reading and writing,” at the very beginning of his first book, gives voice to a dilemma which, while still false for many, is in this case resolved by favouring the disfavoured variety. The decision is a tough one. It is to make a choice between the “real language,” a system whose complex and intricate rules have been grammatically codified and ideologically sanctified a long time ago, so that it has become accepted as the unsurpassable and unchallengeable norm for literary expression, and a variety which, despite being natively and creatively used in oral communication and oral literature for centuries, has been all too often perceived as chaotic, not governed by any systemic rules, incapable of living up to the literary standards, undeserving to be written and disseminated, and at times – not only according to folk linguistic beliefs, but also in the

opinion of some, mostly native, academics and intellectuals – as not being a language at all.

El Esseily also writes how, as a child, he often used to daydream that a time would come for him to appear on television sharing his “theories, thoughts and opinion about everything:”

قاعد انا بقى مُنْجَعِصٌ بثقةٍ في الكورسي بتاعي ومكتوب تحت صورتي بالبنط العريض
"المفكّر الكبير: أحمد العسيلي".

So, I'm lounging self-importantly in my chair and a large-font inscription under my image reads: “the great thinker: Ahmad El Esseily.”

(*ibid.* 10)

Whether or not his dream to be recognised as a “thinker” will come true is yet to be seen. What is certain, however, is that, by opting for ʿAmmiyya, El Esseily is not only giving up the possibility of gaining “the admiration of intellectuals and those passionate about the Arabic language,” but is in fact running a serious risk of attracting their active resentment and odium. Because, at the opposite pole of the recurrent ideological Fuṣḥa-ʿAmmiyya debate, we find, for example, an already established and esteemed thinker, Galal Amin (جلال أمين), a retired professor of economics at the American University in Cairo and columnist for the Egyptian newspaper *al-Shorouk*, addressing the issue of writing in ʿAmmiyya from a different angle.

Under a dramatic headline “The Murder of the Arabic Language,” Amin (2009) writes about what he perceives to be the “degradation” of Arabic that even amounts to an attempt at killing it. Witnessing this degradation in the newspapers, magazines,

commercials, streets, signboards, books and media is like “swallowing poison day by day.” What started as negligent use of foreign words on the pretext of having difficulties in finding the appropriate Arabic equivalent, has been followed by “a strange advance of ʿAmmiyya in articles and books.” For Amin, words and expressions in ʿAmmiyya are “vulgar and ugly.”⁴ What he finds to be worse and unbelievable is that even the state,⁵ “which bears the responsibility for protecting the national language,” had started participating in this “act of degradation” through publicly disseminated slogans and instructions written in ʿAmmiyya:

Manifestations of decline and decay are reaching not only politics and the economy, but also the national language. Yet, it is not necessary for a new revival to start from politics or the economy, but its starting point could be the work on protecting this noble language from the degradation it is being subjected to.⁶

(Amin 2009)

The concluding remark leaves us with a question. How exactly would that prospective linguistic “renaissance” lead or contribute to economic and social prosperity? It is true that at the time when Amin wrote his column one could have witnessed instances that could be described as the state's active participation in writing in ʿAmmiyya. For example, in a TV ad calling people to obtain on time the cards necessary for voting in the upcoming elections, aired during the last months of 2009, several Egyptian public figures

4 Among those that he quotes and qualifies as “مبتذلة” and “قبيحة” are:

مأعرفش -- “this/that” (m. & f.), “but/only”, “how”, “I don't know”

5 Described also as “our miserable state” (دولتنا البائسة).

6 “إن مظاهر التدهور والانحطاط لا تلحق فقط بالسياسة والاقتصاد، بل تلحق أيضا باللغة القومية، ولكن الشروع فى النهضة من جديد ليس من الضرورى أن يبدأ بالسياسة أو الاقتصاد، بل يمكن أن يتخذ نقطة انطلاق له العمل على حماية هذه اللغة النبيلة مما تتعرض له من مهانة.”

appear one after another in the city streets. All of them are saying something, but their voices are muted. In the end, only a text in ʿAmmiyya appears on the screen:

خلي عندك صوت – طالع بطاقة انتخابية – آخر معاد 31/01/2009

Give yourself a voice – Get an electoral ID – The deadline is 31/01/2009

I believe that if one is to reflect on such linguistic behaviour of the Egyptian state, one has to take into account the distance that state had created over the years between itself and its citizens by failing to provide for a great majority of them, in many fields of social life. If the regime – which has recently been seriously shaken, even if not fully overthrown – was to try to bridge that gap and reaffirm itself through a populist discourse, its choice of ʿAmmiyya seems only natural. After all, as El Esseily puts it, “ʿAmmiyya is closer to the heart, and it speaks to all people.”

Also, with its slogans, posters and commercials, the Egyptian state had practically entered a dense field of advertising in which contemporary marketing practices have by now firmly established the use of ʿAmmiyya (almost) as the norm. This is not to say that *all* advertising is done exclusively in ʿAmmiyya. Very often do advertisements contain the mixture of Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya and one can still encounter some (not very many though) that are entirely in Fuṣṣḥa. Nevertheless, significant use of ʿAmmiyya in the discourse of advertising has long become accepted and expected.⁷ So, when the state wants to send out its message and remind the masses to pay their taxes on time, or get electoral cards

7 For two studies on the (socio)linguistic aspects of advertising in Egypt, see Gully (1996/97) and Bassiouney (2009b). Unfortunately, Bassiouney does not refer to Gully's, more comprehensive, article, and thus fails to present us with a possible comparison of changes that might have taken place over a decade that separates her work from Gully's.

by a specific deadline, and given the fact that this message will most likely end up squeezed in-between two catchy commercials for, lets say, a washing powder and a chocolate bar, the state apparently decides to play by the rules of the market, rather than conform to purist attitudes and expectations of members of the intellectual and cultural elite.

Amin's point of view about inter-relationship and/or causality between linguistic practice and socio-cultural condition, while being a prime example of what Deborah Cameron (1995) defined as “verbal hygiene”⁸, is by no means new or unique. In fact, this kind of writing has a long history. For example, Niloofar Haeri (2003: 82-82) brings a lengthy quotation from an editorial “The Arabic Language and Success” published in *al-Ahram* on January 1, 1882. There, the author complains about the state of (in this case, spoken) Arabic, that “has been subject to decay and corruption [...] to the extent that one fears the loss of the glorious language of our ancestors [...]”

As Yasir Suleiman put it, “language-defenders” see modern Arabic dialects as “repositories of all kinds of linguistic corruption and deviation from the norms of S[tandard] A[rabic]. [The dialects] constitute a state of decay in the linguistic fabric of the Arabic language. [...] Support for the dialects is therefore interpreted as support for the forces of decay and corruption in society, in linguistic and moral terms” (2004: 76). Also, “[t]he widespread belief that the dialects are a degenerate and ungrammatical form of Arabic is

8 In brief, Cameron defines *verbal hygiene* as “the set of normative metalinguistic practices that arise from the urge to meddle in matters of language.” (1995: vi & 237, n.3)

taken to indicate the existence of moral and cultural decay in society, and the state of impotence in the socio-political arena” (*ibid.* 93).⁹

Drawing on the work of John Eisele on culturally constructed perceptions and representations of Arabic and “regimes of authority” in language-related discourses (2002, 2003), Gunvor Mejdell (2008a) charts the contemporary language debate and social practice in Egypt by providing numerous examples from Egyptian printed media. Amin's text referred to above, closely read in its entirety, reveals the presence and perseverance of all four “cultural tropes” identified by Eisele as characteristic of the majority of discourses on Arabic in the Arab-Islamic tradition – those of *unity*, *purity*, *continuity*, and *competition* (2002: 4-5, 2003:51), as well as the “(sub-)motif” of *uniqueness*, added by Mejdell (2008a:11).

In the Egyptian context, then, El Esseily and Amin represent two different approaches to ʿAmmiyya and its use in writing.¹⁰ While Amin condemns it entirely, El Esseily decides to adopt it as his main vehicle for literary purposes. It must be noted, however, that in doing so he does not act as an “opponent” to Fuṣḥa (*sensu* Suleiman 2004: 58-95). Neither is he rejecting it completely. On the contrary, he does not want to give it up and reserves the right to resort to it whenever he deems necessary. In fact, he seems to be suggesting that despite his preference for ʿAmmiyya, there are thoughts that resist, or oppose ʿAmmiyya, thoughts that are better expressed in Fuṣḥa. El Esseily's

9 For a comprehensive historical study of Arabic as probably the most important element in the formation and reproduction of nationalist ideologies, both those constitutive of Arab nationalism and those that articulate different territorial nationalisms, see Suleiman 2003.

10 For anthropological accounts on cultural dynamics and tension surrounding the relationship between the two varieties in Egypt, see also Armbrust (1996: 37-62), as well as the book which I discuss in a bit more detail below, Haeri (2003).

stylistic choice to mix Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya while reflecting on his initial dilemma, further accentuates his divided loyalties:¹¹

بعد أن قررت أخيراً أن أبدأ كتابة كتابي الأول.. وقعت في أول «حيص ييص».. ما كنتش عارف اكتب بالعامية ولا بالفصحى!.. مشكلة معضلة جداً.. الفصحى هي لغة القراءة والكتابة.. فيه طريقة واحدة لكتابة ونطق كل كلمة ممكن تستعملها.. بس العامية مش كده.. ممكن مثلاً تكتب «إنّهرد» وممكن تكتب «النهارده» وممكن الاتين يبقوا صح، وممكن مايقوش.

الفصحى عندها قدرة أكبر على البلاغة بس العامية أقرب للقلب. الفصحى قد تتال إعجاب محبي اللغة العربية والمثقفين، بس العامية بتكلم كل الناس المهم من غير رغي يعني قررت اني اكتب زي ما بفكر، بالعامية. ولو فيه حاجة استعصت عليها، اكتبها بالفصحى

The way El Esseily blends Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya, and the way he self-reflexively articulates his decision to do what he does, is a position many a purist would find unacceptable. Cited above, Suleiman's description of the attitudes held by the “language defenders” and the kind of linguistic conservatism that has for centuries been very strong throughout the Arab world, as well as in Egypt, calls to mind an often quoted excerpt from an interview with the Egyptian Nobel Prize laureate, Naguib Mahfouz (نجيب محفوظ 1911-2006):¹²

The colloquial is one of the diseases from which the people are suffering, and of which they are bound to rid themselves as they progress. I consider the colloquial one of the failings of our society, exactly like ignorance, poverty, and disease.

11 Here I reproduce the paragraphs quoted above in an attempt to mark El Esseily's mixed style - Fuṣḥa parts are italicised, those in ʿAmmiyya are given in bold, and those that are shared/ambiguous, i.e. that could be read as either are left unmarked. It must be noted (with regard to all the similar examples in this thesis) that the divisions between the parts in Fuṣḥa and those in ʿAmmiyya are to an extent arbitrary due to the fact that Arabic script often masks certain features that – if (re)produced orally – could help us classify an utterance as belonging to one variety or another with a lesser degree of uncertainty.

12 Cachia (1967, 20) quoting from Dawwārah, F. 1965. *ʿashrat 'udabā' yataḥaddatūn*. Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl. pp. 286-287.

The colloquial which Mahfouz described in such a negative way was his mother tongue.¹³ It is difficult to speculate whether he really believed that a day could come when Egyptians would speak Fuṣḥa as their native tongue. Therefore, I am more inclined towards an interpretation of this statement as an expression of language attitudes of Mahfouz, the writer, as his resentment towards the use of ʿAmmiyya as a vehicle of *belles-lettres*. Research has shown, however, that even his work, once looked at more carefully, exhibits certain features pertaining to ʿAmmiyya.¹⁴ But what is most interesting in the quotation above, is how, while dismissing ʿAmmiyya and expressing his expectation that the people would somehow get rid of it one day, Mahfouz related his prognosis to progress and development, or lack thereof.

Today, half a century later, many Egyptians who are neither “ignorant” nor “diseased” (even if some of them might still be relatively “poor,” or, at least, not in the most fortunate economic circumstances), and who might actually very well represent those “progressive” people whom Mahfouz would have expected to rid themselves of ʿAmmiyya, are in fact doing quite the opposite. They have been using it increasingly where Mahfouz would not have wanted to see it at all – *in writing*. Ahmad El Esseily is just one of many.

With the population estimated at more than 82 million people, Egypt is the most populous Arab and Middle Eastern country, third most populous country in Africa (after

13 For an analysis of how Naguib Mahfouz actually spoke in an interview in which he talked about his life, see Mejdell 1996.

14 See Holes (2004: 380), and Belnap & Bishop (2003: 19-20). Somekh (1991: 27-29) identifies these features as hidden AM (ʿAmmiyya) and colloquialised FU (Fuṣḥa). See also Rosenbaum 2008.

Nigeria and Ethiopia) and fifteenth in the world.¹⁵ At the same time, Egypt is a country with a lot of illiterate people. Total adult literacy rate estimated by UNICEF (for the period 2005-2008) was 66 percent.¹⁶ In 2005, the World Factbook (CIA) estimated it at 71.4 percent.¹⁷ Although statistical comparisons indicate that literacy has been on the rise, the figures presented here suggest that probably some twenty million Egyptians cannot read and write. Given these disturbing facts, we could imagine that Naguib Mahfouz would have certainly been happy had he been alive to read about the literacy initiative “Knowledge is Power” which was announced by the Egyptian branch of a global telecommunications company whose headquarters are in London. In spring 2011, right after the success of the uprising that toppled Mubarak, Vodafone Egypt announced:

Launching “Knowledge is Power” Initiative

Press conference to announce Vodafone's national literacy initiative

Knowledge is Power

Under the patronage of Dr. Ahmed Gamal Al-Din Moussa, Minister of Education, the Vodafone Egypt Foundation for Community Development, in partnership with UNESCO, Life Makers and the General Authority for Adult Literacy, held a Press Conference to announce the details of the Vodafone Initiative for Illiteracy Eradication of 17 million Egyptians over the next five years.¹⁸

The Arabic version of the same press release published at the company's bilingual website is one paragraph longer (italicised and followed by my translation):

15 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html?countryName=Egypt&countryCode=eg®ionCode=afr&rank=15#eg>

16 http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/egypt_statistics.html#77

17 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html> According to the same source, “over two-thirds of the world's 793 million illiterate adults are found in only eight countries (Bangladesh, China, *Egypt*, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan).” (emphasis mine)

18 <http://bit.ly/mVG8a1> (Click on “اللغة العربية” for the Arabic version quoted below)

فودافون تطلق المبادرة القومية لمحو الامية " العلم قوة "

عقدت مؤسسة فودافون لتنمية المجتمع بالشراكة مع منظمة الأمم المتحدة (اليونسكو) وصناع الحياة والهيئة العامة لتعليم الكبار تحت رعاية الدكتور أحمد جمال الدين موسى، وزير التربية والتعليم، مؤتمرًا صحفيًا للإعلان عن تفاصيل مبادرة محو أمية 17 مليون مصري خلال السنوات الخمس القادمة.

انطلقت هذه المبادرة القومية تحت شعار "العلم.. قوة كل واحد" في استجابة سريعة من مؤسسة فودافون لتنمية المجتمع للظروف الدقيقة التي تمر بها مصر والتي تتطلب تكريس كافة الجهود من أجل النهوض والتقدم ببلادنا.

Under the slogan "Knowledge is everyone's power," this national initiative has been launched by the Vodafone Egypt Foundation for Community Development as a quick response to trying circumstances which Egypt is facing and which require all efforts to be devoted for the sake of restoration and advancement of our country.

Even though both texts mention the "details" that were supposedly announced at the press conference, at the time of submitting this thesis no details and particularities were available at the company's website. It was not clear what strategies and activities were planned for this praiseworthy, yet extremely ambitious project.¹⁹ The company's main "goal," however, did appear on billboards and storefront windows of its local branches all over Cairo:

19 Arabic - <http://www.vodafone.com.eg/vodafoneportalWeb/ar/P7600152331301924626303>

English - <http://www.vodafone.com.eg/vodafoneportalWeb/en/P7600152331301924626303> – both sites last accessed on October 5, 2011. Apart from presenting the initiative in terms of the groups, associations, and NGOs that would take part in it, the sites did not mention any details about how the initiative would be implemented, concluding the respective texts with "ترقبوا المزيد من المعلومات عن كيفية التطوع" (the Arabic page) and "stay tuned for more information about volunteering" (the English page). Note also that the English translation of the slogan cited below (found on the right-hand side of the relevant page) differs from mine, and it is not exactly a "translation" of the Arabic text - "Our aim is to eradicate illiteracy in Egypt in 5 years."

Our goal is that by the year 2017
every Egyptian is able to read
this sentence and write it as well.



هدفنا إن قبل سنة ٢٠١٧
كل مصرى يقدر يقرأ
الجملة دى ويكتبها كمان²⁰

Judging by their main slogan, then, it seems that what those behind this initiative want the “seventeen million,” now illiterate, Egyptians to be able to read and write one day is – ʿAmmiyya. A closer look at the sentence reveals the presence of several ʿAmmiyya features in it:

هدفنا إن قبل سنة ٢٠١٧ كل مصرى يقدر يقرأ الجملة دى ويكتبها كمان

1 – the complementiser إن, written with *hamza* underneath *alif* captures its colloquial realisation *'inn-* (which in this case would be read as *innu/innə*), as opposed to the standard MSA *'anna-*.²¹

²⁰ The visual solution of the slogan itself should be pointed to – the font was carefully chosen to resemble handwriting, and a photo of a hand holding the pen “finishes” the last word.

²¹ With regard to spelling of initial *hamza* in Modern Written Arabic (what I basically refer to here as Fuṣḥa/MSA), Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004: 11) note a tendency for the distinction between أن and إن to be ignored in favour of أن. Therefore, I argue that when analysing the contemporary texts which contain instances of mixing, the occurrences of إن-forms should not be ignored. Of course, a single instance of إن, unless accompanied by some other colloquial features, cannot by itself be taken as a marker of “colloquialness” - even if written where the rules of colloquial would require it. A room must be left for the

2 – asyndetic linkage in *يَقْدِرُ يَقْرَأُ* where standard usage would require the use of *أَنْ* /'an/.²²

3 – postposed to the definite noun *الجملة*, the demonstrative *دى* /di/ is a feature of Cairene Arabic (Holes 2004: 186); in the same context, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) would normally have *هذه الجملة*.

4 – the adverbial *كمان* /kamān/ belongs to the ʿAmmiyya lexical stock. Fuṣṣḥa equivalents would be *أَيْضًا* or *كَذَلِكَ* (although both are used in ʿAmmiyya as well)

To these four – and based on contemporary usage rather than actual lexical distribution along Fuṣṣḥa-ʿAmmiyya division – one might also be tempted to point to the lexical choice of the verb *يَقْدِرُ - يقدِر*, “to be able to” which tends to be avoided in contemporary Fuṣṣḥa.²³

Finally, a note should be made that the form *يَقْرَأُ* orthographically conforms to the MSA rules and might thus suggest an MSA or MSA-like rendering (*yaqra'a, yaqra'*). The overall context of the sentence, however, implies that the written form stands for the ECA *yiʔra*, which in turn could have been written as *يَقْرَى*, as sometimes is the case with this verb in texts written in ʿAmmiyya, with the understanding that in this case *alif maqṣūra* does not mark the vowel length.

writer's typo, hypercorrection or overgeneralisation in the direction opposite from *أَنْ*. It is only when some other – lexical and/or (morpho)syntactic – colloquial features are also found in a text, that *ان* becomes interpretable as spelling of the colloquial complementiser (*'inn-*) rather than the MSA one (*'an-/anna*). For a discussion of *ان* (without *hamza*) in Middle-Arabic texts and a suggestion to interpret it as *'inn-* rather than *'ann-*, see Mejdell 2008b (364-370).

22 Interestingly, Mejdell (2006a:100) gives the identical example as an illustration of a syntactic contrast between SA [Standard Arabic] and EA [Egyptian Arabic]. Thus, for “he can read,” she gives:

SA: *yastaʔi:ʔu ʔan yaqraʔa* and EA: *yiʔdir yiʔra*

(Note: *yiʔdir* should be transcribed as *yiʔdar* /in my transcription it would be *yiʔdar/* since this is, to the best of my knowledge, the common form of this verb in EA, and is also found transcribed as such elsewhere in Mejdell's data. See also Hinds & Badawi 1986: 687)

23 “Although common in CLA [Classical Arabic], it has become unusual to encounter the finite forms of this verb in many genres of MSA. The synonym *'istaʔāʔa* is preferred because it has no dialectal analog form, as *qadara* has, and so is saliently ‘formal.’” (Holes 2004: 324). Also, Mejdell's example quoted in the footnote above, although primarily given to illustrate a syntactic difference between MSA and ECA, is at the same time illustrative of this lexical distribution between the two varieties.

Launching this slogan was not the first time for Vodafone to address Egyptians in written ʿAmmiyya. In fact, through its written advertisements it has been doing it for quite some time now. And so have the other two private mobile phone service providers, Etisalat and Mobinil, as well as the national landline telephone company Telecom Egypt. This is not surprising given that, as mentioned above, ʿAmmiyya has become the dominant variety in advertising practices (including written advertisements). Many companies, businesses and banks now feature catchy slogans in ʿAmmiyya when advertising their products or services. It should be noted however that these are often followed by more formal (MSA) instructions, explanations or details that are usually given in “small print.”

Vodafone's top-up cards used to recharge one's mobile phone credit, for example, tend to feature three varieties – ʿAmmiyya, Fuṣṣa and English. The front page is reserved for advertising some of the company's services and contains a cartoon and a text in ʿAmmiyya, such as:²⁴

[top right corner, larger font] خدمة سلفنى شكراً من فودافون²⁵ – اللي معهوش مايهموش
[bottom right corner, slightly smaller font] فقط أطلب --- وفودافون هتحوك ٣ جنيه رصيد

- Service *Lend me. Thanks* from Vodafone – the one who doesn't have, should not worry.
- Just dial --- and Vodafone will transfer you 3 Egyptian Pounds (from now on – LE) /worth of/ credit.

24 ECA parts given in bold.

25 Note the use of the letter ʿ to represent /v/ which does not form the inventory of Arabic phonemes (neither in Fuṣṣa nor ʿAmmiyya). This practice, however, is not fully consistent, and ʿ is also often encountered (as in examples of Vodafone automatic texts given below, which might be due to technical reasons.)

The back of the card is bilingual in English and Fuṣṣḥa. This is where the “secret code” is to be revealed by scratching off the silver film, and where the instructions in parallel read:²⁶

How to use Vodafone recharge card	تعليمات استخدام كارت إعادة شحن فودافون
1- Gently scratch the box below to reveal the secret code	١- إخدش برفق المربع بالأسفل لإظهار الرقم السري
2- Press *858*secret code# You will receive a message confirming the recharge. Or dial 858, enter your secret code and follow the instructions. ²⁷ The voice prompt will confirm the recharge.	٢- اضغط #الرقم السري*٨٥٨* ²⁸ وستصلك رسالة تؤكد شحن الكارت أو أطلب ٨٥٨ وأدخل الرقم السري وابع التعليمات. ستستمتع لرسالة مسجلة تؤكد الشحن
3- For balance inquiry, press *868*1# Or dial 868.	٣- للإستعلام عن رصيدك، اضغط #١*٨٦٨* أو أطلب ٨٦٨.

While the use of English is understandable given that large numbers of foreigners are present in Egypt at any given time, either as residents or as tourists, it is interesting to note that, as far as Arabic parts of the card are concerned, Vodafone construes its potential reader (user) as someone who reads (and most likely wants to read) both Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya. This becomes even more apparent in many sections of the company's Arabic website. While at the top-up cards Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya are kept apart from each other, both functionally and spatially, the company's website mixes the two in a much more liberal way.

26 MSA features italicised. In this case, these are (1) future tense marked with *sa-*, and (2) imperfect form which, had the text been in ECA, would have been marked with *bi-* preverbal marker of present/habitual.

27 Interestingly enough, this part of the instruction is slightly misleading in both Arabic and English, since, upon dialling, the subscriber first hears the instructions s/he is supposed to follow, *i.e.* enter the code.

28 Here (as well as in 3 below, yet unlike in the second line of 2, after *'uṭlub*), because of the direction of the text that follows the imperative *'idḡaṭ*, the Arabic instruction becomes potentially misleading – it assumes that the subscriber will follow the sequence of entering symbols and numbers as if reading numbers only (in otherwise right-to-left Arabic writing system, the numerals are read from left to right). The subscriber thus has to start from *, and not from #. Otherwise, s/he will not be able to recharge.

Here is but one example. Under the section كيف اذفع فاتورتي (How to pay my bill, How can/should I pay my bill), we find four options leading to four different subsections (pages). Two of these are: من بيتك (From your home) and الخصم المباشر (Automatic payment).²⁹ Both are introduced by short explanations that mix ʿAmmiyya and Fuṣḥa features, and are followed by the links that lead to pages containing explanations and instructions in Fuṣḥa:

من بيتك وأنت في بيتك، من غير ما تتعب نفسك، يمكنك سداد فاتورتك عن طريق الانترنت، موبايلك، أو نيجيك لحد البيت	From your home You can pay your bill while at home, without troubling yourself, through the Internet, your mobile, or we can come to your house.
---	---

الخصم المباشر متشغلك بالك، سجل مع فودافون وكل شهر سيتم خصم الفاتورة تلقائيا من حسابك في البنك أو بطاقة الائتمان	Automatic payment Don't bother yourself, register with Vodafone and every month your bill will be automatically deducted from your bank account or credit card.
---	--

From time to time, Vodafone also sends automatic texts (SMS) to its subscribers.³⁰ As a rule, the post-paid subscriber (such as myself) will get one every time they recharge their credit:

تم شحن الكارت و رصيدك أصبح 25 جنيهه
(topped up) and your balance is (*lit.* has become) 25 LE.

²⁹ According to the equivalent English page; literally “direct deduction.”

³⁰ I was told that (language-wise) similar messages are sent by other two providers, Mobinil and Etisalat, but I cannot confirm that due to the lack of comparable sets of data. During my fieldwork in Cairo, I was never in a possession of three mobile phones at a time (not even two) to be able to use the services of all three providers. My Vodafone data is the result of my using Vodafone SIM card. What is certain, however, is that the other two providers, as mentioned above, resort heavily to ʿAmmiyya in their written advertisements pretty much the same way as Vodafone does. I remember vividly the first such advertisement which I saw in September 2008, when I had just moved to Cairo. It was the one by Mobinil, advertising their USB modem with the slogan: عيش عالنت! - Live on the net! *i.e.* Live Online!

The example above is from 2009-2010. The use of periphrastic passive **تم شحن** and the choice of the verb **أصبح** suggest that the variety of the message should be interpreted as MSA, or, in other words, there is no reason whatsoever to interpret it as ECA. The same message, however, was later expanded by an addition of a sentence informing the subscriber that an easier way to recharge is to recharge “on the go” (**عالتاير**), *i.e.* to ask for the E-Top Up service at any Vodafone store or authorised dealer. Apart from the name of the service, the sentence also contains the ECA construction identical to the one we saw in Vodafone's goal of the literacy campaign cited above – asyndetic linkage between the verbs **قدّر-يقدر** and **شحن-يشحن** – thus resulting in a mix:

تم شحن الكارت و رصيدك أصبح --- جنيه. **تقدر تشحن أسهل عن طريق الشحن**
عالتاير³¹

When the subscriber's credit is running low, they usually receive the following message in which (1) asyndetic linkage between *mumkin* and *tiḥawwil-lak*, and (2) orthographic suffixation of the prepositional *lak* (indirect object) to the verb *tiḥawwil* both follow ʿAmmiyya (syntactic and phonotactic) rules:

فودافون **ممکن تحولك** 9 جنيه رصيد على 3مرات، 3 جنيه كل مرة. اضغط--- ب 50 قرش
 Vodafone can transfer you 9LE, three times in a row (3LE each time).
 Press --- for 50 pt (piasters).

If the subscriber decides to take up the offer and then receives his loan (3, 6, 9LE), next time they recharge, the loan will be deducted from their credit and they will be informed about it – in Fuṣḥa:

تم خصم ال 3 جنيه التي تم تحويلها من فودافون رصيدكم³² الحالي ---

31 The second part reads: “You can recharge in an easier way through the “aṭ-ṭayir” (on the go, e-top up)”

32 Note the use of the plural form of the second person pronominal suffix as opposed to the far more common singular.

The 3 LE that had been transferred by Vodafone have been deducted.
Your current balance is ---

One might only speculate why a message like this one is more formal (and at the same time apparently, even if paradoxically, a bit more polite) when addressing the same subscriber (*raṣīdukum* ~ V-form) who had previously been offered a loan in a less formal way (*tihawwillak* ~ T-form). Maybe to ease the subscriber's discomfort that could have been caused by the act of taking back (impersonally, automatically) of what had previously been generously offered (personally, friendly)? Whatever the reason, a pattern that emerges upon examining the data of some forty-odd different Vodafone texts which I collected over the period of my fieldwork is that the majority of them tend to be in ʿAmmiyya, or to contain some admixture of ʿAmmiyya and Fuṣḥa features. Usually, they inform the subscriber about various offers, some of which are advertised as “(for) free,” but most of which, in one way or another, essentially aim at stimulating the subscriber to use her mobile phone more, and eventually spend more money.³³

Let us take look at another few:

<p>دلوقتي على كل دقيقة تجوال هتستقبلها هتستمتع بالتانيه ببلاش في نفس المكالمة. لاشترك كلم---</p>	<p>Now, for every minute of an incoming call while roaming, you will enjoy the next one in the same conversation for free. To participate (in the promotion) call---</p>
<p>طول رمضان، كل مرة تشحن ب 100ج هتكسب دقائق أو رسايل لمدة شهر ببلاش. كلم---</p>	<p>Throughout Ramadan, every time you top up 100LE you will receive free minutes or messages for one month. Dial ---</p>
<p>عايز تفطر مع أحمد حسن أو بركات أو وائل جمعة أبعث y على --- وأدخل السحب سعر الرسالة 3ج</p>	<p>Do you want to break the (Ramadan) fast with Ahmed Hassan, Barakat, or Wael Gomaa?³⁴ Send 'y' to --- and enter the drawing. The price of the SMS is 3LE</p>

33 Not all of them are commercial, though, such as:

عندك ميني كول من فودافون علشان تسمعها أطلب --- ببلاش
Vodafone. To listen to it, dial --- for free.

34 All three are famous Egyptian football players.

اشترى ال-USB Modem اونلاين وهيوصلك ببلاش. للشراء زور موقعنا vodafone.com.eg	Buy USB Modem online and it will be delivered to you for free. To purchase visit our site vodafone.com.eg
مع نظام حكاوي بكرة كل اللي هتكلمه النهارده هتتكمم قده بكرة ببلاش سعر الدقيقة 20ق لفودافون و 30 قرش لاي نمر تانيه...	With the price plan <i>Hakawy Bokra</i> as long as you (will) talk today, you will talk that long tomorrow for free. The price is 20pt/minute to Vodafone and 30pt to any other numbers.
دلوقتي تقدر تسأل أي سؤال محيرك وتجيلك إجابة فورا أسأل في الفن، رياضة، دين أو معلومات عامة. أبعث سؤالك دلوقتي على --- ب 3جنيه.	Now you can ask any question that baffles you and you will immediately get the answer. Ask about the art, sports, religion or general knowledge. Send your question now to --- for 3LE
داونلود ³⁵ فودافون Browser مجانا	Download Vodafone Browser for free
دلوقتي هتتعرف سعر كل مكالمة تتكلمها ورصيدك المتبقي ببلاش. ستصلك رسالة فورية بعد كل مكالمة تتكلمها. لإلغاء الخدمة، اضغت --- [mixing <i>Fuṣḥa</i> and <i>ʿAmmiyya</i>]	From now on you will know the price of each call you make and the remaining balance. This is a free service. After each call you make, you will immediately receive a message. To cancel the service, press ---

In October 2011, Egypt had 76 million mobile phone users, according to *Ahram Online*.³⁶ This figure was quoted at the time when all three mobile operators extended every mobile phone number by inserting a digit, so that they all became 11-digits long. This was done in response to a rapidly growing demand for new numbers. Given the overall population, one might be tempted to conclude that, in terms of potential readership, no text – except, of course, the text of the Holy Qur'an – can compete with mobile service providers' SMS. Two points have to be made, though. First, a lot of Egyptians have more than one line. I know that for a fact since over the three years which I spent in Cairo (September 2008 – October 2011), I met a lot of people, from various socio-economic backgrounds, who had two mobile phones.³⁷ Second, even though many

35 English borrowing - "download" used as a fully fledged Arabic verb, this being the imperative.

36 See <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/23423.aspx>

37 The other phone is often reported as used for job/business, to keep the private life apart from the professional, but I also met a lot of people who used the other phone to have "a parallel life," to keep their public, socially scrutinised persona "clean" and still be able to maintain whatever kind of contacts and relationships they wanted to have yet keep them hidden.

people have two (and some maybe even more than two) lines, this large number of mobile phone users, as well as my experience in the field, testify to the fact that even the illiterate people use mobile phones.

ʿAmm Mansour is a *bawwāb* of the building in which I lived for two years.³⁸ In the building across the alley, opposite our entrance, there is a calligrapher’s studio. This is also a place where ʿAmm Mansour spends a lot of his time socialising with the master calligrapher while still being able to keep an eye on the building. What has been puzzling me ever since I met him and until now, is how come that despite his close, long-term friendship with the calligrapher, whose work he admires and respects, and who could have definitely taught him how to read and write, ʿAmm Mansour remained, as he himself admits, completely illiterate. I asked the master once, and he just laughed and waived his hand – “Come on, you know Mansour, I tell him, but he doesn’t care...” But Mansour does have a mobile phone and uses it regularly. For him, answering an incoming call is in most cases pretty much the same kind of experience we all have with landlines – you don’t know who’s calling, you’ll find out once you pick it up.³⁹ When last year he got a new phone with a camera, he immediately took my photo and asked me to add it to my number which I had previously saved for him in his contacts’ list. From then on, every time I called my photo would appear on the display and he would know it was me. Still, when he needs

38 ʿamm (عم), which literally means “uncle,” is also a term used to refer to, or address a man older than oneself and often of a lower social status. Also, it can be used among friends and peers as an informal term of address with meanings similar to “pal, mate, buddy,...” - See Hinds & Badawi 1986: 603.

bawwāb (بواب), “conciierge, doorkeeper” (ibid. 110) is a man who takes care of an apartment building, runs errands for the tenants and keeps an eye on who comes and goes. Often does he (and his family if he has one) live in a special quarter near the entrance. Sometimes, however, as in the case of ʿAmm Mansour, the *bawwāb* may live (sleep) elsewhere and attend the building from early in the morning until some time in the evening.

39 Unless someone also has a landline phone that displays the caller’s number and name.

to call someone whose number (without a photo) had been previously saved (by someone else), he asks someone to do it for him. Of course, he does not send SMS and automatic texts that are sent by his provider mean nothing to him, yet I am curious to see whether over the next five years Vodafone might succeed where the calligrapher has failed.

Let us now move away from that alley in a lower-middle-class neighbourhood in central Cairo, away from the city's noise, pollution and congestion, and visit a place of learning and knowledge. Let us go to the American University in Cairo (AUC) and its New Campus in New Cairo, built in the desert that is rapidly being transformed into a huge construction site of new gated communities and new satellite cities towards which gravitate those wealthier (new rich?) Cairenes for whom Cairo has become too dirty and too risky (Denis 2006).⁴⁰

AUC is an institution of higher education where, with the exception of several courses taught in Arabic at the Department of Arab and Islamic Civilisations, the sole medium of instruction is English. Except for those who clean it and maintain it (and some of whom are as literate as ʿAmm Mansour is) and many international faculty members whose Arabic is rudimentary or non-existent, everybody else at AUC is at least bilingual in Arabic and English. Even though English is the dominant language, every so often an

40 From its downtown location right next to Tahrir Square, AUC moved to its new, “\$400 million, 260-acre campus [...] technologically advanced and environmentally sensitive” campus in September 2008. For more information about the new facilities, see <http://www.aucegypt.edu/newcairocampus/Pages/default.aspx>. The move has been a controversial issue, not only because many who worked and/or studied there are simply nostalgic – and I am definitely one of them given that I did my MA studies at AUC (1999-2001) – but also because of its damaging impact on the local economy of the neighbourhood in particular (copy centres, stationery shops, small restaurants, cafés... they all lost their AUC customers, and some were even forced to close their premises or change their businesses) and because of its negative impact on the larger population of local scholars and students at national universities to whom the best equipped library in the region has become virtually inaccessible.

event, a theatrical play or a lecture is organised in Arabic. Such events are then announced in Arabic on official University posters. Here is one, in which:

Cairo Science Festival is presenting a panel discussion with

the artist (actor) Ashraf Abdel-Baki

and an important talk about

Art and Science

and how the art and science can contribute together

to the renaissance (revival) of Egypt.

[Wednesday, May 11, 5pm, Mary Cross Hall, AUC New Cairo Campus]



The text of this poster deserves to be commented on for two reasons. First, because it represents a clear case of mixing – it is a hybrid, neither fully Fuṣḥa nor fully ʿAmmiyya; and second, because what we see here is not a hand-written note posted on a wall, but an official announcement bearing the AUC logo, carefully formatted to incorporate the artist's photo and fonts of various sizes and colours corresponding to different lines of the text.⁴¹ It is clear that time and effort were put in the creation of this poster. Most likely, more than one person participated in its creation which, even if a

41 The font colours used are dark blue, red, orange, yellowish and grey.

pre-existing poster template was used, must have included several phases, such as: writing of the announcement, choosing the photo, putting all the elements together, choosing the fonts (maybe even the background colour), formatting, (proofreading?), and, finally, printing the poster and distributing it around campus. So, let us take a closer look at this text:

مهرجان القاهرة للعلوم يقدم ندوه مع الفنان أشرف عبد الباقي وكلام مهم حول
الفن والعلم وإزاي الفن والعلم يمكن أن يساهموا سوا في نهضة مصر
الاربعاء ١١ مايو ، الخامسة مساءً قاعة ماري كروس ، حرم الجامعه الامريكه بالقاهره
الجديده

At first sight, this reads as a text written entirely in ʿAmmiyya. Given that the accusative case is carefully marked on the adverbial مساءً (in the evening, pm), its absence on the direct object⁴² وكلام مهم becomes indicative of the authors' intentions to move in the direction of ʿAmmiyya. Four words later, the voice in ʿAmmiyya becomes loud and clear through the use of the interrogative إزاي. While we might speculate that, due to its frequency in normal speech, this question word might be expected to occur fairly easily even in those contexts in which a speaker has Fuṣṣḥa as the target for her output, in the written context of this particular poster, such a lexical choice (instead of MSA كيف) is highly salient. The next ʿAmmiyya feature, this one being a syntactic one, is the verbal form يساهموا according to ECA agreement rules (*i.e.* plural with its antecedent dual subject (الفن والعلم)). Had the MSA rules been observed, the verb would have been written as يساهما. Immediately following the verb is the adverb سوا (together), which signals the ECA rendering /sawa/ instead of the MSA one /sawā'an/ which would have been written as سواً, or at least سوا. Finally, and before some parts of my interpretation are challenged on the grounds that in this analysis I might be relying on spelling more than one usually

42 Of the verb يقدم.

does (and perhaps should) when dealing with written Arabic, I want to stress that it is exactly spelling – in this case, (re)spelling of the feminine ending, *i.e.* *tā' marbūṭa* – that shows full consistency with the respective word's actual pronunciation. Excluding the bilingual header in the top left corner of the poster (clearly a fixed element of the template that establishes the “uniformity” of all AUC posters and announcements) in which the full name of the institution is spelled in the usual, Fuṣṣa form – الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة – retaining *tā' marbūṭa* regardless of the actual pronunciation (*prepausal* vs. *prejunctural*), all but two feminine words in the text under scrutiny are spelled with *ه* which reflects either their actual ECA pronunciation in their concrete syntactic environments, or MSA pausal pronunciation. These are:

← ← ←

الجديده	الجامعه	الخامسه	ندوه	القاهره (twice)
<i>l-gadīda / l-gidīda</i> ⁴³	<i>l-gāmi'a / l-gam'a</i> ⁴⁴	<i>l-xāmisa / l-xamsa</i>	<i>nadwa</i>	<i>l-qāhira</i>

The only two feminine nouns where *tā' marbūṭa* is retained, are the two which are in *status constructus*, *i.e.* first elements of *'iḍāfa*, in which case the sounding of “feminine -t” is obligatory in both Fuṣṣa and ʿAmmiyya:

نهضة مصر – *naḥḍit maṣr* (or, given the overall context, less likely *naḥḍat(i) miṣr*)

قاعة ماري كروس – *qā'it meri kros* (or, here more likely than in the above⁴⁵ *qā'at(u) ...*)

To the best of my knowledge, this kind of different treatment of *tā' marbūṭa* (to be retained only when the noun is the first element of an *'iḍāfa*) is not sanctioned by the

43 If ECA, also readable as: *g-gidīda*.

44 If ECA, also readable as: *g-gam'a*.

45 This “likelihood” being postulated only because of the MSA spelling of the neighbouring word الاربعاء in the line immediately above.

grammars of standard Arabic.⁴⁶ Neither have I encountered Fuṣḥa texts in which it is applied consistently.⁴⁷ However, as presented in the relevant section of Chapter 3 (3.8), the initiators and administrators of Wikipedia Masry explicitly promote this kind of orthographically codified specification of *tā' marbūṭa*. Also, what is more interesting, the issue was brought up to my attention spontaneously during one of my meetings with a group of young aspiring literati.⁴⁸ After the working part of the meeting was over, five or six of us stayed at the venue and continued chatting about random topics. An interesting expression in ṢAmmiyya, which I had not known but grasped it from the context, popped up during the conversation, and I decided to write it down. When he saw me writing one of the nouns with *tā' marbūṭa*, a twenty-six year old Fadi who was sitting next to me, made sure to correct me and tell me I should write it without the dots. I told him that even when I write ṢAmmiyya I always write the dots on feminine nouns at which point three other participant, two men and a young woman, joined in and explained me the “rule” applied in the poster above. According to them, what I was saying had nothing to do with Fuṣḥa or ṢAmmiyya, that this is how the feminine words should be written, with two dots only when in *'idāfa*, and that the “rule” applies equally to writing in Fuṣḥa and ṢAmmiyya. One of them even claimed that this is what he was taught at school. I was confused at the moment, but

46 For example, in their brief note on “MWA spelling innovations” regarding the feminine suffix, Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004: 20) point to (1) a trend that dots are sometimes omitted, and (2) instances of “occasional confusion between the consonant *-h ʾ* and *-at ʾ* [which] may also be taken as a sign of transition (sic)...” (I believe “hypercorrection” would be a better term.) However, they do not mention occurrences of the kind I present here.

47 It must be stressed though, that this “syntactic distinction [...] between the two allomorphs of the final feminine suffix” is a rather common feature in many “Middle Arabic” texts (Lentin 2006: 220; for more on “Middle Arabic” see below).

48 While gathering data for another, future project about which nothing can be said in this thesis, I used to attend meetings of a group of men and women in their twenties and thirties who would gather biweekly to read (or recite) and critically discuss each other’s latest literary attempts. While some of them had already published some of their writings, the majority were still getting ready to venture into the literary field.

what the poster above, the orthographic proposal in Wikipedia Masry and this ethnographic anecdote suggest is that some Egyptians certainly make this distinction. How widely spread this yet-to-become rule is, cannot be assessed until larger corpora of texts written by Egyptians are examined. I have not been able to attest it in many of the books in ʿAmmiyya, including the two by Ahmad El Esseily, who tends to be very careful and consistent when it comes to orthographic rules he adheres to while writing his books, throughout which *tā' marbūṭa* is consistently marked as such.⁴⁹

Going back to the AUC poster, its alleged hybridity is yet to be illustrated. The first MSA element in what I have so far discussed only in terms of its ECA features is the absence of the present/habitual *bi-* on the verb يقدم. The second is the interpolation of conspicuously MSA complementiser أن within the verb string يساهموا (أن) يمكن where the normal ʿAmmiyya linkage would be asyndetic. And finally, in the bottom line of the text, which I admit is hardly discernible in the provided photo,⁵⁰ we find the case of internally voweled passive that is even supplanted with *ḍamma* as if to disambiguate it:

تُبث الندوة علي الهواء علي⁵¹ موقع المهرجان CairoScienceFestival.org

The panel is broadcast on the air at the Festival's website CairoScienceFestival.org

49 At the beginning of his second book (El Esseily 2011), which is interestingly enough called “The Second Book,” capturing in the title itself the author’s determination to mix ʿAmmiyya and Fuṣḥa - *الكتابُ الثاني* (note the use of *ḍamma* on the first word) – El Esseily stresses again his decision to mix the two varieties and asks the reader to pay close attention to the vowel signs whenever they are supplanted, because this occasional *taškīl* is supposed to convey what he “meant to say.”

50 A larger, colour photo should be available online. Go to <http://cairosciencefestival.org/>, then scroll down until you reach the link (on the right-hand side of the page) that says “Ashraf Abdel-Baki’s Events.” Click on it.

51 Note that the authors do not distinguish between ي (*yā*) and ى (*alif maqṣūra*), which has become a rather common feature in contemporary Arabic texts. See Badawi, Carter and Gully 2004 (20). In this text, only ي is used.

While I was taking pictures of this poster, a man in his late fifties or early sixties came, read it and immediately reacted to it: “Who wrote this!” We spent a minute or two talking about it. “إزاي” was the first he commented on, the lack of dual came a bit later... And indeed, now that its mixed, hybrid character is diagnosed, the question of the angry man still resonates with me, even if it does not make me angry. There are certainly questions to be asked: What do we make out of such a text? How should we interpret it? Who (and why) wrote it the way they did? A logical, straightforward answer would point to the author(s)' linguistic incompetence. They aimed at Fuṣṣḥa, but failed to “get rid of” ʿAmmiyya. Or they aimed at ʿAmmiyya, but wanted to “elevate” it somehow by borrowing a bit from Fuṣṣḥa. Unlike El Esseily, who informs us right from the start that mixing is his choice, the authors of the AUC poster might be completely unaware of the hybridity of the text they had produced. No matter how detailed a linguistic analysis of their output is, some questions will remain unanswered.

However, this poster, Vodafone SMS and El Esseily's writings bring us closer to what I wish to tackle in this thesis – a social and cultural process that is observable in contemporary Egypt (or to put it more precisely and more honestly, in its capital Cairo where I did my fieldwork) – a process that is defined by a range of practices that at the same time *result from and are constitutive of* dynamic reconfiguration of the Egyptian sociolinguistic setting. The products of these practices are various texts that are anything but written exclusively in what even in the literature on Arabic is often referred to as “written Arabic.” I shall return to this later. Here I want to point to a common denominator of the examples presented so far. In all of them we find some form of *mixing* of Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya features. As the following section will present in broad outline without doing

justice to all important work that has been done in the field, mixing of Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya is anything but a new topic among the scholars working on Arabic. If there is any novelty in my work, however, it is not in its focus on mixing, but in its focus on a kind of mixing that has attracted much less attention. While the bulk of the relevant scholarship has been devoted to *audible mixing* in Arabic-speaking communities, in this thesis I present some examples and reflections on *contemporary visible mixing*.

1.2. Diglossia, levels, continuum... - variation in speech

Ever since Charles Ferguson (1959) promoted the concept of diglossia as a contested, but to a certain extent still useful springboard-notion for understanding the sociolinguistic situation in the Arab world (alongside the other three cases, namely those of Greece, German-speaking parts of Switzerland, and Haiti), many studies have been devoted to refining the erroneous simplicity his dichotomy might entail if taken uncritically.⁵² More nuanced analyses of the sociolinguistic complexity which one encounters in the field have led to an understanding, nowadays shared among more or less all the scholars dealing with the sociolinguistic aspects of the contemporary Arabophone world, that the realities on the ground cannot be explained (fully) in terms of a Fergusonian binary opposition between the two varieties, with each one of them being

52 The term itself was used in 1930 by the French linguist Marçais in his paper “La diglossie arabe”.

L'Enseignement public. 14: 401-409. Kaye writes that “[i]t was Karl Krumbacher, however, following in the footsteps of some 19th-century French hellenists, who used it in 1902 with particular reference to both Greek and Arabic” (1994: 53). In his seminal paper, Ferguson defines *diglossia* as “a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, *the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature*, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and *is used for most written and formal spoken purposes* but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.” (1959: 336 – emphasis mine) Ferguson labels these two varieties H (high) and L (low).

assigned a special sociolinguistic and functional domain with fixed and impermeable boundaries.⁵³

This general opinion that the concept of *diglossia* is insufficient (or even inadequate) as a descriptive and explanatory tool, seems to be the only working platform on which more or less all the scholars, whether they focus on inter- or intra-dialectal variation, might be willing to agree. Where they disagree, however, is the question of how to conceptualise variation in Arabic.

Blanc (1960) was the first to record and analyse a sample of inter-dialectal conversation among four educated speakers from three different Arab cities.⁵⁴ Having introduced the concept of stylistic variation, and processes/devices of “levelling” (or koineizing, *i.e.* speakers' avoidance of localisms and their opting for cross-dialectally understandable forms) and “classicizing” (speakers' use of classical features), Blanc proposed the division into “plain colloquial” (which can have “informal” or “mildly formal features”), “koineized colloquial” (a result of “levelling”), “semi-literary” or “elevated” style (a “classicized” form), “modified classical” (predominantly classical form with certain dialectal admixtures), and “standard classical” (1960: 85).

53 As Parkinson puts it, “[b]ecause of its power, elegance and simplicity, [Ferguson's concept and description of diglossia] has [...] bothered a lot of people, and there has been a certain chafing against it in the literature [...], a feeling that it is too simple, that it is hiding something important from us.” (Parkinson 2003: 28). From an anthropological perspective, Haeri (2000) gives an informative overview of the debate on diglossia and a useful bibliography on this subject, calling for further studies that would focus on language and the interplay between colloquials and what she, rather awkwardly, labels “Classical Arabic” in order to advance anthropological theory. By reviewing more works than Haeri does, Owens 2001 provides a rather exhaustive historical account of Arabic sociolinguistics. Daher (1987) is extensive, but nowadays a bit dated. Shorter accounts on variation in Arabic are given by Al-Wer (2006) and Kaye (2001).

54 One from Aleppo, one from Jerusalem, and two from Baghdad.

Following in Blanc's footsteps but focusing on a single dialect, Badawi (1973) analysed his native Egyptian Colloquial Arabic from a perspective informed by sociological categories such as class and education. Thus he proposed a synchronic five-level scheme – *fushhā al-turāt*, *fushhā al-ʿaṣr*, *ʿammiyyat al-muṭaqqafīn*, *ʿammiyyat al-mutanawwirīn*, and *ʿammiyyat al-ʿummiyyīn* – where two (native) types of spoken ʿAmmiyya, that of the “illiterate” (*al-ʿummiyyīn*) and the “enlightened” (*al-mutanawwirīn*), correlate mostly with the speaker's family background in terms of ill/literacy. The third one, the one of the “highly educated” (*al-muṭaqqafīn*) is, according to Badawi, the outcome of education and long-term exposure to and learning of *fushhā*, primarily *fushhā al-ʿaṣr* (“contemporary Fuṣḥa”), whose spoken counterpart it represents, since *fushhā al-turāt*, in Badawi's scheme, stands for the oldest, classical language of Islamic culture, scriptures and “heritage.”

Neither Blanc nor Badawi claimed to have identified fixed, and easily discernible levels. From Badawi's elaboration upon the proposed model it is clear that a particular level is defined not only by the presence and prominence of certain linguistic features characteristic exclusively for that level, but by the simultaneous, albeit less prominent coexistence of other features whose prominence is among defining characteristics of a neighbouring level. Moreover, in order to vividly depict how his levels blur into each other, Badawi metaphorically spoke of the “rainbow”, saying they do so like the colours within the spectrum.

However, the work of both Blanc and Badawi was criticised on methodological grounds regarding the nature of the presented data. In Blanc's case, apart from the

relative paucity of data, as problematic was seen the fact that his speakers were all educated teachers of Arabic familiar with the aim of the study (which, it must be stressed, Blanc himself acknowledged in the introduction to his paper). In Badawi's case the reason for criticism is seen in the fact that a large portion of his data came from radio programmes thus abounding in elevated forms much more than it would have been the case in less formal contexts of daily conversations. Furthermore, an elusive nature of defining criteria for establishing the levels and/or categorising every possible utterance accordingly, opens up space for impressionistic and arbitrary divisions and classifications, thus questioning the sociolinguistic reality of these levels at all, especially in terms of their exact number.

In what resembles a result of a desire to act in the capacity of spokesman on behalf of the Leeds Project, eager to legitimise a new object of study (Educated Spoken Arabic) by dismissing everything that had been done up to that moment, El-Hassan (1977) offered a harsh and at certain points seemingly hair-splitting critique of the “levels approach” advocated by Blanc and Badawi. Still, his paper is instructive since it draws more attention to the complexity of H-L continuum and to a variety of possible factors involved in variation. It also serves as an introduction to the Leeds Project, led by Mitchell, a project the main object of which was a thorough investigation of what was perceived to be a transdialectal or interdialectal form at the crossroads of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and the vernaculars.⁵⁵

While Meiseles (1980) wished to recognise two mixed varieties of spoken Arabic –

55 See El-Hassan 1977, El-Hassan 1978, Mitchell 1980, Sallam 1980, Mitchell 1986, Mitchell & El-Hassan 1994.

Oral Literary Arabic (OLA), a spoken realization of MSA, therefore closer to it in terms of morphosyntactic structure, lexicon and orthoepy, and Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA), a variety more influenced by and therefore closer to vernaculars,⁵⁶ Mitchell maintained a tripartite division – written, vernacular and mixed – considering that “OLA can be regarded as belonging to a formal style of ESA” (1986: 9). According to him, “[i]t is the *interplay* between written Arabic and vernacular Arabic(s) that creates and maintains Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA), both nationally and internationally” (1986: 8 – emphasis mine).

Even though Mitchell insisted that he and his co-researchers did not “see [ESA] as one of a series of separate varieties, on a par with MSA and the vernaculars, but rather as created and maintained by the constant interplay of written and vernacular Arabic” (1986: 12), it is clear that ESA was in fact seen as distinguishable from both MSA⁵⁷ and the vernaculars. Namely, the main goal of the Leeds Project has been the writing of a comprehensive, variationist grammar of Educated Spoken Arabic, a kind of grammar that was supposed to take into serious account “stylistic-cum-regional” variation, identify its rules and translate them into linguistic and pragmatic explanations which would be

56 In his overall division, Meiseles (1979, 1980) distinguishes the following: *Literary Arabic* (LA), *Oral Literary Arabic* (OLA), *Sub-standard Arabic* (SsA), *Educated Spoken Arabic* (ESA), *Printed Arabic* (PA), and *Informal Written Arabic* (IWA). While many of his observations regarding the Arabic H-L continuum are insightful, his infelicitous terminology remains a testimony of how fashionable and influential was the “level-paradigm” in those days – as if it had been an imperative for a scholar working on variation in Arabic to develop his own taxonomy even when adopting concepts introduced by others, such as ESA, and divide the H-L continuum into his own chunks or levels.

57 “The label Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is commonly applied to the written language of contemporary literature, journalism, television and radio news broadcasts, scientific and technological writing, administration, and diplomacy. Though differences in written Arabic have developed over time and space within the Arab world, MSA nevertheless shares most of its morphology and syntax with the classical Arabic (CA) of the Quran and canonical literature of Islam, so that its prestige as a model of eloquence and excellence is thereby further enhanced.” (Mitchell 1986, 8-9)

incorporated into the description of ESA.⁵⁸ That grammar, however, has yet to be published.⁵⁹

In defining ESA, Mitchell (1986) starts from a negative definition, in terms of what ESA is not. He introduces the concept of stigmatisation as a tool for explaining the exclusion/inclusion of particular features – the local and regional forms that are perceived as stigmatised will be avoided by the speakers in an interdialectal conversation, qualifying the unstigmatised ones for the repertoire of ESA. The realm of the unstigmatised is divided between two styles, formal (F) and informal (-F), with a further stylistic differentiation of the informal into careful (-Fa) and casual (-Fb).

I agree with Mitchell that – *metaphorically speaking* – the oral output of educated Arabs, especially in an inter-dialectal context, could be described as an inter-*play* between the naturally acquired competency in a particular native vernacular and a better or worse mastery of a set of numerous and complicated rules of “written Arabic,” which the speaker learns throughout his or her life through schooling as well as by being exposed to (again varieties of) that type of Arabic in the mosque, through TV, radio, newspapers, books etc. However, instead of achieving its main objective which was to lay out the rules of the game by which the speakers play out their communicative competence in “Educated Spoken Arabic,” the main, albeit accidental, legacy of the Leeds Project so far has been to

58 For programmatic statements see Mitchell 1980 and 1986. For example: “[...] stylistic, and also *regional*, distinctions can and must be included in grammars of standard spoken languages of the educated Arabic type.” (Mitchell 1986: 7 – emphasis in the original)

59 Apart from several articles published in the 70's and 80's (most of which have been referred to in this paper), the most important contribution resulting from the Leeds Project so far has been a comprehensive treatment of modality, mood and aspect in Arabic spoken by educated speakers from Egypt and the Levant (Mitchell & El-Hassan 1994).

show how complex, difficult-to-describe and “fuzzy” the situation actually is, even though “fuzziness”, judging by El-Hassan's critique (1977), was seen as the heart of weakness of the previous work, such as that of Blanc (1960) and Badawi (1973).⁶⁰

A succinct critique of the Leeds project is given by Eisele (2002). Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice and Bakhtin's notion of *dialogism*, as well as on his “own extensions of the theory, in a paper which invokes by now a large legacy of post-structuralist and Orientalist critique, the crisis of (ethnographic) representation in anthropology and related disciplines, as well as deconstructivism as a methodological choice (not referred to explicitly in the paper itself though), Eisele attempted to develop an epistemological critique of various linguistic representations of Arabic diglossia and dialects, “examining the sociocultural limitations of specialists' representations of others' language behavior and nonspecialists' considerations of their own behavior” (2002: 4). Given the date of publication and the author's ambitions, one can only wonder how and why he decided to limit the number of works he critically reviewed to not more than a dozen.⁶¹ However, Eisele, as stated above, did provide an interesting and insightful demarcation of main discourses and topoi in Arab and Western linguistic traditions respectively, and the repercussions of these discursive trends on conceptualising and analysing diglossia. Moreover, his critical comparative assessment of the work of Mitchell and El-Hassan reveals a number of inconsistencies and contradictions in their approach and discussions, especially regarding the ESA/non-ESA status of certain features, such

60 “Everyone claims to believe that ESA is rule-governed, but no one seems to be able to come up with the rules.” (Parkinson 2003: 29)

61 I am sure Eisele's discussion would have benefited from the reference to what I call here the “speaker-oriented” approach and discuss briefly below, an approach that cannot be reduced only to the work of Parkinson, which Eisele discusses with acclaim (2002: 17-19).

as *'rāb* (pronouncing the final short vowels that indicate desinential inflection), the use of MSA negative particles *lam* and *lan*, and the use of numerals (classical vs. colloquial) in ESA contexts (Eisele 2002: 13-17). Also, Eisele rightly points to the fact that “even more so than the 'levelers' this group reified and canonized their chunk of the continuum” (2002: 14). Besides, while bouncing back and forth between “modernist” and “traditionalist” stances, Mitchell and El-Hassan differed in their views regarding MSA. For example, El-Hassan argued that spoken language is becoming increasingly classical, whereas Mitchell advocated for a new standard for writing and speaking which would be based on his prescriptive grammar of ESA (Eisele 2002: 15-16).

In addition, I would like to stress that the very concept of stigmatisation, which lies at the core of Mitchell's classifications, is problematic just as any other approach that seeks to identify one single criterion for explaining contextualised and culturally situated complexity of the communicative act. What would count as stigmatised would largely depend on who is talking to whom (an Egyptian to an Egyptian, or an Egyptian to a Jordanian), as well as on the social context of communication, the relationship (and social distance/proximity) between the interlocutors, the topic of conversation, etc. Every Arabist will find just as many field anecdotes of Fuṣḥa features being resorted to for the purpose of ridicule and mockery, as they might be for elevating the conversational style.⁶²

This brings me to Kaye's attitude regarding diglossia. While cherishing quite the opposite ideological stance in the field of language policy and planning regarding a

62 See Parkinson 1993: 71-72. For an illustration of how Yusuf Idris, whose language attitudes regarding the use of the colloquial were quite different from those of Mahfouz, skilfully played around with the H-L divide, see Holes 2004: 375-378.

possible linguistic future for the Arab world from that endorsed by Mitchell,⁶³ Kaye also sought to identify a single explanatory tool for understanding stylistic variation in Arabic.

Here I review only Kaye 1970, almost identical Kaye 1972, and Kaye 1994 since these are the works where the author's attitudes about diglossia, diglossic continuum and variation are most clearly articulated.⁶⁴ Also, Kaye 1970 and 1972 have been very influential as reference points in works on diglossia in Arabic.⁶⁵ Kaye's critique was directed towards what he perceived to be "impressionistic" in Ferguson's definition of diglossia (Kaye 1970: 390-391, Kaye 1972: 47-48). His examples and observations are instructive inasmuch as they emphasise the complicatedness of individual variation in educated Arab speech (1994: 60). For Kaye, "[t]he sociolinguistics of Arabic stylistic variation in terms of the continuum is still largely *terra incognita*." (1994: 62). What stigmatisation was for Mitchell, a starting point for understanding variation, for Kaye is "formal vs. informal in Arabic." Even though he did not try to introduce his own division of what he labels "multiglossia," his comment that "the hierarchies of formality and/or semiformality [...] have not [...] been properly and thoroughly investigated for any Arabic speech community" (1994: 57), suggests that he might have hoped that a better classification was yet to be proposed:

63 Whereas Mitchell promoted the idea of ESA (based on the speech habits of educated speakers in Egypt and the Levant) becoming a prescribed standard that would replace MSA, Kaye advocated "a universalization of only one of the major dialects," Damascene, "to remedy the situation.". He was also "in favor of doing away with Arabic script and substituting in its place a Latin-type orthography." (Kaye 1970: 390, 1972: 47) Both Mitchell and Kaye seem to have been oblivious to the fact that what is usually labelled "the Arab world" stretches far beyond Syro-Egyptian area, both eastwards and westwards.

64 Kaye 2001, for example, is a review article of some important works on diglossia, hence the author's own position is moderate and less prominent.

65 Kaye is one of the scholars whom El-Hassan criticises in his programmatic article from 1977.

Further research in the Arabic language continuum and the notion of multiglossia will enable us to discover the sociolinguistically relevant theoretical details of vocabulary and phonological-grammatical variation, not to mention the largely unexplored realms involving semantic, pragmatic, and nonverbal considerations. All of the aforementioned factors are intricately, yet I believe systematically, interwoven with the idea of formal vs. informal style and/or register. Obviously I believe it can be done.

(Kaye 1994: 60-61)

Kaye himself did not do it. What is more important, his focus on in/formality as the key to interpreting Arabic “multiglossia” is as reductionist as Mitchell's focus on stigmatisation. It also brings him much closer to Ferguson's model of diglossic distribution of form and function than he probably ever wanted to be. It practically objectifies “formality” of a situation – as if it were a predefined category, something that pre-dates and determines the act of communication, something to which the speakers are ushered and to which they have to conform. In my opinion, while being *among* the important factors that influence stylistic choices made by educated speakers, formality in itself is something that is established, maintained, recreated or deliberately challenged by speakers through the very act of communication.

What is crucial for Kaye's stance regarding “Arabic multiglossia viewed as continuum” is that, according to him, MSA is “an artificial, superposed language, changed little from the 7th century, A.D., *which has no native speakers*. This is precisely why MSA

(or any dead language, for that matter, too) is ill-defined⁶⁶ (Kaye 1994: 59 – emphasis in the original).

Whether or not MSA is a dead language is a matter of serious dispute among the scholars. I do not fully agree with Eisele that the problem with Kaye's "characterizations" is that they "are exaggerated and rhetorically very negative toward Arabic" (Eisele 2002: 17) – this kind of description is almost as "ill-defined" as Kaye's equating of MSA with Latin or Ancient Greek. That MSA has no native speakers, in terms of speakers who acquire this variety as their mother tongue and use it as their first language since the early childhood, could hardly be disputed, but to find it "dead" for that reason is to overlook the important role this variety has played for centuries and continues to do so in the lives of many Arabs across the world.

In truth, the vitality of MSA is much more observable in its written form than in "spoken Fuṣḥa," whose contexts (and "purity") of use tend to be rather limited. Yet, as Parkinson aptly demonstrated in his work, MSA *is* indeed alive and lively even though its lifestyles hardly ever fully conform to the prescribed requirements set out in the authoritative grammar books and treatises (1991, 1993, 1996, 2003). Even if it does not have its "native speakers" in its literal sense, MSA may as well have its "native users" – a turn introduced by Parkinson which allows him to speak of communicative continuum of which MSA (accepted by the users in a variety of outputs, not just the prescribed ones) is an important section.⁶⁷ I agree with Parkinson's observation that

66 "Basically, 'ill-defined' means that there are too many linguistic and non-linguistic variables to capture to try to describe human behavior in a rigorous, scientific fashion." (Kaye 1994: 59)

67 Native users of Modern Standard Arabic (modern Fuṣḥā) are practically native speakers of a given Arabic colloquial (in Parkinson's case, Egyptian colloquial) whose linguistic intuition regarding the perception and

[i]t probably would not be appropriate to multiply descriptions of separate levels (an informal MSA, a slightly formal MSA, a quite formal MSA, a very formal MSA), since that would both miss the relationship of all these levels to each other, and imply that these levels are experienced as separate entities, rather than as a continuous whole. (1993: 72-73)

Fortunately, the days of levels and labels seem to be gone.⁶⁸ While recognising the importance of the concept of variation within/along the “continuum”, the sociolinguists have ceased to put efforts into identifying (=constructing!) discrete intermediate forms/varieties. Motivation, context, identity, gender, individual verbal strategies have all come to occupy a prominent place as interpretative frames in the work of scholars who, rather than classifying the intermediate forms and mixtures according to where exactly they might fall on the H-L continuum in relation to predefined sociolinguistic or stylistic categories and/or levels, now seek to describe those forms in terms of which ones are possible and acceptable, as well as in terms of what it is that speakers achieve by employing them (Bassiouney 2006, Eid 1998, Haeri 1996a, Holes 1993, Mazraani 1997, Mejdell 1996, 2002, 2003; Parkinson 1991, 1993, 1996, 2003). It is the trend which Parkinson describes as the “codeswitching trend/approach”, and which I understand to be

usage of MSA evolves according to their education, exposure to MSA and situations in which they have to use it and produce it. Therefore, they might be more or less competent in it in terms of prescriptive grammar skills, but their overt or covert knowledge and implementation of the strict grammatical rules should never be equated with their functional competency in what Parkinson calls “real-life formal Arabic” – a form that might “deviate” from what “pure” Arabic is envisioned to be, but is nevertheless psycholinguistically much more alive in the lives of its users than either “pure Fuṣḥā” or “pure colloquial”, both being just theoretical poles of the continuum.

68 Parkinson calls this “the mutiplicative trend – to deal with the multitude of styles and forms that present themselves in the data, this trend doubles, triples, and quadruples diglossia, so that we get triglossia, quadriglossia, and finally multiglossia, with attempts made to specify the linguistic correlates of three, four, five, or more levels.” (2003: 28)

speaker-oriented much more than it was the work conducted in the 70's and 80's, which, in turn, I see as being more variety-oriented.⁶⁹ Just like in the case of other studies on code-switching that were conducted in non-Arabic settings, “two major perspectives or approaches [...] may be distinguished (although in most studies they are combined to some extent: 1. the discourse/pragmatic perspectives [and] 2. grammatical/syntactic perspectives.” (Mejdell 2006b: 414-416) These recent works have also created a context in which the concept of diglossia could be re-evaluated without being completely rejected. H and L varieties should be understood as idealised theoretical poles of a continuum across which one can observe a high degree of very fluid and fluctuating register variation without necessarily having to cut that continuum into separate chunks.⁷⁰

Even this relatively short literature review⁷¹ demonstrates that attempts to give convincing, methodologically sound and interpretatively satisfying descriptions of sociolinguistic realities across the Arab world have been numerous, yet every now and

69 Here I particularly refer to the Leeds Project in which the emphasis was on what was perceived to be a linguistic variety, ECA, with rules and grammar of its own. Badawi's work, on the other hand, is also speaker-oriented inasmuch as it seeks to classify speakers according to their linguistic competencies in levels of ʿAmmiyya and Fuṣḥa, and then to demarcate the levels, i.e. varieties. However, what I here label “speaker-oriented approach” refers to the works that mostly look at concrete linguistic outputs of educated speakers as being the outcomes of their stylistic choices and strategies.

70 Some thirty years after the publication of “Diglossia”, Ferguson (1996/1991) himself admitted the initial weakness of the strict and static dichotomy implied in his initial conceptual proposal, and called for more descriptions of register variation which would account for its dynamics. According to Mejdell, “[t]he term diglossic, when preserved in its early, narrow fergusonian sense, works beautifully to designate a specific kind of linguistic continuum, between the local vernacular at the one pole and at the other a high standard norm not used by anyone as mother tongue.” (2002: 317, n.1) Also, “[...] a diglossic view of the situation is still helpful, despite the messiness of the middle, precisely because (as today's data seem clearly to indicate) speakers are hyper-aware of the separate meanings of the multitude of features from both ends that they utilize to make up their performance. In fact, in my opinion, the concept of diglossia has just about as much power and simplicity today, after all these data, as it ever had.” (Parkinson 2003: 40-41)

71 For a more comprehensive treatment, relevant to her detailed analysis of spoken data, see Mejdell (2006a: 1-67)

then a researcher's incessant curiosity, triggered anew through all too many encounters with multifaceted linguistic practices in that world – especially within the context of rapidly changing conditions of contemporary social life – results in a desire to offer yet another layer to our understanding of the complexity of the problem. This is exactly where I stand regarding my interest in writing practices in Egypt.

1.3. Variation and writing, variation in writing

Whether they focus on linguistic features and principles of code-switching and code-mixing (Eid 1998, Mejdell 1996, 2002, 2006), their sociolinguistic functions (Bassiouney 2006, Holes 1993, Mazraani 1997), language attitudes and perceptions (Parkinson 1991), or the overall societal and cultural implications of diglossia (Haeri 1996b, 1997, 2003), most of the works on Arabic in Egypt have dealt with *spoken language*. In his review article, Owens indicates that there has not been enough research on variation in *modern* written Arabic that would allow us to draw any firm conclusions about how this variation manifests itself in relation to the standard-colloquial continuum, and speculates that “the tension between a non-standardized and non-taught native variety and an official standard language learned in schools *will be reflected in similar structural continua such as are found in the spoken language*” (2001: 446 – emphasis mine). Further research is needed to validate or repudiate this speculation.

The basic premise of Owens' suggestion, however, is problematic, because it unquestionably assumes that approaches to spoken data, can and should be simply transferred to the analysis of written texts. Starting from the fact that mixed written discourse has in general been under-researched, Mark Sebba (forthcoming, in press)

convincingly demonstrates that even those scholars who did study mixing in writing, did it mostly by applying theoretical frameworks developed for spoken code-switching research. While this may be useful in dealing with texts that resemble conversation (e.g. Internet forums,⁷² chatting, or, in my data, *some tweets*), it undoubtedly leaves a large territory unexplored. Or, in other words, it does not necessarily equip the researcher with what he or she might need when venturing into this yet-to-be-explored territory. I do not wish to argue *against* such approaches. They do offer interesting insights even when applied to more conventional types of texts, such as literary or journalistic prose. But any piece of language data, whether spoken or written, can potentially inspire a range of questions other than those that most research on code-switching has been concerned with (constrains on switching being just an example). I admit that I had initially envisioned my research with a completely different set of questions. I wanted to study blogging. The idea was to collect samples of texts, spend time in Egypt to study Egyptian Arabic and interview several bloggers, and then sit down and analyse the texts in the way some of the Arabists to whose work I referred to above had studied their spoken data. When I found myself in Cairo, I was amazed. First and foremost by the number of books that are being published in ʿAmmiyya or in which ʿAmmiyya is mixed with Fuṣḥa in novel and unusual ways. Nevertheless, I kept my focus on the Internet, because this is where the majority of those who engage in various writing practices, write the most. Had I shifted my focus to books, which is beyond any doubt a fascinating topic, I'm afraid I would have easily confused *literary writing* and *primarily literary writing in ʿAmmiyya* (which, as the following paragraphs will show, has received some attention, more in terms of reviews

72 See, for example, Androutsopoulos 2007. Androutsopoulos (2006) offers a state-of-the-art article on sociolinguistic studies of computer-mediated-discourses, as well as a very rich bibliography on the subject. See also Georgakopoulou (2006).

and histories than in terms of linguistic analysis) with *writing* as a motivated practice of using written language without necessarily having any artistic goals in mind.

Writing in colloquial is not a new phenomenon. Its use in poetry in particular, traces its origins back to medieval Andalusia (Booth 1992: 421), and it has been a vital component of popular culture and folkloric literature ever since, but its place and scope in prose have mostly been kept under control and limited to a rather narrow sphere of illustration and invocation of a particular flavour, a colloquial sound of naturalness, spontaneity and everyday life:

The use of this variety in literary works was mainly restricted to political poetry and drama, as well as dialogue in fictional prose, in order to promote realism of portrayal.

(Mejdell 2008a: 109)

In Arabic-speaking societies, using *ʿāmmiyya* in official types of literature has traditionally been considered taboo. It is only in the last few decades, and mostly in Egypt, that *ʿāmmiyya* has penetrated into various types of literary texts still with restrictive rules. According to the new literary conventions, the use of *ʿāmmiyya* in dialogues has become a norm, whereas in narrative texts its use is more limited and still not very favored.

(Rosenbaum 2000: 82)⁷³

73 For studies on the use of colloquial in short stories and novels (in dialogues much more than in narratives), and – first and foremost – in drama, see, for example, Cachia 1967, Eid 2002, Holes 2004 (373-389) and Somekh 1979 & 1991. For more on cultural tension *vis-à-vis* publishing in *ʿāmmiyya* at the time of her fieldwork in the 1990s, see Haeri 2003 (113-141).

Going back again to Ferguson's definition of *diglossia*,⁷⁴ we find in it that writing is postulated as the stronghold of Fuṣḥa and first and foremost guarantor of a "relative stability" of this sociolinguistic situation. As discussed in the previous section, aiming to correct Ferguson's functional distribution of domains of use of the two varieties, Arabists working in the variationist paradigm have mostly focused their attention on speech.⁷⁵ Apart from the fact that, in the case of educated speakers at least, variation is nearly ubiquitous in more formal situations, this strong interest in speaking could also be partly attributed to a relative paucity, or at best, restrictedness of modern literary and non-literary texts published for mass consumption in ʿAmmiyya or in some form of mixed Arabic.

As far as non-literary writing not intended for public dissemination is concerned, notable exceptions are Belnap & Bishop (2003), a study of mixing between Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya in modern informal personal correspondence,⁷⁶ Holes (2009), a linguistic analysis of mixed forms of Arabic found in a collection of letters written by Gulf rulers in the 19th and early 20th centuries,⁷⁷ and Meiseles (1979), a comprehensive description of what the author labels "Informal Written Arabic," based on "personal letters, personal

74 Footnote 52.

75 An award-winning and translated literary author as well though she is, Reem Bassiouney, in her recent overview of the field of Arabic sociolinguistics (2009), remains virtually silent about the issues of writing in Arabic throughout the entire book. As if sociolinguistics is (and perhaps should be) concerned only with speech.

76 More precisely, the study deals mostly with the attitudes about this type of mixing, and is primarily based on self-reports on practices and preferences in writing personal letters, elicited through interviews with a group of young (student-age) Arabs, twenty interviewed in America and eighteen in Egypt. In addition, a female interviewee gave seven of her letters to the researchers which enabled them to gain some access to actual data. Aware of the methodological limitations of their research regarding self-reporting and the very limited set of actual linguistic material at hand, the authors call for additional research: "Ideally, one would study both the production and the language attitudes of a representative sample of Arabs, whether in a variationist vein or as an ethnography of writing." (Belnap & Bishop 2003: 18)

77 Although it does not deal with the Egyptian case, the study is relevant since mixing is a phenomenon that has existed throughout the Arabic-speaking world.

records and drafts, Syrian and Egyptian (handwritten) military documents, and, occasionally, some typescripts or varia” (276).⁷⁸ In addition to that, important historical-linguistic work has been done on so-called Middle Arabic,

historical intermediate varieties of written Arabic [...] found in a host of documents, some dating back over a thousand years to the early Islamic centuries. These documents consist of personal letters, notes, Bible translations, commentaries, etc. They demonstrate that diglossia and mixing have a long history. It is generally believed that the authors of these materials had a limited command of classical Arabic (many were Christians or Jews), or that these documents were hastily composed, being typically of a more temporary nature.

(Belnap & Bishop 2003: 10)⁷⁹

In Egypt, there is now a growing number of widely circulated texts that belong to the category of “mixed Arabic,” but are neither “temporary,” nor “hastily composed.” Also, a future historian of Arabic would be wrong in the assumption that the majority of the authors of these texts had a limited command of Fuṣṣḥa.⁸⁰ More often than not, the use of ʿAmmiyya is a choice. Therefore, it should be understood as indexical of a historically

78 In footnote 18 on the same page (276) Meiseles gives the following explanation: “A complete description of the corpus would be beyond the proportion of this article. I hope to publish it with a comprehensive description of SsA [Sub-standard Arabic], which I am preparing.” To the best of my knowledge, this announced comprehensive description has never been published, and Meiseles 1979 remains the most comprehensive description of IWA/SsA so far. It should be noted that, when describing his corpus of IWA texts, Meiseles mentions their Egyptian and East-Mediterranean origin, yet he tells us nothing about their date of production (1979: 276-277). However, given the content of some of his examples and his meticulous comparisons with the features of (presumably much older) Middle Arabic texts, I see reasons to assume they were relatively contemporary to the time in which they were analysed.

79 For more on Middle Arabic in general, see, first and foremost, Lentin 2006, but also Holes 2004 (36-41), Versteegh 1997 (114-129).

80 This is also Lentin's argument (2006) whose definition of Middle Arabic is far more nuanced than the one given by Belnap & Bishop.

conditioned cultural change rather than as L1 interference, an outcome of colloquial transfer into attempts at writing in Fuṣḥa. This is not to say that everybody has the perfect mastery of the literary, standard language and that there are no instances of linguistic transfer from natively acquired ʿAmmiyya into learned Fuṣḥa. In fact, what might happen sometimes is that, even when the exclusive use of ʿAmmiyya is an ideologically reinforced decision, it is Fuṣḥa that gets transferred,⁸¹ most probably due to its long-lasting dominance in writing and influences it exerts on writers through their reading experiences.⁸² But as far as textual production intended for public dissemination and consumption in contemporary Egypt is concerned, the situation has been changing in that ʿAmmiyya is increasingly being employed – voluntarily and mostly by younger writers – as a vehicle for written expression:

Arabic has always been characterized by the presence of two parallel idioms – the classical, which dominates writing, and the colloquial, which is the Arabic speaker's mother tongue and the language of everyday intercourse. Over the past half-century, this strict division of function has, it is true, relaxed somewhat in Egypt. Thus for some time now it has been commonplace to find the dialogue in novels written in colloquial, and there is even a small but growing number of literary works written entirely in colloquial. In more real-world contexts, new technology and new market forces are also expanding the realm of colloquial, with SMS messaging, internet chat, and advertising slogans all happening

81 See the discussion on Wikipedia Masry in Chapter 3.

82 Hamdy el-Gazzar, Egyptian writer whose first novel “Black Magic” (*siḥr aswad*, Dar Merit, 2005; English translation by Humphrey Davies published by AUC Press in 2007) was awarded Sawiris Foundation Prize in Egyptian Literature in 2006, in our conversation in January 2009, said: “I can easily write my dialogues in ʿAmmiyya because that is how we speak, but I would never be able to write my narrative (*sard*), my description (*waṣf*) in ʿAmmiyya. I have been reading Fuṣḥa all my life. I have been educating myself as a writer by reading Fuṣḥa.”

increasingly in that idiom. Indeed, some speak of a 'culture of the colloquial,' identified, needless to say, with the young.

(Humphrey Davies, *Translator's Note* in Alaidy (2009: 128

In his pioneering study, Gabriel Rosenbaum (2000) discusses an emerging alternating style in Egyptian prose that seems to be breaking the hitherto acceptable literary norm of employing ^ʿAmmiyya in writing the dialogue, in that ^ʿAmmiyya is now increasingly encountered in the narrative as well. He calls this mixed form of written Arabic “*fuṣḥāmmiyya*,” a label that could be applied to the excerpt from El Esseily's book quoted above. In a more recent study, the same author goes on to examine the stylistic device of alternating focalisation, i.e. changing the point(s) of view in the narration in the work of several modern Egyptian writers:

In many cases this change is brought about through free indirect style and interior monologue, which are often written in either overt or disguised ^ʿ*āmmiyya*. This use of ^ʿ*āmmiyya* helps in changing the point of view, and is done not only by writers who are in favour of using the colloquial in literary texts, like Yūsuf Idrīs, but also by writers who believe that literature should be written in *fuṣḥā* only, like Nagīb Maḥfūz. Both types of writers contribute to the spread of mixed style and the use of ^ʿ*āmmiyya* inside narration written in *fuṣḥā*.

(Rosenbaum 2008: 403)

I agree with Rosenbaum in his understanding of this creative mixing as a deliberate, stylistic choice rather than some identifiable, and grammatically describable, intermediate “level/s” between the two diglossic poles. It must be kept in mind though, that just as not every instance of changing the point of view in narration in a literary text will be

realised by resorting to ʿAmmiyya, not every instance of mixing between Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya in contemporary Egyptian prose is related to this stylistic device.

Through a careful reading of the novel *Love in Exile* (الحب في المنفى) by the acclaimed Egyptian novelist Bahaa Taher (بهاء طاهر), Reem Bassiouney (2010) gives an interesting analysis of code choice as a stylistic device through which the author constructs different identity positions of his characters.

In her cultural diagnosis of a change in progress and new trends in linguistic practices in contemporary Egypt, Madiha Doss identified a significant increase in the use of ʿAmmiyya, either exclusively or in the form of aforementioned mixed style, in three major spheres – literary writing, non-literary writing and “cyberspeech” (2006: 54). Humphrey Davies (2006) gives an informative overview of the growth of the “dialect literature.” Following in his footsteps, but with a much broader and detailed scope, Manfred Woidich (2010) provided by far the most exhaustive treatment of the subject. Tracing the emancipation of ʿAmmiyya over the last century and a half, Woidich demonstrates how from its earlier locatedness and function within the text to represent the spoken word (dialogue, or a first-person narrative), ʿAmmiyya has gone through a stage when a number of authors started employing it for the third-person narration, and finally reached a stage in which it is used for expository writing as well. El Esseily's first book is one of the few to which Woidich refers in order to support this claim. He concludes that, given the variety of genre and number of works, ʿAmmiyya has become an “Ausbaudialekt.” Woidich should be credited for documenting this important development and its relatively steady continuity.

Having analysed a large corpus of texts (mostly texts of drama), Gabriel Rosenbaum (2004) provided an informative overview of a fluid state of the orthography of ʿAmmiyya. While spelling inconsistencies are a common feature of the texts he analysed (to the point that variant spelling of the same form/feature could be found in a single text, sometimes even in two consecutive lines), the author concludes that certain “conventions for ʿ*ammiyya* orthography are now beginning to crystallize” (320). While it is hard to expect that the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo will endorse and undertake the project of “standardisation” of ʿAmmiyya any time soon,⁸³ it is nevertheless possible to describe the ongoing process as a (spontaneous, or organic) *conventionalisation* of ʿAmmiyya.⁸⁴

I also refer here to Ziad Fahmy (2007) who gives an excellent historical account of the construction, negotiation and spread of collective Egyptian identity and dissemination of Egyptian nationalism among (less educated or uneducated) “ordinary” Egyptians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His work is based on colloquial Egyptian sources, including many textual ones, which were mostly neglected in previously written historiographies that tended to focus on the “intellectual origins” of Egyptian nationalism.

In their respective discussions of the growth and development of the Egyptian “dialect literature,” both Davies (2006) and Woidich (2010) also identify the late nineteenth century (around 1870) as the period when prose writing in the colloquial becomes a

83 Over the course of my fieldwork I had raised this issue and discussed such prospects with several Egyptian and other Arab Arabists. Most of them reacted negatively, sometimes even dismissively to the very idea that ʿAmmiyya could/should be codified and standardised. The usual explanation was that such a project would directly undermine the status and importance of Fuṣṣḥa.

84 I thank Gunvor Mejdell for suggesting the term “conventionalisation” as more flexible and more adequate than “standardisation.”

societally visible, even if marginal, cultural practice “through the conduit of the magazine and newspaper, new vehicles for colloquial literature that were to play an essential role in its development through the first decades of the following century” (Davies 2006: 598).⁸⁵ Inevitably marginalised and traditionally denounced as “vulgar” by the elite, writing in the colloquial, already tamed in the 1930s and 1940s, became virtually extinct by the beginning of the second half of the 20th century (Fahmy 2007). It was the Nasserist ideology of pan-Arabism and strong faith in the power of education which was seen as capable of bridging the gap between the two varieties and would sometimes go as far as to imagine that Fuṣḥa could somehow become the spoken language, that gave the final blow to the production and dissemination of colloquial texts. From the 1990s onwards, however, there has been a rising and, in the history of social and cultural experience of *diglossia* unparalleled spread of ʿAmmiyya in publicly disseminated and consumed writing.⁸⁶

The main contributing factors, as identified by Doss and with which I fully agree, are “decentralization of printing and a more inclusive cultural and social position which entails a change of attitude towards the different language registers” (Doss 2006: 67). Therefore, sociolinguists, dialectologists and anthropologists will be having more and more *texts* to work on. Some of these texts are very popular and widely circulated, so their possible effects on writing and reading practices should not be underestimated.

85 The most prominent magazines to feature texts in ʿammiyya were Yaʿqūb Ṣannūʿs *Abū naẓẓāra zarqāʾ* (“The Man with the Blue Glasses”) and ʿAbdallāh al-Nadīm’s *al-ʿUstāz* (“The Professor”). See particularly Fahmy 2006 (79-185).

86 “The richest and most sustained phase of prose writing in Egyptian colloquial started in the 1990s and continues until the present.” (Davies 2006: 599)

Ghada Abdel Aal's *I Want to Get Married* (عايزة أتجوز) is but one example among many. It is a very popular book written almost entirely in ʿAmmiyya. It is actually a selection of the author's posts (witty and satirical, apparently personal, anecdotes and reflections on the topic of marriage) taken from her blog⁸⁷ and published by Dar El Shorouk in 2008. In 2010, El Shorouk Group engaged in a TV production project whereby the book was turned into a multi-episode TV comedy with the famous film star Hend Sabry (هند صبري) in the leading role. Aired during the holy Islamic month of Ramadan, which has long become the peak-season for soap operas, sitcoms, dramas and films, the show has gained remarkable popularity. Hanan Kholoussy (2010) reads Abdel Aal's book against the background of her own academic expertise, "marriage crisis in Egypt," and provides interesting insights about transformations the book and the author had gone through in the processes of "translation" – on one level, for the Western readership when the book was translated into English, and on the other, for Egyptian TV audiences, when the book was turned into a sitcom.

Abdel Aal's book was one of the three with which Dar El Shorouk inaugurated its series مدون@الشروق (Blog@Shorouk).⁸⁸ The other two were the books by Rehab Bassam (2008) and Ghada Mohamed Mahmoud (2008). Hoda Elsadda (2010) analyses this remarkable event – a leading, canon-setting publisher decides to release three books based on blog-posts, all three by three young women. Elsadda offers a thought-provoking reading of the circumstances surrounding the publication of these books, arguing convincingly that with the formation of "literary counterpublics" that is currently under way,

87 <http://www.wanna-b-a-bride.blogspot.com/>

88 Or, rather ShoroukBlog, but in any case, the creative use of Arabic script and the substitution of *tā'* *marbūta* with @-sign is untranslatable.

we are witnessing significant changes in how one becomes a writer nowadays. New cultural trajectories are becoming available to the young aspiring authors to gain readership and popularity online and circumvent much of the practices that had been firmly in place for those just a generation or two ago.

In short, the growth of *written* *ʿAmmiyya* is remarkable and irreversible,⁸⁹ but what is important to keep in mind is that – as far as its actual language output is concerned – the contemporary textual production in Egypt could and should not be understood in “either or” terms despite the polarising, binary discursive tropes that permeate a lot of the Fuṣḥa-ʿAmmiyya debate and shape the arguments of many of those who, like Galal Amin quoted at the beginning of this chapter, oppose the use of the colloquial in writing. While there is by now not only a large number, but also a variety of texts to support Woidich's argument, many of these new texts, including some to which Woidich refers, contain and combine elements from both varieties: Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya.

1.4. The third player in the field

This rough sketch of the Egyptian sociolinguistic setting would be left unfinished if it did not take into account the third player in the field – English.⁹⁰

From slang to scientific discourse, leaving the religious one virtually intact, English is variously, yet increasingly present and influential in contemporary Egyptian society. It is,

89 The CASA programme (Centre for Arabic Studies Abroad, based at the American University in Cairo), under the former executive director Nevenka Korica, has already reacted to this growing spread of ʿAmmiyya in writing by offering their students an elective course on “Written ʿAmmiyya” (العامية المكتوبة) in the spring semester of 2010.

90 For an earlier discussion see, for example, Haeri 1997.

I argue, the primary vehicle of social stratification in the country since it is the carrier of the most prestigious kind of education, the one that caters to demands of Egypt's post-*Infitah* liberal market economy and prepares the students for more lucrative jobs. Such education is provided by the American University in Cairo (AUC) and its ever so numerous English-language competitors,⁹¹ but by the time of entering this university system, the great majority of students will have already been educated in private, foreign language schools in which Arabic is but a school subject, not the medium of instruction and learning. This privilege is available only to those coming from more affluent families. The overwhelming majority has to depend on scholarships.⁹² Otherwise, they will be left behind in the Egyptian market-educational race. Thus, finding graduates from Egyptian public universities who struggle to make their ends meet while working as taxi drivers, security officers, or shop assistants is a common feature of contemporary Egyptian society. In an era of commodification of knowledge and new global economic practice of “out-sourcing,”

91 Even the German University in Cairo, founded in 2002, uses English as the primary vehicle of instruction. And so do other private universities, such as British University in Egypt, Canadian International College, Future University in Egypt and many others.

92 For example, AUC offers twenty annual full-tuition scholarships to Egyptian students coming from public educational system. Larger is the Leadership for Education and Development Program (LEAD), jointly sponsored by the US Agency for International Development, the Egyptian Ministry for International Cooperation and AUC, which offers full tuition scholarships to 58 students annually – one male and one female – coming from each of Egypt's governorates [http://www.aucegypt.edu/students/finaff/scholarships/Pages/default.aspx - accessed on 10 November 2010]. While working for two academic years (2008-2011) as an adjunct instructor at the AUC's Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology and Egyptology (SAPE) I have learned that these students are given special preparatory and orientation sessions upon their admission. AUC “dresses them up” and “teaches them manners” so that they could more easily “blend in” with their rich peers. Sadly enough, despite these efforts, many of these students on scholarships report that they are being avoided and excluded by most of their well-to-do schoolmates. They remain a sort of the “untouchables” and mostly mingle with each other. A kind of juxtaposition and confrontation of identities (poor, traditional and Egyptian vs. rich, modern and westernised) that emerges in such a context in which the rich, modern urbanite has to “*kaḏwil*” (Eg. *slang* to “dress casually”) the poor, mostly perceived as “backward” *ibn al-balad*, was elaborated in the 1998 Egyptian comedy *ṣiṭḏi fil-gamʿa il-amrikiyya* (“An Upper Egyptian at the American University”). (See also Mehrez 2009: 96-97)

those who have managed to learn some English are happy when they find a job at a call-centre.

The overall decline of the public educational sector on the one hand, and on the other the *sine qua non* status of the private one in the reproduction of the Egyptian socio-economic elites, are seen as the major reasons for the declining competencies in Fuṣḥa among the Egyptian youth (Mejdell 2008a: 113-115). In her discussion of “education and the stranded Egyptian elite,” Samia Mehrez (2009: 91-106) concludes that “Egyptian students who have opted for the international curricula [...] all speak the vernacular, but for all intents and purposes [...] represent an illiterate elite where Arabic language and culture are concerned” (105).

And not only that. Many of those upper- and high-class Egyptians who speak ʿAmmiyya but do not read and/or write Fuṣḥa, often see the English language as their “property” which is defining and constitutive of their identities and social positions – the property which should not be trespassed on. So, for example, a future textbook or a phrasebook of Egyptian Arabic could provide both lexical and cultural information if answering the question: “How to say 'shoes' in Egyptian?” – Of course, *gazma*, the answer would go, but one could also say *šūz* and be easily understood. The point, however, is that this particular word – *šūz* – is a shibboleth, and higher up the social ladder one's interlocutor is, or, sometimes, aspires to be, higher is the likelihood that they would react to it by saying something like: “But that is so low-class!” An interesting question to investigate, then, is how this borrowing came to be incorporated into the basic lexical stock of Egyptian Arabic as synonymous with the long-present Arabic equivalent

(*gazma*), which, it has to be noted and perhaps partially accounted for, has particular negative connotations that are avoided once the English loanword is used. However, the cultural biography of this word, appropriated and nowadays more readily used mostly by socio-economically less privileged speakers with limited or no command of English, and the resentment with which its use is met by those for whom Arabic-English code-switching and code-mixing are otherwise likely to constitute a major feature of the everyday life, are indexical of the social importance of the English language and the agency it bestows upon its speakers in the processes of perpetuation, reinforcement and deepening of the economic, as well as cultural (and even ideological) divide between the haves and have-nots in today's Egypt. It is no wonder, therefore, that English – written down in original or transcribed in Arabic script – has also found its way into some of the new, “mixed” texts that are dealt with in this thesis.

1.5. Franco

Since this thesis is about writing and primarily about Arabic, a note should be given on how Arabic is written.⁹³ Alongside with predominantly used Arabic script, there has been – “over the past fifteen years or so”⁹⁴ – a parallel system of writing, i.e. transcribing Arabic by using the Latin alphabet, usually with the addition of certain numbers and symbols (such as the apostrophe) to mark Arabic sounds/letters for which there are no counterparts or close equivalents in the Latin alphabet. Variouslly termed (both by researchers and common users) as “Arabizi”, “Arabish”, “Francoarab”, “Latinised Arabic”,

93 In this section I draw on my personal observations during my fieldwork in Cairo (2008-2010), and the work of Aboeizz (2009), Palfreyman & al Khalil (2003), and Yaghan (2008).

94 According to Aboeizz (2009:3), although it is difficult to establish exactly how long this system has been in use.

or “Romanised Arabic” (Aboelezz 2009:2),⁹⁵ the system has evolved organically as Arabic speakers' spontaneous response to the growth and spread of the new information technologies, particularly the Internet and mobile telephony, at the time when there was none or very little technological (software) support for non-Latin-based scripts. Unlike the highly elaborated transliteration systems (such as IJMES or ZDMG) used by the Arabists to capture as precisely as possible the actual pronunciation (and, when necessary, other phonotactic features) of Arabic, this system tends to be rather simplified, liberal and it exhibits a high degree of regional variation. So, while it is common in the Gulf to mark the emphatics by using the numbers (that could be preceded or followed by the apostrophe) – 9, '9, 6, and '6, for writing ص (*ṣād*), ض (*ḍad*), ط (*ṭā'*) and ظ (*ẓā'*) respectively (Palfreyman & al Khalil 2003),⁹⁶ it is a common Egyptian practice not to mark the emphasis and use the same letters as the ones used for these sounds' non-emphatic counterparts (s, d, t, z). Not only is a high degree of variation observable across various regions/dialects, but is also present in every speech community of different Arabic dialects. So, for example, while 2, 3 and 7 have become conventional signs for writing ء (*hamza*), ع (*ʿayn*) and ح (*ḥā'*) respectively, ways of writing خ (*xā'*) and غ (*ḡayn*) are in free variation in Egypt – 5, 7', and *kh* for خ, and 3', 5', and *gh* for غ. Palfreyman and al Khalil (2003) provide the interpretation for the introduction of the numeral 5 (in Arabic *xamsa*) to stand for the letter that stands for the first sound of the corresponding Arabic word. In the case of 2, 3 and 7, it is the visual similarity to the Arabic letters (but in the mirror) that lead to a rather quick spread and appropriation of these solutions. These three numbers came in handy since Latin script and various transcriptions which have been everywhere around Egyptians for a long time,

95 Following Aboelezz (2009), I adopt the term “Latinised Arabic” and use it in alternation with the locally meaningful and among many young Egyptians popular term – Franco.

96 Sometimes capitals are used – S, D, T, Z.

did not really capture any of these three sounds. Consider, for example, the name of the street – “Talaat Harb” (as it is usually written), and its Arabic pronunciation as *ṭalaʿat ḥarb*; two sounds are lost since they are equated with the vowel /a/ in the case of /ʿ/, and with /h/ in the case of /ḥ/. To the ears of the colonisers, /h/ and /ḥ/ could have been very similar, or different, but for some reason unimportant, but for an Egyptian these are two different phonemes. On the other hand, the digraphs *kh* and *gh*, had been fairly established transcriptions for /x/ and /ğ/ respectively and could have easily been transferred to Franco. This, I believe, is the reason why 5 still does not enjoy big popularity among those who use Franco. As for ġ /ğ/, the preference for *gh* is clear since no monographic solution has appeared yet to be even competitive.⁹⁷

In Egypt at least, gemination is hardly ever marked, and the same holds true for the lengthening of the vowels. At times, even the short vowels are not written (in which case usually the long ones are) reflecting the user's application of the Arabic orthographic conventions.

Latinised Arabic is used first and foremost for writing the colloquial. It has been widely accepted by the youth. At the same time, it is often attacked by the critics and adversaries of any kind of written colloquial and/or “corruptions” imposed on Arabic by *luġat al-šabāb* (Mejdell 2008a: 115-116). Despite the fact that there is now abundant software support for using Arabic script in computer-mediated communication and SMS,

97 I did attest very marginal use of 4 for ġ in some forums and Facebook groups. The logic behind it, at least the way I see it, is fascinating, but it has not spread among young Egyptians. Many are surprised when I present them with something like “min 4er”. So, how did 4 come to stand for ġ? I propose that the answer should be looked for in the sequence of letters in the Arabic alphabet. ġ comes after ġ - if ġ is 3, then ġ is the next one – 4!

Latinised Arabic has not lost its appeal.⁹⁸ In fact, it has become somewhat of an unofficial transcription system that could often be found alongside Arabic script, primarily on music CD covers and film posters (Yaghan 2008: 46). Due to a certain expressive potential its proponents feel it possesses, it is sometimes – and usually through script-shifting with Arabic script – employed even in new literary writing. As such, it has become yet another factor in the current reconfiguration and redefinition of the meaning of *modern written Arabic*. The reader will encounter most examples of it in the fourth chapter. Franco, in all its richness, diversity and variant yet meaningful manifestations, is a vivid illustration of how people can communicate with each other in writing without highly regulated *standardisation and codification*.

1.6. Glimpses into a changing linguascape

As already mentioned, the rise of Latinised Arabic has been closely connected to the development and spread of the Internet, which, in its various manifestations (websites, discussion forums, chat-rooms, social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, blogs, wikis, etc.) has emerged as a new and dynamic site of virtually unrestricted sociolinguistic freedom in the Arab world. In 2003, Belnap and Bishop gave a correct prognosis that “the more immediate communication now available via the Internet (e-mail, chat) may serve to further erode the spoken/written distinction and result in even more C[olloquial] A[rabic] being used in the written mode” (2003: 19). Having reviewed two discussion forums and

98 Yaghan summarises some of the various reasons for the popularity of Latinised Arabic: “the historical precedence of English over Arabic in Internet and cellular phones;” the feel that Arabic script should be used for Fuṣṣḥa, not ʿAmmiyya; the fact that certain emotions could be better expressed in this way (for example, anger, i.e. shouting could be conveyed by capitalising the letters); the economy of texting since the number of characters allowed per message still depends on the chosen language (160 characters per message in English, 70 characters per message in Arabic); and the perception that Latinised Arabic is “cool,” free from errors or at least more relaxing and less demanding than Arabic script (2008: 44-46).

one commercial website, Doss observes “that cyberspace is a privileged area for the use of colloquial and of mixed varieties of Arabic” (2006: 64). The development and growing popularity of interactive, user-centred web applications intended for sharing of information, collaboration and social networking, now known as Web 2.0, has been creating new conditions and modes for production, dissemination and reception of the written word. Therefore, I decided to devote a lot of my attention to certain writing practices that are observable online.

In the following chapter, I analyse three examples of online campaigns, and conclude with an example from the “real world.” In Chapter 3, I examine a very interesting project – Wikipedia Masry (WM), an official Wikipedia page written in ʕAmmiyya (or, as my analysis at times shows, in attempts at ʕAmmiyya). I tackle language ideologies and attitudes of contributors to WM and discuss them against linguistic evidence drawn from the analysis of the actual language output found in WM articles. Finally, in Chapter 4, I turn to Twitter and provide a comprehensive discussion of this social networking platform. Although limited to 140 characters only, tweets are shown to be extremely varied language-wise. I identify main linguistic resources that are observable and meaningful on Twitter. These are to be found at the intersections of two scripts (Arabic and Latin) and three linguistic varieties (Fuṣṣḥa – ʕAmmiyya – English). I conclude by stating that the identified system of resources is not characteristic of Twitter only, but should be expected in many other forms of contemporary writing. To that end, I present some examples from Facebook and books, arguing that many instances of writing are indexical of deeper language-related issues in the country.

I opened this chapter with a reference to the Egyptian Revolution of January 25. For many Egyptians the revolution is still going on – الثورة مستمرة. To say that language has played, and continues to play, an important role in the revolution, would be an understatement. It was in many ways constitutive of it. The way language was put to work during the uprising was, in my opinion, as important as bravery and persistence. I have written an entire chapter on the use of language during the uprising, and at the last minute, realised with regret that I would have to cut it out. Otherwise, this thesis would have exceeded the word limit. Nevertheless, as will become evident, in at least two of the following chapters, a story about the revolution is still there. It is inevitably fragmentary, not only because the revolution is not over, but because the main story of which it is a part – my story about how some Egyptians write, presents only a fragment of the picture. Every account of an aspect of culture is from the very beginning both cursed and blessed with the inevitability of perspectivalism.

One rather uncontroversial feature of ethnography is that it addresses complexity. It does not, unlike many other approaches, try to reduce the complexity of social events by focusing *a priori* on a selected range of relevant features, but it tries to describe and analyze the complexity of social events *comprehensively*. That is: good ethnography is *iconic* of the object it has set out to examine, it describes the sometimes chaotic, contradictory, polymorph character of human behaviour in concrete settings, and it does so in away that seeks to do justice to two things: (a) the perspectives of participants – the old Boasian and Malinowskian privilege of the ‘insiders’ view’; and (b) the ways in which micro-events need to be understood as both unique and structured, as combinations of variation and stability – the tension between phenomenology and structuralism in ethnography. While these two concerns are constant and define the long history of twentieth-century ethnography, a third one was added from the 1960s and 1970s onward in the work of Fabian,

Bourdieu, Clifford and others: (c) a concern for the situated and dialogical character of ethnographic knowledge itself – reflexivity.

(Blommaert 2007: 682)

I quoted Jan Blommaert at length, because this passage beautifully summarises what it is that I would like to have approached to in my approach. It is an ideal, and I make no claims whatsoever that I have reached it, but I tried to get close to it. Complexity, comprehensiveness, human behaviour in concrete settings, reflexivity – these keywords were reverberating as I was struggling to extract from a wealth of data and experience examples for discussion, analysis and construction of an informed narrative that would bring in something new, cast light on something relevant, offer a competent insight, yet remain self-reflexive of the fact that my research has only just begun. It is clear by now, that this is not an ethnography of Egypt. It is not even an ethnography of *all* writing in Egypt. It is an ethnographic approach to, admittedly, fairly limited number of writing practices that nevertheless tell us some important things about Egyptian society. My aim is to complexify the picture and move away from dichotomies and binary oppositions which, when it comes to language, indeed permeate the dominant ideologies and discourses – dominant both in Egyptian society and in some scholarship about that society. What these dichotomies conceal, however, is what is far more dynamic and far more important. They conceal what it is that people actually *do with* language.

Sometimes even the finest ethnographies get caught in these dichotomies. In 2003, Niloofar Haeri published a book based on her extensive fieldwork in Egypt. The book is called *Sacred Language, Ordinary People: dilemmas of culture and politics in Egypt*. The title is beautiful and poetic, but it sets the overall tone and announces the main message right from the start. Haeri is a very sensitive, perceptible and careful

ethnographer. She offers rich ethnographic detail and interesting insights throughout the book. One can really learn a lot about what people from various walks of life think about language in Egypt. What I find problematic, however, is that Haeri writes as if she had first come up with her main concepts and then went to do her fieldwork. Throughout the book she pushes her argument that Egyptian Arabic should be the official language of the country instead of what she labels Classical Arabic, even when she informs us that very few of her informants share that attitude. She claims that Classical Arabic has not changed over time, although later she seems to argue that it has, but not enough to be considered modern(ised). I can relate to a degree to such a point of view. When defining “the ideology of the standard language,” James Milroy (2007:133) postulates that :

speakers of [...] widely used languages [that] are regarded as each possessing a *standard* variety, live in *standard language cultures*. In such cultures, *language attitudes* are dominated by powerful ideological positions that are largely based on the supposed existence of this standard norm, and these, taken together, can be said to constitute the *standard language ideology* or 'ideology of the standard language'.

(emphasis in the original)

At first sight, Egypt seems to be a good candidate for such a standard language culture. But once we look at some of the characteristics of a standard language listed by Milroy (133-139) we find that some are not applicable to Fuṣṣḥa. First and foremost, “elaboration of function [so that it can be used] in a wide variety of different spheres of activity” (134). In the case of Fuṣṣḥa, this is at best questionable, and it is from this perspective that I can understand Haeri’s argument. Nevertheless, if the majority of Egyptians react strongly against the idea that Fuṣṣḥa should be replaced by ʿAmmiyya, we must accept that position. What Haeri seems to do is to treat it as some expression of false consciousness. The fact that for very many people in Egypt Fuṣṣḥa does not play a

big role in their daily lives, except in the religious sphere, leads Haeri to postulate her dichotomy that Egyptians are “owners” of ʿAmmiyya and cannot be anything but “custodians” of Fuṣṣa, because Fuṣṣa or Classical Arabic is “sacred” and that qualification is, in turn, derived through Haeri’s reference to untranslatability of the Qur’an and non-arbitrariness of the relation between form and meaning (which again she postulates with reference to the holy book of Islam but then extends it to Fuṣṣa as the language of Islam).

As some sort of a general description or a background of the sociolinguistic setting, Haeri’s narrative is very useful, but her main argument is too simplistic. It is true that situation has changed since Haeri conducted her fieldwork. Maybe there was not enough written material to analyse how people put language to work through a variety of activities they might be engaged in. Then again, seeing what kind of “linguistic analysis” she applied on a handful of data in the fourth chapter of her book, to which I return in my third chapter, it is probably better that she did not do more of it.

Only when we put together what it is that people do with language and what it is they think about it, can we reach to a more nuanced understanding of what it is that they might “need.” Coming up with language policy solutions that represent radical breaks with traditions can do nothing but hurt cultural sensitivities. Haeri is otherwise very well aware of the ongoing reconfiguration of the Egyptian sociolinguistic setting (1997), of the importance of English, of the complex ways in which issues of language are interwoven with those of class.

In this thesis, I take a different approach, I take texts as my informants, and people as my interlocutors. My primary focus is on the linguistic detail in written language output, but I conduct that analysis with reference to the context of its production.

In his recent, thought-provoking book, Alastair Pennycook (2010), calls for a new approach to language – *language as a local practice*. This, he argues, will help us move beyond thinking of languages as systems and rules, and focus on a variety of locally meaningful practices that involve the use of language. From that perspective, some of the local practices I tackle through my discussions of language would be: (ideologically motivated) production of knowledge, linguistic rights activism (Wikipedia Masry); social networking, social activism (Twitter, Facebook); campaigning and advocacy; advertising,...

From some scholars working within the paradigm of “The New Literacy Studies,”⁹⁹ I learned to think of literacies as *social practices*, not as given (present or absent) but as situated, and negotiated. Embedded in a broader cultural context, literacy is not a mere use of a writing system (or writing systems), or, in other words, it is not a mere ability to read and write. It is a set of historically, culturally and socially constructed (and thus to a certain extent locally meaningful) set of practices and events (so-called literacy events) which emerge whenever writing and reading take place.

When theorising about the global cultural economy, and ways to understand the contemporary, not always voluntary, flows and movements of people, ideas, objects, and images, Arjun Appadurai (1990: 6-7), introduced the concepts of *ethnoscapes*, *media-*

99 See Barton 1994, Gee 1990, Street 2001, and Szwed (2001).

scapes, technoscapes, finanscapes and ideoscapes. “The suffix -scape,” explains Appadurai (7):

allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes, shapes which characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles. These terms with the common suffix -scape also indicate that these are not objectively given relations which look the same from every angle of vision, but rather that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as sub-national groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighbourhoods and families.

I like to think of language situation, or sociolinguistic setting, in the same way. Hence linguascape in the subtitle. At one and the same time, within the same locale various languages, or varieties, can be present, they could be heard and spoken, or seen and written, to some people they might be meaningless even if visible and audible, and their coexistence or competition is influenced by various actors and dependant on different ideologies and interpretations. However, regardless of the differences among all individual vistas of the Egyptian linguascape as we find it in the first decade of the century, one thing is certain – that linguascape is changing. From mobile phone screens, to books, to walls, to newspapers, to cyberspace and back, manifestations of language have become diversified.

Yes, there is a long history of writing in ʿAmmiyya, but it is not until some two decades ago that we find a real boom in its production for public consumption. Yes, people might have always written their diaries and scribbled their private notes in

ʕAmmiyya or some kind of language mix, but today, thousands of Egyptians are tweeting and blogging, and millions are on Facebook. So, let us take a glimpse at it.

Chapter 2

WHEN FUṢḤA IS NOT ENOUGH

notes on campaigning online and offline

In this chapter I provide three case-studies on the use of the Internet in Egypt for campaigning for political or social causes. The first is a long analysis of one of the key texts that were instrumental in mobilising Egyptian Internet users around the idea of popular uprising on January 25. The second is an illustration of a campaign aimed at raising awareness about an issue that is often seen as one of the major problems in Egyptian society – sexual harassment. Finally, the third one goes back to the realm of the political in post-Mubarak Egypt, discusses the social dynamics in the country after the uprising, and looks at one of the aspects of the campaign against the referendum on constitutional changes that was held on March 19, 2011. Taken together, they highlight some of the important ways in which the available language resources are being used, indeed deliberately manipulated, in attempts to create effective written messages with the aim of gaining support of an imagined literate Egyptian.

2.1 Bring the flag and leave your watch at home: a call for revolution

What follows is a close reading of an important text that was published on the Facebook page “Kullina Khaled Said” on the eve of the protests scheduled for January 25.¹ It is actually a detailed call for demonstrations, and even though it was not the only

1 <http://www.facebook.com/notes/%D9%83%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%AF/25-january-%D8%AA>

such call to appear online, and by no means was it the sole factor that brought people to streets in such large numbers, it was widely circulated around the Internet, and it was read by many.² Also, it is interesting because it suggests that what the organisers had in mind was indeed “a revolution.” Therefore, the discursive devices it employs deserve to be discussed.³

The first thing to note about this call is that it is written in an admixture of Fuṣṣa and ʿAmmiyya. The authorship of the text is unknown. It is not clear whether it was single-handedly written by one writer or if it is the result of a team work. Towards the end of it, however, there are three instances of “I” – in the use of the first person singular verbal forms. This could be taken as a signal that one person, who in those instances, as will be shown below, is imparting advice, wrote the entire text. But it could also be that several writers were in charge of different sections which were later combined into a single document. Whatever the case might be, I argue that the significant occurrence of ECA in this predominantly MSA-text should not be understood exclusively in terms of “mistakes” or the authors' inability to produce the entire text in Fuṣṣa. While certain instances of ʿAmmiyya represent what most likely were slips and cases of interference, there are reasons to assume that the text was deliberately produced in an admixture of Fuṣṣa and ʿAmmiyya, rather than in one of the two. The distribution of the two varieties is to be understood as a *discursive strategy* (*sensu* Gumperz 1982). To a large degree, this distribution corresponds to different sub-topics (sections) within the text, the authors'

<http://bit.ly/Egypt25>

2 On March 30, 2011, the page “Kullina Khaled Said” had 1,098,505 followers/fans.

3 As a Google document, it is available at: <http://bit.ly/Egypt25>. Here I analyse almost the entire text. I skip certain parts that contain mostly addresses, phone numbers and names, and add nothing in terms of the findings presented here.

re-positioning of themselves in relation to their target readership and the effects they wanted to produce among those whom they aimed to mobilise.

The text is divided into sections each of which is introduced by a heading. I analyse the text according to these sections: the quotations are followed by my translations, then follow my comments on the linguistic features. Arabic parts that are clearly in ECA are given in bold, those that are in MSA are italicised, whereas those that could be doubly interpreted, *i.e.* which could theoretically be read as both and are primarily interpretable judging by the immediate context, are left unmarked. In fact, I italicise only those salient MSA forms (whether lexical, or morphosyntactic) for which ECA alternatives exist and could have been used had the authors aimed at ʿAmmiyya. Thus, the unmarked parts, unless noted otherwise, should in most cases be understood as MSA. In the translations, I therefore mark (in bold) only the parts that are written in ECA in the original.

On the relevant Facebook page (“Kullina Khaled Said”) where the text was first publicised, a header is given in ʿAmmiyya containing the instruction about the web-page (Google document) where the text could also be found:

عشان تشوف الصفحة دي كويس يا ريت تدخل على اللينك ده أفضل

<http://bit.ly/Egypt25>

لو اللينك مشغلش اقرأها من هنا

In order to see this page properly, it would be better if you followed this link. If the link is not working, read it from here. – Note the occurrence of a very colloquial desiderative particle *ya-reet* “Please would you..., it would be a good idea if you..., I/we wish...” the use of which implies a polite, friendly request and an attempt to overcome the distance between the authors and their invisible readers in cyberspace.

The first section of the text is the usual self-introduction “*man nahnu?*” (“About Us”, *lit.* “Who are we?”). It gives a brief history of this call and of the relevant Facebook page. It states the page's independence from any political formation. It establishes a connection between the successful uprising in Tunisia and its encouraging effect on Egyptians to “defend their rights:”

(1)

من نحن

بدأت الدعوة للتظاهر يوم 25 يناير من صفحة كلنا خالد سعيد وهي صفحة على الفيسبوك اتعملت عشان قضية الشهيد خالد سعيد اللي اتقتل من التعذيب والضرب في الشارع في إسكندرية يونيو 2010. الدعوة كانت عفوية ولم يكن مخططا لها من أي قوى سياسية أو شعبية. وبعد ما نشرت الدعوة وبسبب أحداث تونس تشجع كل المصريين للمطالبة بالمشاركة ونشر الفكرة. الصفحة لا تتبع أي حزب أو جماعة أو حركة أو جمعية فالصفحة مستقلة بذاتها وهي لا تؤيد شخصا أو فكرة هي لكل المصريين الذين يريدون الدفاع عن حقوقهم. والصفحة قائمة على جهود ذاتية من الأعضاء في الصفحة وده كان سر نجاحها.

Who are we?

The call for demonstrations on January 25 has been launched from the page “We Are All Khaled Said”, which is a Facebook page made because of (after) the incident of the martyr Khaled Said who was tortured and beaten to death on the street in Alexandria in June 2010. The call was spontaneous and it was not planned by any political or popular force. After it was propagated and due to the events in Tunis, all Egyptians are encouraged to demand to participate and promote this idea. The page does not follow (belong to) any party, group, movement or association. It is autonomous, it does not support any particular individual or idea, it is for all Egyptians who want to defend their rights. The page exists because of the personal efforts of its members and that's the secret of its success.

Commentary:

In this section, there are only two parts where the use of ECA forms (*itʿamalit, ʿašān, illi, itʿatal, da*) allows us to read the entire clauses in the colloquial. In the first instance, the identity of the page itself is defined, its *raison d'être* being linked to a tragic death of a young activist, brutally murdered by the police – an incident which many Egyptians could (and in fact did) easily identify with. The shift to ECA emphasises the event and attempts at bringing the overall cause of the page closer to the minds and hearts of Egyptian Facebook users. The second case could have easily been rendered in MSA had the first word, the demonstrative *da(h)* (هـ) been substituted with the more formal *hādā* (هذا). Since the rest of the sentence could be equally ECA and MSA, the use of *da*, marks it as ECA and makes a shift towards the discourse of marketing, so that the whole short sentence (which, significantly enough, closes the paragraph) becomes a sort of a commercial, a catchy advertisement – “and that's the secret of its success!”

The next section of the text lays out the reasons for these demonstrations at length:

(2)

لماذا تتظاهر؟

تمر مصر بواحدة من أسوأ مراحلها التاريخية في كل النواحي. فبرغم التقارير التي تذكرها الحكومة المصرية لتجميل الصورة إلا أنه وللأسف الحقيقة مختلفة عن تلك التقارير. ونزلونا⁴ جميعاً يوم 25 هو بداية للنهاية، نهاية كل الصمت والرضا والخنوع لما يحدث في بلادنا وبداية لصفحة جديدة من الإيجابية والمطالبة بالحقوق. يوم 25 يناير هو مش ثورة بمعنى إنقلاب لكن هو ثورة ضد الحكومة لنقول لها أننا بدأنا الاهتمام بشؤون بعضنا البعض وسأخذ كل حقوقنا ولن نسكت بعد اليوم.

فهناك 30 مليون مصري مريض بالاكئاب منهم مليون ونص مرضى بالاكئاب الجسيم وأكثر من مائة ألف محاولة انتحار خلال عام 2009 تسببت في

4 Obviously a typo – it should be نزلونا.

وفاة 5000 شخص. لدينا 48 مليون فقير منهم مليونان ونصف المليون يعيشون في فقر مدقع. لدينا 12 مليون مصري بدون أي مأوى ومنهم مليون ونصف يعيشون في المقابر.

هناك فساد منهجي أدى إلى وجود قضايا فساد تزيد قيمتها جميعا بأكثر من 39 مليار جنيه خلال عام واحد فقط. ومصر تحتل المركز 115 بين 139 دولة في تقرير التنافسية العالمي⁵ من حيث الفساد الحكومي. هناك أكثر من 3 مليون شاب عاطل ونسبة البطالة بين الشباب تجاوزت 30% ومصر تحتل المركز الأخير بين 139 دولة في معدل الشفافية في التوظيف.

لدينا أعلى معدل لوفيات الأطفال في العالم بواقع خمسين طفلا كل 1000 ولادة. ونصف أطفال مصر تقريبا مصابون بأنيميا و 8 ملايين شخص مصاب بفيروس سي. ولدينا أكثر من 100 ألف مصاب بالسرطان سنويا بسبب تلوث المياه. ولدينا سيارة إسعاف لكل 35 ألف مواطن.

في مصر قانون للطوارئ⁶ تسبب في وفاة عشرات المصريين من التعذيب والقبض على الآلاف منهم دون وجود أي سند قانوني لعمليات القبض عليهم. وبسبب استخدام الأمن لمراقبة السياسيين وإجهاض نشاطهم فقد نتج عن ذلك تزوير فاضح في انتخابات مجلس الشعب أدت إلى أن الحزب الحاكم يحصل على أكثر من تسعين بالمائة من مقاعد المجلس.

لمعرفة المزيد ومصادر هذه المعلومات يرجى مشاهدة هذا الفيديو.

Why are we demonstrating?

In every aspect, Egypt has been going through one of the worst phases in its history. Contrary to the reports which the government is giving in order to improve the image, the truth is unfortunately different. Our going out together onto the streets on January 25 is the beginning of the end, the end of all silence, acceptance of and submissiveness to what is happening in our country. We are turning a new, positive page. We want our rights. January 25 is not a revolution in the sense of an overthrow, it is a revolution against the government so that we tell it that we have started to take care of each other's concerns, that we will get our rights and will no longer be silent after this day.⁷

5 A typo – it should be تقرير التنافسية العالمية - "Global Competitiveness Report"

6 Another possible typo – قانون الطوارئ – unless the writers deliberately broke the genitive construction in order to satisfy the requirements of the nominal sentence that starts with a prepositional phrase ("In Egypt, there is an emergency law / There is an emergency law in Egypt.")

7 Note the explicit use of the word "revolution" (in the Arabic original, ثورة).

There are 30 million Egyptians who suffer from depression, of whom one and **a half** are affected by major depression. There were more than one hundred thousand suicide attempts in 2009 that lead to the death of 5000 people. We have 48 million poor people, of whom two and a half million live in abject poverty. We have 12 million homeless Egyptians of whom a million and a half live at cemeteries.

There is systematic corruption that led to corruption lawsuits involving more than 39 billion Egyptian pounds within one year only. As far as government corruption is concerned, Egypt ranks 115 among 139 countries in the Global Competitiveness Report.

There is more than 3 million unemployed young people, and the percentage of unemployment among the youth is higher than 30%. As for the average transparency in hiring practices, Egypt ranks last among 139 countries.

We have the highest child mortality rate in the world amounting to fifty deaths per 1000 live births.⁸ Approximately a half of the Egyptian children suffer from anaemia, and there are 8 million people infected with Hepatitis C. Every year, more than 100 thousand people get cancer because of polluted water. And there is one ambulance vehicle per 35 thousand citizens.

There is an emergency law in Egypt which has caused death under torture of dozens of Egyptians, and led to detention of thousands of them without any legal justification for their arrest. Security has been used to control politicians and obstruct their activity which resulted in shameful fraud during the elections for the People's Assembly whereby the ruling party won over ninety percent of the seats in the Parliament.

To learn more and to see the sources of this information, please watch this video.

8 In fact, this is not the highest child mortality rate in the world. See the press release from UNICEF for 2010 [http://www.unicef.org/media/media_56045.html]. In any case, I am not interested here whether the data presented in this call is accurate or not.

Commentary:

Given its contents, it is not surprising that this entire section is written in Fuṣḥa. Disturbing facts and figures, regardless of their accuracy, serve a special purpose – they give a portrait of a society deeply affected by crisis. The question “Why are we demonstrating” is thus answered by highlighting the conditions under which “we” actually live. In its solemnity, this depiction manages to invoke the factuality of official reports, and at the same time to lament over the miserable state to which the Egyptian people had been lowered by their repressive regime. Stylistically, there is some repetition (*ladaynā, ladaynā, ladaynā... hunāka, hunāka, hunāka...*) that elevates the overall tone. At the same time, the language is kept clear and simple. There are no attempts to “classicise” it by using ornate or convoluted constructions. But neither are there interpolations in ʿAmmiyya. Most likely, the authors (would have) thought that using ECA in this section could have diminished the gravity of the situation they wanted to convey. For the effect they wished to achieve, Fuṣḥa served a much better purpose.

There are only two ECA elements in this part of the call – *مش* (instead of *ليس*) and *نص* (instead of *نصف*). Due to its close similarity to its MSA counterpart, and given that the form *نصف* was used correctly elsewhere in this part, the latter form could be easily explained as a typo, a slip of a finger in haste. As for the former, *مش*, its occurrence in this otherwise Fuṣḥa section could be attributed to its high frequency in normal speech. Deictics, negative particles, conjunctions, common adverbs, and some frequent verbs are the likeliest elements to occur in MSA environments. This is not to claim that the form *مش* has no saliency whatsoever, but in this particular context its saliency might be low – a mere substitution of the MSA lexical item *ليس* with ECA *مش* did not require any syntactical

restructuring or readjustment of the sentence elements (as in many other contexts involving the negation could have been the case.)

The next, short paragraph is intended to explain the choice of this particular day. It follows the same pattern:

(3)

لماذا يوم 25 يناير؟

في عام 1952 قاوم أجدادنا في جهاز الشرطة ببنادقهم العادية الجيش البريطاني بدباباته وجيوشه فاستشهد منهم 50 وأسر أكثر من 100 وضربوا أروع الأمثلة في التضحية من أجل الوطن. ونحن بعد أكثر من خمسين سنة نعاني الآن من ممارسات جهاز الشرطة الذي أصبح أداة لتعذيب المصريين وإهانتهم. وقد اخترنا هذا اليوم بالذات لأنه يرمز إلى التحام الشرطة مع الشعب وهذا ما نرجو يوم المظاهرة أن يلتحم معنا الضباط المحترمون لأن قضيتنا واحدة. يوم 25 يناير هو إجازة رسمية مما يمنح لكل المصريين المشاركة دون تعطيل أعمالهم.

Why January 25?

In the year 1952, our grandfathers who served in the police, used their ordinary rifles to oppose the soldiers and tanks of the British army. Fifty of them were martyred and more than a hundred were taken prisoners. They gave the most magnificent example of self-sacrifice for the sake of the homeland. And now, more than fifty years later, we suffer at the hands of the police which have become the instrument for torturing and degrading treatment of the Egyptians. We have chosen this particular day because it symbolises the union between the police and the people. And what we hope for is that the respectable police officers will join us on that day because our problem is the same. January 25 is an official holiday which allows all Egyptians to participate without interrupting their work.

Commentary:

This part is also entirely in Fuṣḥa. It tells the story of those brave, patriotic

grandfathers who fearlessly confronted a much stronger, colonial power and sacrificed themselves for their country and their people. It juxtaposes this ideal image to the disappointing here and now, where those who should follow in the footsteps of the ancestors have betrayed the ideal. It effectively creates a contrast between how it was and should be, and how it actually is; between courageous, determined heroes and a brainless, cruel “tool” – between patriotism and treason. Scheduling the demonstrations on the Police Day is significant precisely because it was the police that had become the instrument of coercion in charge for keeping in its place the rotten regime that had created the problems laid out in the previous section. It is here where the organisers are also reaching out – assuming that there are still some respectable officers left in the police, they are calling on them to join their people and finally live up to the high standards set up by the heroes from half a century ago. Throughout the whole paragraph an elevated style is maintained, keeping the chosen code in the realm of the “high” variety, MSA.

The text then moves on to lay out the demands of the protesters. There are four main demands and they are all articulated in MSA with a heavy resort to nominalisation. This common feature of contemporary media Arabic (Holes 2004: 320-323) allows the writers to depersonalise these demands, raise them above the level of individual grievances and turn them into general preconditions for a better society. In most of these demands, the use of the verbal nouns stresses the action itself, the result; it does not individuate the agent, the doer. What the organisers are actually saying – albeit in a rather formal way is – “we don't care who's gonna do it, we want it done!”

In the last paragraph, however, there is a shift in formality, something like “oh, of

course, these are not all, but...” As if to address concerns of a potential sceptic, the organisers show that they are fully aware of the fact that problems in the country outnumber those articulated in the main demands, but that these should be dealt with step by step. It is at this point that the text suddenly resorts to ‘Ammyya (or, to put it precisely, makes use of certain ECA forms) – a discourse strategy that here has an explanatory function, it clarifies the point and establishes a more immediate, almost direct communication with a reader that might have become a bit suspicious and critical of presumed exhaustiveness of the main demands:

(4)

ما هي مطالبنا؟

المطلب الأول: مواجهة مشكلة الفقر قبل أن تنفجر وذلك باحترام حكم القضاء المصري بزيادة الحد الأدنى للأجور زيادة عادلة خاصة في مجالات الصحة والتعليم لتحسين الخدمات المقدمة للشعب. والعمل على صرف إعانات تصل إلى 500 جنيه مصري لكل شاب خريج جامعي لا يستطيع الحصول على وظيفة وذلك لفترة محددة.

المطلب الثاني: إلغاء حالة الطوارئ والتي تسببت في سيطرة الجهاز الأمني على مصر والقبض على المعارضين لسياسات الحكومة ووضعهم في المعتقلات دون أي ذنب. ونحن نطالب بغرض سيطرة النيابة على الأقسام لوقف عمليات التعذيب المنهجية التي يتم ممارستها في أقسام الشرطة. وتنفيذ أحكام القضاء واحترامها من قبل الحكومة المصرية.

المطلب الثالث: إقالة وزير الداخلية حبيب العادلي بسبب الانفلات الأمني الذي تواجهه مصر متمثلا في الحوادث الإرهابية وانتشار الجرائم التي حدثت على يد ضباط أو عناصر من وزارة الداخلية دون وجود الرادع القوي.

المطلب الرابع: تحديد مدة الرئاسة بحيث لا تتجاوز فترتين متتاليتين لأن السلطة المطلقة مفسدة ولأنه لا توجد دولة متقدمة تسمح لرئيس الجمهورية البقاء عشرات السنين في منصبه. من حقنا أن نختار رئيسنا ومن حقنا ألا يستبد أحد بالسلطة فيحكم البلاد حتى يموت.

طبعاً هناك مطالب كثيرة لكل المصريين في مجالات زي الصحة والتعليم والبدية هي إننا نتحرك مع بعض ونحقق مطلب مطلب عن طريق الضغط على الحكومة وده دورنا كشعب إننا نوجه الحكومة ونحاسبها على أداءها⁹ ونحدد أولوياتها مش العكس.

9 على أدائها

What are our demands?

First demand: To confront the issue of poverty before it explodes, and that (is to be achieved) by respecting the decisions of the Egyptian judiciary to raise the minimum wage equitably, particularly in the fields of education and healthcare so that the services provided to the people are improved. To aim at providing financial support of 500 Egyptian pounds,¹⁰ for a limited period of time, to every young Egyptian university graduate who is unable to find a job.

Second demand: To revoke the state of emergency which has resulted in domination of the police apparatus in Egypt, detention of the opponents to governmental policies and their detainment without reason. We demand that the prosecutor's office imposes control over the police departments in order to stop systematic torture that has been practised in the police stations. The Egyptian government should implement and respect the rulings of the court.

Third demand: The deposition of Habib al-Adly, Minister of the Interior, because of the breakdown of security in Egypt, as represented in the incidents of terrorism and proliferation of crime at the hands of police officers or elements from the Ministry of the Interior in the absence of a strong deterrent.

Fourth demand: To limit the presidency so as not to exceed two consecutive terms because absolute power corrupts and because there is no developed country which allows the president of the republic to stay in office for decades. It is our right to choose our president, and it is our right not to have anyone who would despotically monopolise power and rule the country until he dies.

[And here the aforementioned shift occurs:]

There are, of course, many other demands held by Egyptians in the fields **such as** health and education. At first, **we are to act together** and realise the demands **one by one**, by putting pressure on the government, and **that** is our role as the people, **to** direct the government, hold it accountable for its performance, and define its priorities, **not the other way around**.

¹⁰ Presumably, per month.

Commentary:

In an example such as:

– **وده** دورنا كشعب **إننا** نوجه الحكومة ونحاسبها على أداءها ونحدد أولوياتها **مش العكس** the lexical stock is shared between MSA and ECA, except for the ECA items **ده**, **مش**, and, arguably, **إننا** (as a colloquial realisation of the complementiser), and so are the morphosyntactic rules. Nevertheless, in a case like this there is a reason to interpret that colloquial rendering spans across the entire sentence even though it is punctuated with but a few colloquial elements.

This shift towards colloquial expression hinted at in the last paragraph of the section 4, in the following one goes all the way. With the exception of one interpolation of an MSA item, the entire paragraph could be read as written in ECA:

(5)

أماكن وتوقيت المظاهرات
مهم جدا **إننا** نفهم **إن** هدف المظاهرة هو **إننا** نحشد كل الناس **معانا**. الناس
كلها متضايقه ومظلومة **ومش** راضية عن حال البلد يبقى لازم نشجعهم يشاركوا
وعشان كده عايزين **نعمل** مسيرات في كل المناطق الشعبية والناس تنزل مع
بعض في مسيرات أكثر من عشر أشخاص لحد مكان المظاهرة ده مهم جدا.
وعلى فكرة أماكن المظاهرات **مش** مقصورة على الأماكن المذكورة هنا لأن فيه
مظاهرات في أماكن **تانية** لم يعلن عنها **وهيتنظم** فيها مظاهرات في محافظات
مختلفة. المهم **إنك** تنزل وتعبر عن رأيك وغضبك بالطريقة اللي **تقدر** عليها.

[five locations listed]

N.B. - Since I argue that this entire section is in fact in ECA, in the following translation, and contrary to the sections above and sections that follow, the part in MSA *is* italicised.

Locations and time

It is very important **that we** understand **that** the goal of the demonstrations is **to** gather everyone **around us**. Everyone is fed up, oppressed and **dissatisfied** with the situation in the country, **so**

it is necessary to encourage people to join, therefore we want to **organise** marches in all of the poor neighbourhoods, and people should walk **together** in marches of **more** than ten **until** they reach the location of the demonstrations – **that** is very important. **By the way**, locations for rallying **are not** confined to those mentioned here, because **there are** (going to be) demonstrations at **other, still undisclosed** places, and demonstrations at these **will be organised** in different governorates. It is important **that you** go out and express your anger **in whichever way you can**. [five locations listed]

Commentary:

In this section the organisers finally get down to the practicalities of the entire event. What they have to say is “very important” (مهم being repeated three times). They address the potential demonstrators directly – either through the inclusive “we”, or, as it is the case in the last sentence, by using “you” of the interlocutor (2nd person sing.). They specify the main objective of the demonstrations (mobilising the downtrodden masses), give instructions on how to reach the locations (in groups of more than ten), and announce that there are other locations that are yet to be revealed. All this is done in a very ʿAmmiyya-oriented style. In fact, one could read this paragraph almost as a transcript of an utterance given in one breath. There are many elements that set this entire section as rendered in ECA. Orthographically, it is interesting to note that most of the complementisers are written with *hamza* (ء) underneath the *alif* (ا) thus signalling their colloquial form (*inn-*, as opposed to *an, anna*). Also, colloquial pronunciation is captured in forms like أكثر /aktar/ and تانية /tanya/. Lexically, there is a number of ECA items (مش، عشان، كده، عايزين، مع بعض، ده، على فكرة). On the level of morphology, we find the form هيتنظم /hayitnazzam/ (the future marker is ECA and so is, arguably, the morphological pattering of the passive voice although the form could be also interpreted as MSA Pattern

V). On the syntactic level, there is asyndetic linkage in syntactic environments in which MSA would require the use of the particle أن /an/ (يقي لازم نشجعهم بشاركوا وعشان كده عايزين نعمل). Also, there is an example of semantically influenced agreement variation (deflected vs. strict) in the treatment of the word *nās* (“people”) that corroborates Belnap's findings (1993). When used as a generic term (“people”, “all the people /everyone”), it is treated as feminine singular (a). Once it became more individuated or specified (“those already described as annoyed, oppressed, etc. people whom we have to encourage), it is treated as masculine plural (b):

- (a) - الناس كلها متضايقه ومظلومة ومش راضية / والناس تنزل مع بعض
 (b) - الناس كلها متضايقه ومظلومة ومش راضية عن حال البلد يقي لازم نشجعهم بشاركوا

Here it should be noted that, according to Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004: 104, 355-356), this particular word, *nās*, has variable agreement in “Modern Written Arabic” as well. The authors give two examples when both genders appear in the same sentence but give no interpretation regarding specificity/individuation, even though both examples fit nicely within the explanation which Belnap (1993) offered for the colloquial. In both sentences the transition is in the direction from *feminine* (general, unknown, less concrete) to *masculine* (specified, known, concrete):

ولكن الناس تفكر، وتفكر كثيرا، ونحن حين نطالب الناس بالتفكير والتأمل لا
 نجبرهم على اختيار وجهة نظرنا

but people think and they think a lot, and when we challenge the
 people to think and contemplate we cannot (sic) force them to
 choose our own point of view

وقد انتقل حب الناس له من المدرجات إلى الشارع حيث تتادي عليه وتحبه وإن
 كان البعض منهم يعيب عليه أنه زمالكاوي

the people's affection for him has moved from the stands to the
 street, where they call out to him and greet him even though some

of them criticize him because he is a Zamalek supporter.

(Badawi, Carter, Gully 2004: 356)

As noted earlier, there is only one occurrence of a form that is saliently Fuṣṣa - لم - يعلن عنها /lam yuʕlan ʕanhā/. I propose that this should be understood as a *lexical borrowing* from Fuṣṣa – this short relative sentence (and its variants according to the gender and number of its antecedent, with gender and number being expressed through the appropriate pronominal suffix) has become a sort of a fossilised construction often used in bureaucratic and media MSA to express the meaning of the adjectives such as “undisclosed”, “secret.” Its use in this particular context (and a quick jump up in terms of language levels) further accentuates the secretiveness around these places. It is also a signal that the writers themselves are not (the only) organisers of the demonstrations, that there are some other brains behind the whole operation who have more details that are for the time being kept secret. The first of the remarks that follow this section (again, in ECA) confirms this interpretation:

ملاحظات مهمة: فيه جهات أخرى منظمة مظاهرات ومسيرات في أحياء شعبية
في كل أنحاء القاهرة والجيزة وحلوان لو كنت في منطقة شعبية انزل يوم 25
يناير وانضم لهم.

Important notes: **There are** other groups involved in organising demonstrations and marches in popular¹¹ neighbourhoods all around Cairo, Giza and Helwan. **If you happen to be** in one of these neighbourhoods, come out on January 25 and join **them**.

[Here I skip a part of the text (approx. 170 words) – see footnote 2]

The section 6 lists “Dos and Don’ts” for the demonstrations. Again, in terms of language levels, it represents a linguistic patchwork between pieces in MSA and pieces in

11 In the sense of low-income, poor neighbourhoods (as already translated above).

ECA. And again, the pattern is very similar – the broader and more general the instruction or prohibition, the higher is the likelihood of it being expressed in MSA (either through nominalised constructions, or through direct imperatives/prohibitives). ECA tends to be used for concretisation, explanations, comments. As the instructions progress the occurrence of *ʿAmmiyya* rises until it reaches its maximum in the last two paragraphs. There, as I mentioned above, the single author finally speaks out (“I am talking” / “I repeat”). The last paragraph, which is entirely in *ʿAmmiyya*, gives the crucial instruction: it is where the writer implores the potential protester not to go alone to the demonstrations by drawing a parallel between rallying and going to a football match:¹²

(6)

إرشادات التظاهر

١) المظاهرة سلمية. نحن دعاة سلام ولسنا دعاة عنف. نحن نطالب بحقوقنا ومن الأولى أن نحافظ على حقوق الآخرين. لن نستجيب لأي محاولات استفزاز من الأمن عشان يخرجنا من شعورنا وبحصل اللي هما يخططوا ليه. هدف رئيسي من أهداف الأمن هو تصوير المتظاهرين على أنهم شوية بلطجية عايزين يخربوا البلد. يجب ضبط النفس وعدم التهور وعمل أي شيء يخالف القانون أو يعرض حياة أي شخص لخطر أو يتسبب في الإضرار بأي ممتلكات عامة أو خاصة. وفي حالة تواجد أي أفراد **بيقوموا** بأي عمل عنيف يرجى التكتل حول الشخص واستبعاده الفوري من داخل المظاهرة وإبلاغ الأمن عنه.

٢) يرجى التواجد في مكان المظاهرة في الوقت المحدد بالدقيقة. التأخير يتسبب في تشتيت الجهود واحتمال فشل المظاهرة. التواجد في نفس الوقت

12 By the way, this comparison is very well-chosen given how popular football is among Egyptians. One of the favourite pastimes for Egyptian men is to gather in the evening (very often in a coffee house, *ahwa*) and watch a football match. The passion for this sport extends beyond the local clubs and national team. Whenever there is a game, there will be a lot of interested spectators. There are several Egyptian football clubs, but the nation is mostly divided between *ahlawiyya* and *zamalkawiyya*, those who respectively support al-Ahly (*sing.* ahlāwi), the most popular Egyptian club, and those who are fans of az-Zamālik (*sing.* zamalkāwi). Football is a common topic of everyday conversations, and in an inter-cultural conversation between an Egyptian and a foreigner, answering the usual question about which club you support can be almost as equally important of an ice-breaker to your interlocutor as identifying yourself by your name, nationality, and religious affiliation.

يجعل من السهل بدأ المظاهرة ويصعب على الأمن فرصة منعها.

٣) عند النزول من البيت لا تحمل أي شيء لا تحتاجه مثل كارنيهات أو الرخص أو بطاقات البنوك. احمل بطاقتك الشخصية ومبلغ كافي لأي طوارئ. ويا ريت متجيش ساعتك أو أي حاجة تتكسر بسهولة. الزي الأفضل يكون رياضي أو جينز مع وجود جاكيت للحماية من البرد في حالة استمرار المظاهرة أو الاعتصام لوقت طويل. يا ريت كل شخص يجيب معاه قزازة مياه كبيرة لأنه داخل المظاهرة يكون دائما في عجز في المياه.

٤) يرجى إحضار علم مصر وعدم إحضار أي شعارات أو لافتات خاصة بأي حزب أو حركة أو جماعة أو جمعية أو طائفة دينية. اليوم لكل المصريين لأننا جميعا نطالب بالمساواة في الحقوق والعدالة الاجتماعية ومش عايزين نتفرق.

٥) في حالة عدم نزولك لأي مظاهرات لا تكن في الصفوف الأمامية واترك الصفوف الأمامية لمن هم أكثر خبرة على قيادة المظاهرة أو المسيرة عشان ميحصلش لخبطة في اتخاذ القرارات.

٦) الهتافات موحدة ومتفق عليها. يرجى عدم استخدام أي أفاظ بذينة أو الدخول في معارك جانبية مع أفراد الأمن. الأمن المركزي مش هو عدوك. هو مجند تم إجباره أثناء خدمته في الجيش على القيام بهذا الدور وفي حالة عدم طاعته للأوامر يتم معاقبته بأقصى العقوبات. حاول بقدر الإمكان تركز مشاعر غضبك نحو عدوك الحقيقي.

٧) المحاولة قدر الإمكان لعدم تعطيل المرور في الشوارع. نحن لا نعاقب المواطنين نحن نطالب بحقوقنا. طبعاً باتكلم عن التعطيل المتعمد للمرور. لأنه في حالة نزول عشرات الآلاف في أي شوارع سيتم تعطيل المرور ومش ده اللي بتكلم عليه.

٨) متزلش لوحدهك .. أكرر مهم جدا متزلش لوحدهك لأن الأصحاب بيفيدوا في الظروف دي. يا ريت تكون مع حد واقنع حد صاحبك تنزلوا مع بعض. زي ما بنزل الاستادات وقت الماتشات.

Instructions for the demonstrations:

1) The demonstrations are peaceful. We are calling for peace, we are not calling for violence. We demand our rights, and the first thing is to protect the rights of others. We will not respond to any

attempts at provocation by the police **to drive us out of our minds so that it happens what they are planning to happen**. The main goal of the police is to present the protesters **as if they were a bunch of thugs that want to destroy the country**. It is necessary to control oneself, not to be irresponsible and do anything that violates the law, puts anyone in danger, or causes damage to public or private property. In case there is an individual **committing** any acts of violence, it is expected that the person will be surrounded by others, removed from the demonstrations immediately and reported to the police.

2) Please arrive at the rally venue right on time. Being late leads to fragmentation of efforts and to a possibility for the protest to fail. Coming at the same time makes it easy to start the demonstrations, as well as it makes it difficult for the police to prevent them.

3) When leaving the house, do not carry anything you do not need, such as membership or credit cards. Take your ID and an amount of money enough for any emergency. **Please don't bring your watch or anything that could be broken easily**. Preferable clothes should be sportswear or jeans with a jacket for protection from cold in case the protest and demonstrations continue for a long time. **It would be good if everyone brought a large bottle of water with them because there is always shortage of water at demonstrations**.

4) Please bring an Egyptian flag and do not bring any signs or banners pertaining to any party, movement, group, association, or religious denomination. This day is the day of all Egyptians because we, one and all, demand equal rights and social justice, **and we don't want to differentiate among ourselves**.

5) In case you have not participated in any other protests before, do not stand in the front rows, leave them to those who are more

experienced in leading the marches and demonstrations, **so that there would be no confusion in decision-making.**

6) The slogans have been unified and agreed upon. Please do not use any obscene words, or get into side fights with the security forces. The riot police **are not** our enemy. Each one of them is a conscript forced to perform this role during his army service; in case he disobeys the orders he is most severely punished. **Try as much as possible to concentrate your feelings of anger towards your real enemy.**

7) Try, in the best way possible, not to obstruct traffic in the streets. We are not punishing the citizens, we are demanding our rights. **Of course, I'm talking about the deliberate obstruction of traffic.** Because, in the case of tens of thousands of people taking to the streets, traffic gets obstructed, **and this is not what I'm talking about.**

8) **Don't go out alone.. I repeat, it is very important for you not to go alone because it's useful to have friends around in situations like this. It would be a very good idea to be with someone and convince a friend of yours that you go together. Just as we go to stadiums when there are football matches.**

Commentary:

There are several instances in this section in which ECA figures prominently:

In writers' assumptions about what it is that the police think and intend (provoke to → ECA), (portray the protesters as → ECA). In both cases, the use of 'Ammiyya invokes the kind of speech ordinary people could really use in this context, thus moving these potential thoughts and events from the realm of the hypothetical towards real-life scenarios:

- محاولات استفزاز من الأمن عشان بخرجنا من شعورنا وبحصل اللي هما بخططوا له.
- هدف رئيسي من أهداف الأمن هو تصوير المتظاهرين على أنهم شوية بلطجة عابزين بخربوا البلد.

When the instructions/requests on what to do/bring or not, become very specific,

or, as in the third example, need and explanation (why):

- ويا ريت متحسش ساعتك أو أي حاجة تتكسر بسهولة.
- ياريت كل شخص يحب معاه قزازه مياه كسرة لأنه داخل المظاهرة يكون دائما في عزز في المياه.
- اترك الصفوف الأمامية لمن هم أكثر خبرة على قيادة المظاهرة أو المسيرة عشان محصلش لخطة.

When there is a call to solidarity and unity (of “all Egyptians”) and Egyptian ‘Ammiyya is, of course, the major expression of that unity:

- لأننا جميعا نطالب بالمساواة في الحقوق والعدالة الاجتماعية ومش عايزين نتفرق.

In the case of the author's interpolations (“I'm talking about...” / “I'm not talking about”):

- نحن لا نعاقب المواطنين نحن نطالب بحقوقنا. طبعاً باتكلم عن التعطيل المتعمد للمرور. لأنه في حالة نزول عشرات الآلاف في أي شوارع سيتم تعطيل المرور ومش ده اللي بتكلم عليه.

When the message is of utmost importance, as in the case of the last, eighth note:

- متنزلهش لوحدهك .. أكرر مهم جدا متنزلهش لوحدهك لأن الأ أصحاب ينفدوا في الظروف دي. ياريت تكون مع حد واقنع حد صاحبك تنزلوا مع بعض.. زي ما ينزل الاستادات وقت الماتشات.

The final section of the call introduces the agreed upon slogans which protesters are encouraged to chant during the protests. Again, the section is about unity and it urges the protesters to focus on the burning issues which the demonstrations aim to address. As expected, and given the already explained pattern, the section is written in ECA. So are, naturally, the proposed chants. The text then goes on to supply the information about the important telephone numbers, Internet links and confirmed participants (movements, groups, parties and individuals), all of which I exclude from this analysis:

(7)

الهتافات الموحدة

فكرة الهتافات الموحدة هي من أهم أفكار التظاهر. كلنا نازلين لمصر ولازم نوحده صفوفنا ونكون إيد واحدة. هنلتزم بالهتافات مع بعض كلنا وهنركز على قضايا البطالة والفقر لأن دي القضايا اللي بتهم المصريين كلهم، ودي الهتافات

اللي تم الاتفاق عليها:

Unified chants

The idea of having unified chants is among the most important ideas of the demonstrations. **We are all going out because of Egypt and it is important for us to stand united and be one hand. Together we will stick to these chants and focus on the problems of unemployment and poverty because these are the problems that concern all Egyptians, and these are the slogans that have been agreed upon:**

[I reproduce the slogans here with my fairly liberal translations that, where appropriate, attempt at rhyming in English as well:]

(8)

تحيا مصر .. تحيا مصر	Long live Egypt, long live Egypt.
عيش .. حرية .. كرامة إنسانية	Bread, liberty, human dignity.
حرية .. حرية .. حرية .. حرية	Freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom.
يا حرية فينك فينك الطوارئ بيننا وبينك	Freedom, freedom, where've you been, the emergency law stands in-between.
مش هنتخاف مش هنتطاطي إحنا كرهننا الصوت الواطي	No more surrender, no more fear, no more whisper, they should hear.
شعب تونس يا حبيب شمس الثورة مش هتغيب	Dear Tunisians, please fear not, the flame you've lit is burning hot.
بالروح بالدم نفديك يا وطن	Our blood and soul we'll sacrifice, our homeland doesn't have a price.
ارفع صوتك قول للناس احنا كرهننا الظلم خلاص	Raise your voice, say it to all, tyranny we want no more.
واحد اتنين.. احنا المصريين	One, two – Egyptians: me and you
صحي الخلق وهز الكون مصر بلدنا مش هتهون	Shake the world, don't let it sleep, Egypt won't be something cheap.
لما شعب تونس قام هرب اللص والمدام	When Tunisians did it their way, their thief and his madam ran away.
حد أدنى للأجور .. قبل الشعب ما كله يثور	We demand the minimum wage, or we'll all erupt in rage.

حقي ألقى شغل وأعيش والملايم ما بتكفيش	To work and live I have the right, it's not enough to grab a bite.
يلا يا مصري صحي الروح الحرية باب مفتوح	Come on, brother, sleep no more, freedom is an open door.
يلا يا شعب عدّي الخوف خلي الدنيا تصحى تشوف	Come on, people, no more fear, wake the world up, make it hear.
شعب حضارة ومجد سنين مش هيطاطي ليوم الدين	Our culture, our glory, they don't fade away, we'll never bow down until the Judgement Day.

In the conclusion to this section, I wish to make a few comments about this text as a whole. The analysis indicates that MSA-ECA mixing in it is, for the most part, deliberate. It represents a kind of discourse strategy, albeit here implemented in a written political statement, that has been well documented in Arabic political speech making (Holes 1993, Mazraani 1997, Bassiouney 2006). The occurrences of ECA in this pre-dominantly MSA text are unequally distributed – they are topic-bound to the extent that they increase as different sub-sections move the reader from the general cause to the nitty-gritty of the actual event. These occurrences could be divided into “large” (switches or moves) and “small” (inserts). By small occurrences I refer to instances of isolated words or short phrases in ECA that are inserted in MSA sentences (*i.e.* sentences in which the lexical status and morphosyntactic treatment of all other constituents would otherwise give no reasons whatsoever for a colloquial reading). These inserts are represented by forms that have low saliency (such as مش, ده, فيه), *i.e.* those that have high frequency in speech and are easily transferred into MSA contexts. As mentioned earlier, some of this inserts might be taken as typos. Large occurrences, on the other hand, are represented by entire clauses/sentences in ECA. These always appear at the clause boundaries, either within coordinated or complex structures. These large occurrences are the main proof that

MSA-ECA mixing in this call was a choice. Except in one example, all shifts occur in the direction from Fuṣḥa to ʿAmmiyya (MSA→ECA), following the pattern of moving from a more general statement to something concrete (including explanations, clarifications, warnings,...). Where this is not the case is the instance where an MSA clause is embedded between the two “discourse organising” sentences (that serve the purpose of clarification):

طبعا باتكلم عن التعطيل المتعمد للمرور. لأنه في حالة نزول عشرات الآلاف في أي شوارع سيتم تعطيل المرور ومش ده اللي بتتكلم عليه.

Given the predominant variety and presence/absence of mixing, the analysed sections could be roughly classified as follows:

- MSA – 2, 3.
- ECA (predominantly) – 5, 7.
- ECA (exclusively) – 8.
- mix (but predominantly MSA) – 1, 4, 6.

It is interesting to note that in all three sections that contain instances of mixing (1, 4 and 6) it is ʿAmmiyya that is used in the closing of the section¹³ – almost as a punchline, *i.e.* for emphasis and/or establishing solidarity and more immediate communication with the reader. Also, even though it does not shy away from the strategic use of ECA, the text does not contain highly salient colloquial forms, such as, for example, analytic genitive constructions (*bitāʿ / bitāʿit / bitūʿ*).

As discussed in Chapter 1, the inadequacy of the concept of diglossia, as formulated by Ferguson (1959), in handling the formal reality of actual usage (often

¹³ In section 4, this is actually the only part where ʿAmmiyya elements appear. In the other two, ʿAmmiyya elements are also found elsewhere in the text.

characterised by variation and some degree of mixing rather than clear-cut distribution of form and function), has been well documented in a number of studies of spoken data. The written data presented here corroborates the main findings that the concept of diglossia does not even attempt to explain the functional realities and what is shown here to be the motive power behind the variation – the objectives/functions/intentions of communication can change even in the same message. Several types of function-related rhetorical “moves” that *tend* to be associated with MSA or ECA have been identified in this text and summarised in the table below. The list should not be understood as a set of rules, but *tendencies* that characterise this particular text:

MSA	ECA
- <i>general</i> descriptions and explanations	- <i>concrete</i> descriptions and explanations
- facts (and figures)	- emphasis, importance
- demands	- practicalities
	- addressing the reader directly (instructions, warnings, call to unity)
	- invoking personal experience
	- discourse organisers

If a final, rough, generalisation is to be made about this call based on its overall layout (sections), albeit not necessarily in the same order as they appear in the text, it is the one which suggests that the analysed shifts (moves) from MSA to ECA *tend* to occur and increase along the following axis:

WHAT ————— WHY ————— WHO ——— WHERE & WHEN ——— HOW
 MSA MSA MSA/ECA ECA/MSA ECA/MSA

2.2 Before it happens to your mother or your sister – say no to sexual harassment

Unlike the previous section, this one is very short. Here I refer to a text that is so consistent in terms of its code choice, that it need not be analysed. Or at least, it does not open itself up to a kind of reading that was applied to the text above.

It is also a “call” for an event, but unlike the first one, which was political, ambitious and with high stakes, this one was a part of ongoing campaigns for a social cause. It addresses the problem of sexual harassment which, due to its ubiquity in particularly, but not exclusively, urban centres, has come to be recognised as one of the major issues in Egyptian society.¹⁴ In the streets of Cairo, sexual harassment is something many a woman – Egyptian or foreign, veiled or unveiled – has to put up with on daily basis.

In October 2006, in the night of the Fast-Breaking Feast (*ʿīd al-ḥiṭr*) at the end of the holy month of Ramadan – which, in general, is the occasion for many Egyptians to go out and celebrate – a large number of boys and young men in downtown Cairo participated in the biggest ever recorded incident of sexual harassment. Several women who happened to be there were aggressively touched, verbally abused, chased, and some of them even got their clothes ripped. The incident would have never been reported about had it not been for several bloggers who posted on the Internet video clips taken by mobile phones. It was the bloggers' pressure that instigated a public debate and since then, a number of raising awareness initiatives have been launched far more prominently than before with the aim of alerting the general public about this burning issue. The text below is a part of that overall campaign.

¹⁴ Sexual harassment in Egypt has been the topic of many journalistic accounts and a number of academic articles. See for example Ilahi (2009) and Schielke (2009).

The actual event of this call was scheduled for January 21, 2011. As I came to know later, it never took place. Allegedly, some of the organisers were threatened and, ironically enough, harassed. In the end, the whole event was cancelled. Nevertheless, the call itself, which was posted on a number of blogs and circulated on some mailing lists, points toward some of the possible linguistic directions which many similar raising campaigns might be taking in the future:

دعوة

"عايزين شوارع مصر أمان يا شباب"

الجمعة 21 يناير مسيرة بالدراجات في القاهرة ضد كافة أشكال التحرش الجنسي

"عايزين شوارع مصر أمان يا شباب" هيكون شعارنا يوم الجمعة القادم 21 يناير 2011، لما تتقابل في المهندسين أمام مكدونالدز جامعة الدول، عشان ناخذ جولة بالدراجات في شارع جامعة الدول العربية وشارع أحمد عرابي. هيشاركنا في اليوم ده أبطال فيلم 678 وفريق عمل خريطة التحرش الجنسي، من أجل التوعية بأهمية دورنا كشباب وبنات للمساعدة في نشر الوعي بخطورة مشكلة التحرش الجنسي في الشوارع المصرية.

عايزين شوارع مصر أمان يا شباب أمان من المعاكسات والمضايقات اللي بتحصل فيها علشان أختك وهي راجعه من المدرسة تبقى حاسه بأمان، ووالدتك وهي راجعه من الشغل أو السوق تبقى مطمئنه على نفسها وولادها. هنركب عجل ولاد وبنات من الساعة 03:00 العصر لمدة ساعة تقريبا علشان الناس تشوفنا ورسالتنا توصل لأكبر عدد ممكن من الناس...

إحنا شباب وبنات مصر وبهنا إننا نعمل حاجة إيجابية. عايزين شوارع مصر أمان يا شباب لأن ده هيفيدنا كلنا.

لو حاتشارك أو حاتشاركي معانا أكدوا حضوركم عشان تحصلوا على التيشيرتات الي حانلبسها اليوم ده للتوعية بالقضية

الحدث ده تحت رعاية نادي القاهرة للدراجين

(<http://cairocyclists.wordpress.com>)

وخريطة التحرش الجنسي (<http://harassmap.org>) وعدد من أبطال فيلم
678 سوف يتم الإعلان عنهم قريبا بالإضافة الي المؤلف والمخرج محمد دياب
تتمنى نشوفكم يوم الجمعة ان شاء الله

معلومات حول المشاركة

إحنا بنمشي صف جنب الرصيف بحد أقصى اتنين جنب بعض ومحدث بيتخطي
قائد المجموعه واللي هيكون في قدامه عربيه وهيكون في عربيه في اخر
المجموعه علشان نبقي فأمان من العربيات ان شاء الله

لو معندكش عجله ممكن تأجر عجلتك من [...]

Translation:

Call: "We Want the Streets of Egypt to be Safe, Guys"

Friday, 21 January – Cycling in Cairo Against All Forms of Sexual
Harassment

"We want the streets of Egypt to be safe, guys" will be our motto
on this coming Friday, January 21, 2011, when we meet in
Mohandiseen in front of the McDonald's at Gama'at al-Duwal St. to
take a bicycle ride along Gama'at al-Duwal al-Arabiyya and Ahmad
Oraby streets. On this day, we will be joined by the actors of the
film "678" and a team that made Harassmap, in order to raise
awareness of the importance of our role as young men and women
in helping spread awareness of how serious the problem of sexual
harassment is on Egyptian streets.

We want the streets of Egypt to be safe, guys... safe from
harassment and annoyances that take place on them, so that your
sister feels safe on her way back from school, and so that your
mother, on her way back from work or the market, sets her mind at
rest about herself and her children. We, young men and women,
will ride bikes from 3:00 pm for about an hour so that people see
us and our message reaches as many people as possible...

We are the youth of Egypt, and we find it important to do something positive. We want the streets of Egypt to be safe, guys, because this is good for all of us.

If you will participate with us, confirm your attendance so that you get the T-shirts we'll be wearing that day to raise awareness of this issue. This event comes under the auspices of Cairo Cyclists (<http://cairocyclists.wordpress.com>), Harassmap (<http://harassmap.org>) and a number of crew members of the film *678 whose names will soon be announced*, including the screenwriter and director Mohamed Diab. We hope to see you on Friday, in sha allah.

Information about participation

We will ride along the street by the pavement, maximum two people next to each other. No one should go ahead of the leader of the group, in front of whom there will be a car, as there will also be a car at the end of the group so we stay safe from cars, in sha allah.

If you don't have a bike, you can rent one from [...]

Commentary:

The call is, obviously, written in ʿAmmiyya.¹⁵ By virtue of being the Egyptians' native tongue grounded in the everydayness of their lives, ʿAmmiyya has a higher indexicality towards the concrete and personal. What is utilised in this call is its capacity to relate the message of the text to a personal experience of the reader. As shown above, ʿAmmiyya seems to be adequate for mobilisation. Therefore, it should probably come as

15 A caveat must be made by pointing out to three instances of MSA/MSA-like forms (italicised) that appear in the text. The first is the use of the noun *دراجة* /darrāga/ (“bicycle”) alongside with the more common ECA *عجلة* /ʿagala/. The second is the formal adjective *قادم* /qādim/ (“next”) instead of the more common Egyptian *اللي جاي / الجاي* /il(li) gayy/. And the third, most salient one, is an asyndetic relative clause which, like in the case of “undisclosed locations” in the text analysed in the previous section, suddenly dips into journalistic and administrative discourse:

سوف يتم الاعلان عنهم قريبا بالاضافه الي المؤلف 678 أبطال فيلم [...] - “[...] actors of the film 678 whose names will be announced soon in addition to the director [...]”

no surprise that the authors of this text, when calling people to react against something bad that is regularly happening in the streets, opted for ʿAmmiyya. How many similar campaigns in the future will be following in its footsteps is yet to be seen.¹⁶ For the time being, there is at least one, on Facebook, supported (*i.e.* “liked”) by some prominent public figures such as Ahmad El Esseily and Amr Khaled – انا مش هسكت على التحرش.¹⁷ In this case, however, the page is linguistically much less uniform. Its name is in ʿAmmiyya, the description of the page (its cause and statement of mission) is introduced by a short poem in ʿAmmiyya, followed by a longer text in Fuṣṣḥa. Some of the “wall posts” and “notes” written by the page's administrators are in Fuṣṣḥa, others are in ʿAmmiyya. Expectedly enough, most of the followers' posts and comments are in ʿAmmiyya, but it is not unusual to find occasionally someone's post in Fuṣṣḥa. In this Facebook initiative at least, apparently both varieties are drawn on while discussing and campaigning against harassment.

2.3 لا لترقيع الدستور¹⁸

In days preceding the referendum on the constitutional amendments which took place on Saturday, 19 March 2011, a lot of it in Egypt was again about the importance of

16 Another recent incident of sexual harassment – this one being immediately reported about world-wide – was a mob assault on Lara Logan, a CBS News correspondent, which took place while she was reporting from Tahrir Square about the celebrations following Mubarak's resignation on the night of January 11, 2011. According to her testimony, (<http://youtu.be/bO12X1nhzzk>) Logan was separated from the rest of her crew by a group involving 250-300 men who assaulted her physically and sexually.

17 “I won't keep silent about harassment:” – <https://www.facebook.com/AnaMeshHaskot>. Interestingly, or perhaps, ironically enough, among those listed as “liking” this page (in September 2011) was also the official page of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. In March 2011, the army was confronted with serious allegations by some female protesters who had been previously arrested (after Mubarak had resigned) and who claimed to have been tortured and forced to have “virginity tests.” (See, for example, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/egyptian-women-protesters-forced-take-%E2%80%98virginity-tests%E2%80%99-2011-03-23> and <http://bbc.in/kvsDU5>.)

18 “No to patching of the Constitution!”

saying no. On the streets and squares throughout the country, many Egyptians had only recently, very visibly, loudly, clearly and creatively said a system-changing “No!” to a very long-lasting regime. On previous similar occasions (elections and referendums), their choices were always known long before they would even go, or not, to express them (as it would be expected) secretly. Now they were suddenly, and earlier than what, many had argued, would have taken it had they been really offered something substantial to vote for, asked to, supposedly finally freely, position themselves in relation to an alternative, to a binary opposition encapsulated in a yes-or-no question – whether or not they support the proposed amendments.

There started a debate during which, at the discursive level, on both sides of the argument the answer to the question was mostly presented as fatal. While the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as the Salafis, constituted a strong force calling for “yes” and framed this potential “yes” as a religious duty, the intellectual and political forces pushing for a civil, democratic state, the prerequisite for which would have been laid out in an entirely new constitution, were dissatisfied with but a few cosmetic changes and minor modifications.¹⁹ For them, the result of the referendum was determinative of the future of a fragile, post-revolutionary society resembling a convalescent who has yet to learn anew whatever had been kept away by the disease, a society that was yet to start making many new steps if it were to become truly better for those who form it, or, one would also argue, belong to it.

¹⁹ These changes were seen as counter-intuitive to the main revolutionary demand – the downfall of the regime and complete break from the political conditions that had been established in the former system. The buzzword which encapsulated the fear that the revolution would fail and which in those days permeated the media, Internet, and daily conversations among the ordinary people was – الثورة المضادة (“counter-revolution”).

When during the revolution, and especially on February 10, a day before he would eventually step down, Hosni Mubarak, in an attempt to stay in power, announced that similar constitutional changes would be made, the answer that came from the protesting street was “No!” At that time, all forces behind the protests, the Muslim Brotherhood included, stood united around the main demand – *iššaʿb yurīd isqāṭ innizām / iššaʿb yurīd isqāṭ irraʿīs* (“The people want to overthrow the regime / The people want to overthrow the president”). These, however, were utopian moments of national unity that are generally conditioned during revolutions, moments when the overall, idealistic desire for change gets subordinated to particularistic, individual or group visions of what that change actually means: how and, more importantly, to what the present should be changed.

The main uprising, as manifested in continuous, daily protests at least, was now over, with the main demand being only partially met. The president had indeed stepped down, but there were many signs that the old regime, although seriously shaken, was in many ways still in its place. Stories and testimonies of continuing detentions and torture, now conducted by the military forces and not, as the case had been during the Mubarak era, by the police, signalled that one of the major chants during the protests – *iššaʿb wi-ggēš ʿēd waḥda* (“The people and the army are one hand!”), could have been yet another expression of utopian wishful thinking. Cracks started to appear in the ideal image of a unified nation and the public sphere was divided again pretty much along the same lines as it had been before. The Islamists and the members and supporters of the formerly ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) had both had a long history of engagement with the masses and were therefore better organised and experienced in communicating, or

imposing, their opinion. Also, the time to publicly debate the amendments and discuss future scenarios was relatively short. In the end, as television reports from polling stations from across the country kept confirming on the day of the referendum, there was still a lot of “confusion” (*ḥēra*) among the ordinary people as to what exactly they were voting for. Many thought that voting against the constitutional changes would prolong the military rule for an unpredictably long period of time. Many simply wanted to do something good for their country.²⁰ According to *Al Ahram*, the turnout of eligible voters was around 41%, of which 77,2% voted “yes.”²¹

The referendum results came as a sobering alarm to secularists and liberals. They had to wake up to reality and realise that there was a long way to go if they were to propagate successfully their ideas among the large, stratified Egyptian population. Metaphorically and ironically speaking, the up-scale residential island of Zamalek, where many of the intellectual elite live and retreat to eat sushi and sip cappuccino while discussing big politics and drafting grand plans for the country's future, is indeed at a

20 It should not go unnoticed that, while the debate and campaign for the most part clustered around “yes” and “no,” the actual ballot papers (expectedly enough, written in Fuṣṣa) offered the choice between *muwāfiq* and *ḡayr muwāfiq* (“agree” / “disagree”) with two large circles to be ticked printed under each option. Almost the entire text, including the “disagree” option, was printed in black. The text of the amendments, the adjective *muwāfiq* and its circle stood out in green. Apparently, this is not a new practice. On page 85, the textbook *Media Arabic: a course for reading Arabic news* (by Alaa Elgibali and Nevenka Korica, AUC Press, 2007) features a photo (by Joshua Stacher) of a similar ballot paper from the constitutional referendum held in 2005. For a glimpse at the ballot paper from the referendum in 2011, see [<http://thespicebazaar.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/referendum2.jpg>].

In a predominantly Muslim country with a high number of illiterate people, colour-coding the outcome desired by the authorities in green, is anything but a coincidence.

21 [<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/8125/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-referendum-results--per-cent-say-Yes-to-the-.aspx>] Even though the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafis campaigned in favour of the constitutional changes was significant for the outcome, interpreting the results of the referendum exclusively as “the success of the Islamists” (for example, <http://www.thetrumpet.com/?q=8108.6749.0.0>) and as the indicator of their popularity and/or political prospects for the future is at best exaggerated.

walking-distance from Tahir Square, but in symbolic terms it is still miles away from, for example, Abdeen, a central, densely populated lower-class neighbourhood (a stone's throw away from Tahrir), in which I lived for more than two and a half years of my fieldwork in Cairo, away from the city's huge informal settlements (so-called *ʿašwāʿiyyāt*) where poverty is rampant and some of the basic infrastructure and facilities still largely missing, away from the provincial towns and villages where the message of the Muslim Brotherhood has been resonating well not just because of its comforting, religious, ethical appeal, but also because the Brothers had long been there to fill in the void and provide numerous social services and help to the needy, for whom the state had failed to cater.

Here, I critically refer to one particular text which I find emblematic of an often self-congratulatory attitude encountered in my conversations with some of the upper- and upper-middle-class members of the so-called liberal block. It is a very romanticised account of (her experiences of) the Egyptian Revolution which the Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Soueif published in the *Guardian* (Soueif 2011a). Written by a prominent literary figure, and illustrated with descriptions of supposedly real incidents verging on the fictional, Soueif's article calls for certain suspension of disbelief to the extent that it reduces the complexity of social and political life in Egypt before and during the revolution. Both simplistic and exaggerated, her main argument about the spread of “the Tahrir mindset” makes sense only insofar as it states the obvious – that a revolution took place and with it came some different forms of behaviour and expressions of political opinions. Soueif, for example, finds “extraordinary” a scene she had witnessed in Tahrir in one of the early days of the protests – “two young men walking towards me, deep in conversation [...] two men, openly, on a Cairo street, discuss an issue bordering on the political.” She goes on

to explain: “It was the normalcy of it that was so extraordinary, and that was a measure of the repression we had been living under.” (Soueif 2011a)²²

Soueif's article was written in English and aimed at non-Egyptian, presumably Western readers. In disagreement with her, as a foreigner who had interacted with people from across the social spectrum over an extended period of time, I have always found Egyptians to be very politicised. Long before the revolution, I used to meet people that

22 Soueif 2011b is a later, more realistic and sobering account of a rather worrisome aftermath of the protests, written in July 2011. Nevertheless, even in this article her inclusive “we,” repeated many a time throughout the article, again fails to acknowledge the existence of millions of Egyptians who *did not* participate in the demonstrations. In fact, many people were against it, and many, even if supportive of it at first, soon felt a strong sense of disappointment and nostalgia for the “security” of the old days.

Abu Mahmoud is a fifty-five year old resident of the over-populated low-class district of Imbaba. There he lives with his wife and three children in a small rented apartment. He works as *faṭaṭri* (maker of *fiṭir*, layered pastry filled or topped with various sweet or savoury ingredients) at Hagg Ahmed's *fiṭir* shop in Abdeen. The place stays open twenty-four hours and Abu Mahmoud works the night shift. On one such night, he shared his thoughts about the revolution with me: “I'm a poor man. I don't have a car, I don't own a house, and I have my family to take care of, children to feed. I earn money day by day. When I work, I bring home some money. When I don't work, there is no money. Do you know what this revolution has done to us? Can you imagine? It ruined us. It has made things worse. For more than two months this place was closed at night because of curfew. I had no job. It was horrible. And now it's not better at all. Shouldn't things get better after a revolution?! Do you know how many people live in Imbaba? Five million. And had I taken you there during the revolution, you wouldn't have known that something was going on in Egypt. No revolution, nothing. People there have to find bread, they have to survive, they don't have time for this...” We spent nearly three hours talking and arguing. I knew that Abu Mahmoud was exaggerating in his description of the “normalcy” of life in Imbaba during the uprising. But I could understand why he was doing it. In order to reinforce his dissatisfaction with the revolution, he had selectively chosen a lot of what the state-media propagated with the aim of discrediting the continuation of the protests (He repeated several times that it was in my country, Serbia, that “those protesters” received their training, yet another manipulative trick pulled by the state-run media during the summer months of 2011). Abu Mahmoud is a simple, hard-working, desperate Egyptian who is trying to make his ends meet. Whatever his attitudes are, and no matter how they are formed, he is anything but a supporter of Mubarak and the previous regime. At the same time, as it became clear to me through many similar conversations I had with people from the lower social strata, he was not the only one to articulate similar kind of dissatisfaction with the revolution, to talk about foreign influence and interference, and to complain (even if unfoundedly) about those who sought to maintain the pressure on the army and the government. The “we” of Ahdaf Soueif, unfortunately, does not seem to include Abu Mahmoud and millions of others who hold views similar to his.

were interested in and opinionated about the political situation. Often were they willing to discuss it in public places, even with me, let alone among themselves.

As a beautiful example, I refer to a popular Youtube clip featuring “the Eloquent Baker” (*al-xabbāz al-faṣīḥ*), as he came to be known.²³ The clip, made after Mubarak’s resignation but with demonstrations still going on, shows “an ordinary citizen” with (among Egyptians at least) rather extraordinary command of spoken Fuṣṣa giving a very animated and profound political analysis of the moment. Two minutes into his speech, a female voice (presumably of the reporter) interrupts him – in ṠAmmiyya – and asks about his whereabouts during the protests. He responds briefly, in ṠAmmiyya, or to put it precisely, by using the ṠAmmiyya verbal forms (such as /kunt^e baḍṭarr arūḥ/ “I had to / I was forced to go”, /bargaṣ/ “I would/used to come back”) while maintaining certain lexical items that, while shared by both varieties, could be identified as belonging to higher registers (such as /maxbaz/ for “bakery”, as opposed to more colloquial /furn/). He then continues his political statement in Fuṣṣa, often carefully rendering the *ʿrāb*. Even though he could have easily expressed his thoughts in ṠAmmiyya, or in some form of mixed Arabic, the Eloquent Baker did it “as seen on TV”²⁴ – in a variety that he apparently sees as more befitting the topic (and perhaps the medium: the camera).²⁵ Also, to the reporter’s inquiry

23 Watch: <http://youtu.be/N8VDeyr7aVs>.

24 Although a lot of what is “seen” (i.e. heard) on TV in Egypt, even in political programs or politicians’ statements, is in fact very often in ECA, or in its admixture with MSA.

25 As noted earlier, Holes (1993), Mazraani (1997) and Bassiouney (2006) demonstrated that code-switching and code-mixing are discursive strategies employed by some politicians depending on the roles they assume throughout their speeches, and communicative effects they wish to produce among their audience. The Eloquent Baker, on the other hand, does not resort to such rhetorical subtleties in the video referred to here. His delivery fits neatly within Ferguson’s (1959) contested distribution of form and function in which the political speech is put under the rubric of “H-variety.” As such, this man’s statement is indicative of still widely held popular perceptions of what a political speech *should* sound like (But watch him, for example, in <http://youtu.be/rtg49Qa5pFw>, where he shifts back and forth between ṠAmmiyya and

about the daily routine of his revolutionary experience, he could have easily responded in Fuṣṣa. By opting for the colloquial, not only does he respect turn-taking and accommodates to the interlocutor's choice of variety (which she herself did not do when interrupted him in ʿAmmiyya), but, in doing so, he also insists on keeping the mundane and the political apart. Throughout his speech, certain ʿAmmiyya interference is notable only in his inconsistent pronunciation of the interdental and almost exclusively colloquial rendition of the numerals. It is not only the linguistic form in which this short speech was delivered, but also its contents and thoughtfulness that testify to the fact that this was hardly the first time for the Eloquent Baker to elaborate in public on his political views.

Egypt under Mubarak was indeed a repressive dictatorship, no doubt about that. But the way in which Ahdaf Soueif describes the time before the revolution as “either silence or shouting” ignores all too many conversations of the ordinary people of the kind she described, and which she as an Egyptian living mostly in the United Kingdom could have also easily witnessed on any of her visits before the revolution. Her account also fails to do historical justice to a long-lasting, critical and multi-faceted active engagement of many Egyptian public figures, dissidents, intellectuals, artists, writers, journalists, and political and human rights activists who had been very outspoken (without necessarily “shouting”) when expressing their criticism – even if that often meant approaching or crossing the red line.

The referendum, the campaign that preceded it, a relatively large turnout of voters, long queues in which people patiently waited to cast their ballots, the interest many had

Fuṣṣa, reserving the former for his political proclamations and the latter for direct interaction with those around him.)

shown in the significance and nature of the proposed amendments, the “confusion” many had still been left with on the voting day, and, last but not least, the creativity of political campaigning before and during the revolution itself, all testify to the fact that in Egypt there has been a high potential for political activism and mobilisation around a variety of ideas. The question is how to articulate these competing ideas and visions and communicate them to the electoral body. Further research of the rhetorical and discursive strategies of the political campaigning of the first free democratic elections that, at the time of submitting this thesis, are expected to take place in late November 2011, will undoubtedly yield interesting results. Here, however, I look at one specific, sociolinguistically interesting aspect of the campaign that was directed at persuading people to vote against the constitutional amendments.

A major site-and-vehicle of this variously expressed pro-no advocacy was, of course, the Internet, or more precisely – Facebook. Opinion pieces, testimonies, notes, comments, jokes, status updates and calls for events were circulated alongside cartoons and video clips. Some of this material was indeed solemn, but a lot of it drew wittily on a vast cultural and linguistic repertoire which Egyptians have at their disposal: it articulated in a myriad of ways the kind of disposition that is in social and cultural terms highly valued in interpersonal relationships and interactions among Egyptians – the one marked by cheerfulness and sense of humour. What was officially called “constitutional amendments” (*attaḏīlāt addustūriyya*) quickly became referred to as the “patching of the constitution” (*tarḏīḥ iddustūr*).²⁶

26 Watch, for example, the following clips. All of them are in ECA, including the written captions that appear at the beginning and the end of each one of them:

- <http://youtu.be/pRa96Oczg24>

- <http://youtu.be/f0TrBzUC46g>

Here I want to focus on one particular Facebook initiative that was quickly taken up by a large number of Egyptian users. The idea was to replace the user's current profile picture with a white “no” written on a red background. The first “no” that was promoted was لا /lā/ (MSA), but within a day or two it was followed by other, more colloquial variants. The first one of these was the default ECA لا /la'/ and its more emphatic variant لاَّ /la"ɑ/ (also in Latinised versions as “la2a” and “la22a”). Then there appeared what Hinds and Badawi define as a “coarse exclamation of extreme disapproval” - /aħħa/. On various profiles it was featured as either written in Arabic script – لاَّ، or in its Franco variant – a7a. English was also used (“No”), but particularly interesting were the instances of English words being written in Arabic script – نو (no) and هيل نو (hell no). Then came the graphic representation (in Arabic script) of the dental click used to express annoyance and disapproval, equivalent to the English “tut (tut),” or “tsk”. It was written as تُو. Finally, as probably the most emphatic of all, came لع /laʕ/, which on some of the logos was featured as vocalised with *šadda* on its first consonant - لَعَّ.

All these variants of “no” appeared within a matter of days after the initiative started to circulate around Facebook. And all of them followed the graphic design of the initial one – white letters, red background. Their proliferation and variation illustrate the creativity and resourcefulness of those who took part in this form of campaigning – announcing to all your Facebook friends that you are against the constitutional changes and inviting them to join you.

- <http://youtu.be/UnjeYNjfTBI>

- <http://youtu.be/qiwRgkYSQ3o>

- <http://youtu.be/YJ2JjvfbRiU>

- <http://youtu.be/5oInCGwsU0g>

All these various forms of “no” and their deployment to express a political stance, nicely symbolise a *range* of linguistic resources that are nowadays actively used by some Egyptians in their writing practices in particular, and language practices in general. Of all these forms, I find لُج to be particularly interesting. When I first saw it, I did not know what it meant or how it is pronounced. I was equally confused about تُو, so I asked several native speakers to help me.

لُج, which most of my interlocutors used to pronounce exaggeratedly and with some affectation, belongs to *ṣaʿīdi*, *i.e.* Upper Egyptian dialects. In Cairo, it is perceived as a kind of emphatic “no!” It signifies very strong rejection and disapproval. It is very macho.

Interestingly enough, *Ṣaʿīdi* is otherwise very stigmatized in the Egyptian context where the accepted, *i.e.* prestigious, spoken norm is Cairene Arabic.²⁷ Unlike in some other Arab countries, where the situation is less clear-cut, such as in Morocco, for example, where there are still competing varieties, most notably Fessi and Casablančan (Hachimi 2007), in Egypt, all other dialects except the one of Cairo, the uncontested cultural and political heart of the country, have been relegated a lower status: either those from the Delta, or from the south, not to mention those of the Sinai given how much the Nile-Valley-culture of the *fallaḥīn* (farmers) despises the Bedouin, and vice versa. Even the Alexandrians tend to be laughed at by Cairenes because of some of their linguistic features (although the differences between the respective dialects are not big).

27 For an excellent study of dialectal accommodation among Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo, see Miller 2005. For a comprehensive overview of issues pertaining to identity and change in Upper Egypt, see the collection of articles in Hopkins & Saad 2004.

In such a context, the appearance of this ڨ is very telling. It is an instance of what Rampton (1995) labels “language crossing” - using a variety (in this concrete case, only a particular lexical item) of another group (and Upper Egyptians are indeed very often perceived/constructed as the internal Other). Some highly educated, one might even say posh, Cairenes whom I know, had it on their Facebook profiles - all of them, I have to admit, being men.²⁸ As such, it is reminiscent of the famous “baladi”/“ibn al-balad” concept (el-Messiri 1978, Armbrust 1996: 25-29). It carries a lot of tension and it is imbued with ambivalence. At the same time, it comes to function as an “icon” *sensu* Irvine and Gal who define iconisation as “a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence.” (2000: 37) Immediately recognised as Ṣaʿīdi, this word triggers a whole range of stereotypes associated with Ṣaʿāyda (Upper Egyptians) – simplicity, stubbornness, stupidity, but also toughness, manliness, determination,... On one hand, as a linguistic feature of a stigmatised dialect used by the privileged speakers, it signals a form of almost arrogant disgust towards the proposed amendments and the referendum (“even *they* say no”). On the other, yet in the same capacity (the word of the “Other”), it invokes a set of positive connotations and stereotypes associated with that “Other” and becomes somehow inclusive of all Egyptians. As if to invite everyone from across the social strata and geographical locations in what otherwise tends to be a rather class-ridden and

28 This is not to suggest that all those who opted for ڨ were men. I examined several hundred Egyptian profiles and was not able to find it on a single profile of a female Facebook user, which, of course, does not mean that no woman or girl ever used it. I would dare to propose, however, that it was a predominantly “male form,” *i.e.* form used by men since it indexes toughness and manliness.

segregation-oriented society – to vote "no". As one Facebook user captured it in one of his statuses during the campaign:

²⁹The Şaʿayda say *laʿ* and we agree with them – الصعايده بيحولوا لع، و احنا معاهم



2.4 While waiting for the elections: concluding remarks

Online campaigning has become a very important activity in Egypt. Its importance lies in the fact that “online” refers to the medium while the real referent of every Internet campaign is nearly always “offline.” Whether motivated politically, socially or culturally, all campaigns seek to change something in “real life,” of which the “virtual” is gradually becoming an indispensable part. It would be nearly impossible to keep track of all too many Egypt-related online initiatives that are appearing on the Internet. The three cases presented here are but a fraction of thousands of words that are being written and uploaded daily with the aim of gaining support for something. Yet, they illustrate a large portion of the linguistic spectrum that partakes in contemporary online advocacy – from texts written by someone to creative verbal outburst spontaneously created by many; from long, elaborate treatises to a couple of letters representing monosyllabic interjections; from sparing, strategic employment of ʿAmmiyya within texts written in Fuṣṣḥa, to its

29 Note the use of the letter ج instead of ق in the form بيحولوا (instead of بيقولوا) to mark the Upper Egyptian realisation of the CLA/MSA voiceless uvular plosive /q/ as voiced velar plosive /g/ – thus /biygūlu/. In Cairene, this phoneme is almost uniformly realised as glottal stop /ʔ/ (biyʔūlu). Similarly, on some of these small Facebook banners *laʿ* was followed by the entire phrase “to patching of the constitution” with ق of the word ترفيع being substituted with ج in order to reflect the Upper Egyptian pronunciation – ترجيع. This was particularly comical - /targi/ in Cairene means “to return (give/bring back)”, or “to vomit, throw up.”

exclusive use as a fully-fledged vehicle of writing; from the interplay along the standard-dialect continuum, to the exploration of the regional and stylistic levels within the dialect itself... These diverse and interesting writing practices are not limited to online campaigns. As the following chapters demonstrate, they are becoming an important feature of much of the contemporary writing in Egypt, both online and offline. As far as the title of this chapter is concerned, I do not claim that there are no Internet activists who rely exclusively on Fuṣḥa. There are. But for many others Fuṣḥa is no longer enough.

post scriptum

It is Saturday, April 30, 2011. On my way home around midnight, I notice some new posters in the neighbourhood. Only a few hours earlier they were not there. They all have the same background, the Egyptian tricolour, and over its red and white, different messages are written in bold violet typeface. Aligned left on the black band of the flag, the signature in white reads: الإخوان المسلمون (the Muslim Brotherhood, MB).³⁰

I take photos of four of these posters, climb up to my flat, return to my laptop and find out that the MB have fulfilled their promise given in February; they have just formed their political party – Freedom and Justice, الحرية والعدالة.³¹

“Not only did they launch the party, but the campaign as well. Way ahead of the elections... And they seem to have learnt an important lesson about language and this society.” These are my first thoughts as I am looking at:

³⁰ <http://www.ikhwanonline.com/> and <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/> respectively.

³¹ See <http://nyti.ms/qz20IO>. The party's website is <http://www.hurryh.com/>.

- *No to drugs.*
- *I won't pay bribe ever again.*
- *I won't throw garbage in the streets.*
- *I'll fight corruption and report about it.*

What strikes me is that there is nothing Islamist about these messages. Not even anything particularly Islamic. The authors of the banners could have easily resorted to the Qur'an, hadith,³² or many other different sources had they wanted to establish a direct reference to Islam. It is not unusual, for example, to find cleanliness campaigns being articulated around the quotation "Cleanliness is a part of faith" (النظافة من الإيمان). I saw it once or twice in Egypt, and quite a few times in Morocco where I only spent one month in 2008.

There are a lot of people in Egypt, even among the devout ones, who fear that the Muslim Brothers might end up establishing yet another repressive regime if they came to power. And now, the Brotherhood has formed a political vehicle to come to power by calling for freedom and justice. At the same time, in this initial campaign which they launched on the same day when they announced the decision to form the party, their new posters bypass any kind of recognisably Islamic discourse. Instead, the messages are composed so as to reach out to everyone and not only to the Brethren. They are composed of sentences many an Egyptian could easily say and relate to: a man or a woman, believer or atheist, Muslim or Christian, young or old, rich or poor, educated or illiterate. Semantically neutral as to a variety of social categories and identity positions

³² Reports on the sayings, deeds and tacit approvals of the prophet Muhammad.

which Arabic (just as many other languages) could have easily captured in some other forms (e.g. “you masculine” vs. “you feminine”), these “I” sentences aim at encouraging new daily practices among those who read them, or those whom they might be read to. Targeting some of the problems that are very often talked about as impeding development and progress within Egyptian society, these messages are supposed to make a profoundly cultural intervention. While looking at them, I get the impression that the MB long-term, rather vague yet almost sacrosanct, trademark slogan “Islam is the solution,”³³ seems to have been left aside for the moment, and so is – at least in these messages – the variety whom one might expect an Islamist group would be eager to use. Except for one sentence (which can be interpreted as both MSA and ECA), these messages are written in ʿAmmiyya:

- لا للمخدرات
- مش هدف رشوة تانى
- مش هرمى زبالة فى الشارع
- هحارب الفساد وابلغ عنه

Interestingly, they mimic a TV campaign in Egyptian Arabic – “Be positive, be Egyptian” (خليك إيجابى، خليك مصري)، that has been broadcast by OnTV ever since Mubarak was forced to resign the presidency. OnTV is owned by Naguib Sawiris, a Coptic Christian businessman and billionaire, who has also formed a political party in the meantime – Free Egyptians' Party, حزب المصريين الأحرار.³⁴

33 On the Internet and some signs during the uprising, this slogan was wittily rephrased by some to: الخل هو الحل - “Vinegar is the solution” (as a protection from tear gas).

34 <http://almasreyaalahrrar.org/>

Juxtaposed, these two campaigns bring to the fore interesting intertextual dynamics. In one of the OnTV videos,³⁵ a male voice repeats the motto – “xallīk 'igābi, xallīk maṣri”, while three different concrete examples of how to be positive/Egyptian (2msg, imperative) appear only in writing, again, in ʿAmmiyya:

ما تدفعش رشوة – ما تكسرش إشارة مرور – حافظ على نظافة الشارع
Don't bribe - Don't break traffic signs - Keep the streets clean

The MB campaign reads almost as a response to these imperatives that have been circulating on TV for a couple of months already. The use of the first person singular (“I will, I will not”) could therefore be understood as a promise to obey these or similar orders and requests. Or, it could be that the MB campaign envisions a different kind of subjectivity among those whom they target (or want to produce): citizens who are aware and proactive social agents, cable of making decisions on their own, without being told or ordered to do so, capable of changing their behaviour easily, for the sake of a higher, general cause.



I remember that Suleiman (2004: 59) mentioned how mixing was part of the speeches of the Brotherhood's founder Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949, حسن البنا), “in spite of the fact that the third commandment of the party enjoins its members to use [S]tandard

³⁵ Watch <http://youtu.be/e5S2xtcFu84>.

[A]rabic in its capacity as one of distinguishing markers of Islam.”³⁶ I look at these photos of MB posters and think of all too many new political parties that are being formed in post-Mubarak Egypt, leading to an increasing fragmentation of the political field. I wonder what Egyptian political marketing will look and sound like on the eve of the elections scheduled for November 2011. What will be the code choices of various parties and movements across the diversified political spectrum? What discourse strategies will be employed in order to attract the voters? I think of interdiscursivity, and about what seems to be an ongoing solidification of a particular discourse which, once clustered around tropes of social justice, education, poverty, cleanliness, corruption etc., might later be exploited by players with radically different political visions.

I go back to my photos and look at a photograph taken a week or two after I took those of the posters of the Muslim Brotherhood. This one is of another poster, placed on another wall in my neighbourhood, two blocks away from the corner where the Brotherhood had placed theirs. This one, however, is anonymous; it comes “from a man from Egypt.” Except for the more formal, Fuṣḥa noun قمامة, used here to refer to “garbage” instead of زبالة (shared by Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya), the message is basically the same:

“I will not litter the streets and will keep our country clean.”



36 Here, Suleiman refers to a source which was not available to me (al-Musa 1987: 156-7).

Chapter 3

GOING ʿAMMI ALL THE WAY... or maybe not

the case of Wikipedia Masry

3.1 The beginnings of Wikipedia Masry¹

Having been officially launched on November 24, 2008, Wikipedia Masry (WM, arz.wikipedia.org) became the first Wikipedia to be collaboratively written in one of the colloquial varieties of Arabic – the Egyptian ʿAmmiyya

[It] was proposed on 30 March, 2008 and started as a developing project on 2 April, 2008, in the Wikimedia Incubator. The proposal was accepted in July 2008 and the announcement was made on the first day of Wikimania 2008 in Alexandria. On 24 November 2008, the Egyptian Arabic Wikipedia became an official Wikipedia.²

Now in its third year of existence and nearing its third anniversary, it has grown to a phase in which it contains slightly more than 8,000 articles.³ Arabic Wikipedia (WA,

1 A shorter version of a part of this chapter was previously published as Panovic 2010. Also, I had two great opportunities to present some of my early thoughts and observations about Wikipedia Masry at two conferences: (1) “Translating Identity Away – from Fuṣḥa to ʿAmmiyya – the case of Wikipedia Masry” at GURT 2010 (Georgetown University Round Table – Arabic Language and Linguistics, Washington D.C., March 12-14, 2010); and (2) “Wikipedia Masry amidst ideological obstinacy, political correctness, and sociolinguistic dissidence” at the symposium “e-Arabic and Cyberspace: marginalised voices” (University of Durham, June 2010). On both occasions I benefited from several comments, and would particularly like to acknowledge those of Professor Yasir Suleiman and Yonatan Belinkov at GURT.

2 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_Arabic_Wikipedia – accessed 3 October 2011] See also the appropriate WM article (WM – ويكيبيديا مصري).

3 According to its statistics page, on 2 October 2011, WM had 8,056 articles (the total number of pages, including discussion pages, history-of-change pages etc. amounting to 24,692), that had been edited 344,068 times. The number of registered users (بيوزرز مسجلين), those who could potentially act as writers/editors of WM articles) was quoted at 21,325 while the number of users active within the last 30 days (البيوزرز اللى نفذو عمله فى ال 30 ايام اللى فاتو) was 105. (To get the latest data, click on the number of

written in Fuṣṣḥa – ar.wikipedia.org) has been in existence since July 2003. On October 3, 2011, it contained 158,044 articles. The number of active contributors to Wikipedia Masry is still rather small, yet their entries seem to be growing.

The fact of the matter is that a lot of WM articles are, to use Wikipedia term, “stubs” – short articles in need of expansion. For example, by choosing an option to visit a “random page” (صفحة عشوائية) one can easily stumble upon an entry such as “1831”⁴ which should contain information about important events in that particular year, as well as dates of birth/death of famous people, but contains virtually nothing. This testifies to a strategy of “Masry Wikipedians”⁵ to start new articles just for the sake of increasing their number with the hope of expanding them later. This constant growth, in turn, should reaffirm the significance of WM as an encyclopedic source. While the group of Masry Wikipedians is enthusiastically undertaking the project of building a web-based encyclopedia written in ʿAmmiyya, their endeavour – expectedly enough – is not being carried out without controversy and resistance, thus compelling them to actively defend and redefine the project's *raison d'être*, particularly the status of the chosen linguistic variety.

3.2 Debate around Wikipedia Masry

Reacting to Wikipedia Masry, Abdurrahman Gemei, a young and eloquent Egyptian blogger who writes in English,⁶ in his entry posted on June 3, 2009, describes

articles quoted at the main page.)

4 Accessed: 25 April, 2010.

5 “Wikipedian” has become a popular term for a contributor to Wikipedia. Given that “Egyptian Wikipedian” could refer to any Egyptian contributing to Wikipedia in any language (English, Arabic, Masry, French, etc.), I use the term “Masry Wikipedians” for those who write for Wikipedia Masry.

6 In “About Me” page of his blog, Gemei introduces himself as follows:

“I’m a 17 year-old Muslim Egyptian, outraged by chaos and corruption. Egypt has always been the world’s

“Masry” as “a dialect only”, which for him “means that it is spoken only (which means never written) because it is just an accent used only in Egypt.” He further describes it as “a tremendously faulty version” and “a transformation of the Arabic language that has tons of errors. It does not have an official status in Egypt and thus cannot be used in written form.” Gemei is “shocked to see such usage of the Arabic language” and “ashamed to see [his] precious language written in such form.” For him, this is something “very degrading.”⁷

In a very similar tone, on February 1, 2009, in his post “Wikipedia Masry? No, Thanks!”, Dr. Haisook, another young Egyptian blogger who posts in English, formulated his argument against Wikipedia Masry in a very similar vein – by discarding its vehicle of expression, which, in his opinion, “is not a standalone language, [...] just a dialect of Arabic, [...] poor in precise technical terms, so the meanings are all mixed up.” He further states that “in Egypt, the official language by which all formal, scientific, and educational affairs are managed is Arabic. Masri is not recognized by the government, and thus does not have any role in education or scientific research, or in applying knowledge for the benefit of people. You can’t write a scientific paper in Masri, for instance, but you can write it in Arabic.” Therefore, “a wikipedia in a common speech will never be useful. It would be just like a random blah-blah at a bar late at night.” One of the readers of this post commented: “It’s not easier for us (Egyptians) to read in this Masry thing, it’s crap, we never saw it written, and it’s not a language at all.”⁸

greatest civilization, but now, it's just another developing country. I'm not happy about that, and nobody is. We need change, and change will come from strong faith in Allah. This is what we need... strong faith in Allah.”

[<http://www.blogger.com/profile/11491792630102971728> – accessed 3 October 2011]

7 [<http://abdgemei.blogspot.com/>] (archive – June 3, 2009) – accessed 3 October 2011]

8 [<http://drhaisook.wordpress.com/2009/02/01/wikipedia-in-masri-no-thanks/>] - accessed 3 October 2011]

As in the case of Galal Amin (2009) quoted in Chapter 1, here we see again an expression of the attitude that writing in ʿAmmiyya represents a “degradation” of Arabic, supported in this case by a circular argument which, over the course of my fieldwork in Egypt, I had more than one chance to hear being expressed in a similar way – that ʿAmmiyya is not official and that therefore could (=should) not be used in writing, in other words – that it could not be written because it is not written. Moreover, what makes Wikipedia Masry particularly interesting is what I call its *sociolinguistic dissidence*, this almost heretical ambition to employ ʿAmmiyya for knowledge production, to use it in scientific discourse, which – unlike literary writing, traditionally more flexible and open to colloquial – has been traditionally perceived as the exclusive domain of Fuṣṣḥa.

Gemei and Dr. Haisook are just two among many angry voices online. So far, Wikipedia Masry has been discussed and criticised in numerous forums, blogs, and a few Facebook groups.⁹ Main arguments against it echo all those familiar tropes constitutive of a metalinguistic discourse that resurfaces in the Arab world every once in a while, the discourse “in which [Standard Arabic and its associated dialects] are the topic of contention between parties with irreconcilable ideological differences.” (Suleiman 2004: 60) Tackling these arguments from a linguistic point of view is a futile task. They are grounded in folk belief about language and “the immunity of folk belief from empirical or logical refutation derives first and foremost from its ideological nature.” (*ibid.* 61) As such, these arguments are indexical of “extralinguistic issues” – they “signal metonymically the concern with identity, modernization, tradition, change and globalization.” (*ibid.* 93)

9 See the Appendix 3-1.

3.3 *Masry* – defining a language

In a *post scriptum* to his attack on Wikipedia Masry, Gemei ironically asks: “What the hell is arz?” – a question that deserves an answer. *Arz* is one of the key reference points on which Masry Wikipedians base their argument, and their claim for the independent status of “Masry.” It is the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)¹⁰ code for Egyptian Arabic. When submitting his proposal to the Wikimedia Foundation language committee, a Wikipedian with a username Ghaly, formulated his request as follows: “Egyptian Arabic (Masry)¹¹ as a language is spoken by more than 70 million people in Egypt and other countries, it has ISO 639-2 and ISO 639-3 Codes which is arz.” Initially, Ghaly had envisioned Wikipedia Masry to be “written in layperson terms and a mixture between Egyptian slang and simple Arabic” so that it provides “the information to speakers of Egyptian Arabic in a way similar to what Wikipedia Simple English is doing currently in comparison to Wikipedia English.”¹² Some ten days later, and after being criticised for an attempt to actually start a “Simple Arabic Wikipedia,” Ghaly revised his argument, claiming that he had never intended that:

I used the example for demonstration purposes only, I recognise Egyptian Arabic as a language as many other people do, I have no intention to start a simple Arabic wikipedia as I think the Arabic wikipedia is developing really well and I edit on it a lot, I have started more than 300 articles myself there.¹³

¹⁰ www.iso.org

¹¹ Note that here, in the proposal and debate in English, Ghaly explicitly refers to “Masry” as Egyptian *Arabic*. Compare it to complete absence of (and, in fact, implicitly held or explicitly expressed, definition against) the adjective Arabic throughout Wikipedia Masry itself – discussed below.

¹² [http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Requests_for_new_languages/Wikipedia_Egyptian_Arabic#Description_of_Egyptian_Arabic_from_English_wikipedia.5B1.5D – accessed 3 October 2011]

¹³ Ibid.

Following a debate, the project was approved and “مصري” found its place on the Wikipedia menu of languages. It needs to be pointed out that what founders of Wikipedia Masry actually have in mind when delineating the kind of *maṣri* that should preferably be used for writing WM articles, could in fact more precisely be called *qāhiri* (maybe even *maṣrāwi*) – Cairene (Egyptian) Arabic, which Woidich rightfully labels “the Egyptian Standard” (1994: 493)¹⁴ – so, not just any (rural or urban) variety that partakes in the linguistic make-up of the country, but the one which carries the highest prestige, thus conferring on its speakers the highest symbolic capital which those coming from other parts of the country, if they are to move up socially, have yet to acquire by accommodating linguistically to the speech patterns of the country's capital.¹⁵ Therefore, one of the “general principles” for writing WM articles states:

اكتب بالشكل اللي يعجبك، بس الفاهريه هيه الطريقه المشهوره لكتابة الكلام
 المصري؛ المهم يفهمها المصريين
 Write any way you like, but Cairene is the well-known way for
 writing Egyptian. The main thing is that (all) Egyptians understand
 it. (WM: طريقة الكتابة)

Throughout Wikipedia Masry, its language has more than one name. Judging by the main entry, its “official” name should be *المصري* /ilmaṣri/ or *اللغة المصرية الحديثة* /illuḡa

14 As Mitchell noted, “in the important case of Egypt, the colloquial usage of the cultured classes of the capital city provides spoken norms for the whole country.” (1975:70)

15 For more discussion on competing prestigious forms in Arabic, see, for example, Ibrahim 1984 and Haeri 1996, 1997. In questioning the conceptual justification and usefulness of Ferguson's *diglossia* it is sometimes suggested that the situation he described does not in fact differ significantly (if at all) from sociolinguistically ubiquitous standard-*cum*-dialects situations (see, for example, Al-Sharkawi 2007 and Mansour 2007). I feel that this type of criticism needs further elaboration. It has to position itself in relation to what it actually implies – that in Arabic speaking communities there might be two standard-with-dialects situations co-existing simultaneously. (In Egyptian context, these would include Fuṣṣa vs. ʿAmmiyya and Cairene ʿAmmiyya vs. other Egyptian dialects) If this really is the case, are these two situations identical? If, by any chance they are not, do we then need a term (which we already have) to distinguish one from another?

Imaṣriyya Iḥadīsa/ – “Modern Egyptian Language”. In addition to this, it is also referred to as:

				←	←	←
اللغة المصري الحديثه	اللغة المصري	الكلام المصري	كلام مصري	مصري		
illuḡa Imaṣri Iḥadīsa	illuḡa Imaṣri	ilkalām ilmaṣri	kalām maṣri	maṣri		

The last two cases (اللغة المصري الحديثه and اللغة المصري) are particularly interesting. Although they seem to be coined according to what appears to be a general ʿAmmiyya rule of using a deflected, or, according to David Wilmsen (1999), “degendered” form of the *nisba*-adjectives of origin regardless of the gender of the non-human head-noun (for example, قهوة تركي /ʾahwa turki/ – “Turkish coffee”), some native speakers whom I asked to comment on these forms were reluctant to accept them, and some even rejected them as ungrammatical.¹⁶ In order to minimise the possibility of, so to speak, ideologically induced “unspeakability” of the phrase “the Egyptian language” (since I was corrected more than once that “there is no such a thing as the Egyptian language”), I also used other phrases with degendered agreement, such as اللغة الألماني (“German language”) and اللغة الإنجليزي (“English language”). Some of the interlocutors expressed the same kind of reluctance regarding these phrases. At the same time, there were quite a few for whom these were perfectly acceptable. It was as if there was something too Fuṣḥa about the word *luḡa* that seemed to make it resistant to a grammatical treatment in accordance with ʿAmmiyya rules.¹⁷

16 Wilmsen claims that “[w]ith *nisba* adjectives of origin, material make-up, or color, degendering has gone to completion” (1999: 227). But, note feminine adjectival congruence in the following example, this time with the word “civilisation”:

الحضارة المصرية القديمة (الحضاره الفرعونيّه)

If variation of this feature on Wikipedia Masry could be seen as telling us something about “degendering” of *nisba*-adjectives in, at least, written ʿAmmiyya, then is telling us that this old feature has not been completed yet.

17 Although it cannot be used as a proof of some kind of its “Fuṣḥanness,” it is interesting to note in passing

The interlocutors' reluctance *vis-à-vis* two phrases quoted above could also be accounted for due to their uncommon usage in connection with the word *luġa*, which is usually omitted:

Languages are referred to by *using the masculine singular* of the nisba-adjective, defined or undefined: *bakkallim ʿarabi* (I speak Arabic), *il ʿarabi luġa gamīla* (Arabic is a beautiful language).

(Woidich & Heinen-Nasr 2004: 20 – first emphasis mine)

I feel a comment is needed on this explanation.¹⁸ The authors seem to imply that it is a matter of free choice whether the adjective will be used defined or undefined even though their examples suggest that in/definiteness might have something to do with (a) substantivisation *vs.* adverbialisation of the adjective, and consequently (b) its syntactic treatment. I reversed these two examples (*bakkallim il- ʿarabi* and *ʿarabi luġa gamīla*) and presented them to five native speakers. All of them rejected the former as being

the behaviour of this lexical item in possessive constructions such as *luġat-ak* (your language), *luġat-u* (his language), etc. in contrast with the general rule about sounding of the feminine ending *-a(h)* as *-(i)t* when the feminine noun is the first element of the construct state (*ʿiḍāfa*), or when pronominal (possessive) suffixes are added to it (The word *sana* - “year,” is treated in the same way). Hinds & Badawi (1986), however, attest the *-it* form as well. Under the lexical item *luġa* (in their transcription, *luḡa*) /n pl -*aat*/ we read: “1 language. *il-luḡa l-ʿingiliziyya* the English language. 2 speech, manner of speaking *luḡit iṣ-ṣiʿīd*, the speech of Upper Egypt” (792). Also, it is interesting to keep to in mind, that in the terminology of mediaeval grammarians this word was used to designate a “dialect.” (I thank Professor Manfred Woidich for pointing this out to me.) As for contemporary meanings, Mejdell (2006:397) states: “The notion *luġa* is interesting [...] because, in spite of it usually being rendered as 'language' when translated into English, *luġa* is in fact used for a range of linguistic phenomena, equivalent to notions of '(linguistic) usage', 'way of speaking', 'linguistic items/characteristic', 'variety' and 'language'.”

18 With the understanding, of course, that this explanation (and thus inevitable simplification) is found in an introductory textbook for students of Egyptian Arabic and not in an elaborate grammatical treatise. Unfortunately, while writing up this thesis, I did not have access to the most comprehensive grammar of Cairene Egyptian Arabic *Das Kairenisch-Arabische. Eine Grammatik* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006) by Manfred Woidich. Given the author's admirably in-depth treatment of the syntax of Cairene Arabic, it is likely that the issue has been dealt with there in more detail.

non-idiomatic, and three of them rejected the latter. I found it quite surprising that two native speakers accepted the latter since I had initially thought that among the two, this one was obviously ungrammatical.¹⁹ I assume that the two speakers who accepted the string *ʿarabi luġa gamīla* as a grammatical sentence with the meaning “Arabic is a beautiful language,” simply did not understand me. If, however, they did and if more native speakers were to be found who would accept it, then the only explanation I can think of is that in this case we are in fact dealing with the substantivised adjective that is not only a noun, but a proper name of a language and, as such, it lends itself to variable treatment regarding the optional use of the definite article, as sometimes is the case with proper names.²⁰ In the case of the latter – *bakkallim ʿarabi* vs. (?/*)*bakkallim il-ʿarabi* – I propose that the adjective here is not substantivised and thus the direct object of the verb, but is in fact used *adverbially*, which precludes the idiomaticity of the *il*-form.²¹

Another, simple, explanation would be that the substantivised form without the definite article is used far more often than the one with the article, in which case *ʿarabi* in *bakkallim ʿarabi* could be interpreted as the direct object rather than an adverb. Nevertheless, it seems that the phrases such as (a) *bi-l-ʿarabi* (most common) vs. (?/*)*bi-ʿarabi* (for “in Arabic” but also “in Egyptian Arabic”); and (b) *bi-l-maṣri* (common) vs. (?/*)*bi-maṣri* (for “in Egyptian Arabic”) are not likely to occur with similar frequency. In other

19 The basic rule for the grammaticality of this kind of nominal sentence in Arabic is that its subject must be definite.

20 Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004: 95) – I quote the relevant sentence in the following section.

21 Telecom Egypt (المصرية للاتصالات), for example, had written advertisements promoting low rates of landline phone services. The text was a play on the Egyptian proverb *il-ʿarḍ bititkallim ʿarabi* (The earth speaks Arabic) and it read *كله بيتكلم أرضي* (which is to be understood as “Everybody uses landline”). The *il*-forms were reserved for the type of call (i.e. noun), as, for example, when quoting rate per minute: *دقيقة الأرضي ٣ قروش* – “landline minute for 3 piasters,” or *دقيقة لأي دولة / أي وقت* – “international minute for any country / any time.” In this case, it is clear that *أرضي* is not the direct object of the verb *يتكلم* but its modifier, i.e. it specifies *how* talking/speaking is done, rather than *what* is spoken.

words, the distribution of the defined/undefined adjectival forms in this case is not optional.

As for the general rule on the use of nisba-adjectives, Abdel-Massih et al. (2009: 23) state: “Nisba adjectives denoting color, [...] and those denoting place of origin (when modifying non-human nouns) are *usually masculine singular* regardless of the form of the modified noun” (emphasis mine). Woidich & Heinen-Nasr (2004: 19-20) provide the following relevant formulations:

If the *nisba*-adjective occurs in the feminine singular or plural, it almost always relates to *persons*. [...] When referring to *inanimate objects* (non-humans) of whatever gender and number, the adjective is always in the masculine singular.

(emphases in the original).

So, it remains unclear how concepts such as “language”, or “civilisation” are treated when feminine. Does this variable treatment tell us something about how they are perceived by native speakers (animate? personified? etc.) or, are they to be considered borrowings from Fuṣḥa that are then predominantly subject to strict agreement?

3.4 “Bye bye to grammar?”: struggling with the name, struggling with the form

Not only can these rules be puzzling for a researcher, but they may also resurface as a contentious issue for Masry Wikipedians and their online critics. In a debate that had preceded the official approval of WM, an interesting exchange occurred regarding the usage of *nisba*-adjectives. One user suggested the form “ويكيبيديا المصرية” /wikipidiya Imaṣriyya/ as a more correct than “ويكيبيديا مصري” /wikipidiya maṣri/, claiming that the word

Wikipedia is feminine, not masculine. Ghaly explains that what is meant by the name **ويكيبيديا مصري** is that it is “written in Egyptian.”

“And who says that this is Egyptian?,” protested the first, “Egyptian language doesn’t mean that you should say bye bye to grammar. Think about it and you’ll see that it’s wrong this way. It doesn’t work, that Wikipedia Masry.” Ghaly then goes on to explain that the grammatical rules of the Egyptian language have not yet disappeared (WM – main page, discussion):

A: اسم ويكيبيديا المصرية أصح من ويكيبيديا مصري عشان ويكيبيديا مؤنث مش مذكر..

Ghaly: ويكيبيديا مصري مكتوبه بالمصري

A: ومين قال ان ده مصري؟ مش معنى لغة مصرية يعني القواعد تروح في الباى باي.. فكر فيها وهتلاقي انها غلط كده.. مش ماشية خالص ويكيبيديا مصري دي..

Ghaly: لما المصرى يتكلم عن لغه بيتكلمها بيقول انا يتكلم انجليزى او انا بتكلم فرنساوى , و لما المصرى يتكلم عن ويكيبيديا بيقول ويكيبيديا انجليزى او ويكيبيديا فرنساوى او ويكيبيديا عربى , و دى ويكيبيديا مصري , قواعد الكلام المصرى لسه مش فى الباى باى [...]

When an Egyptian talks about a language he speaks, he says 'I speak *ingilīzi* (English),' or 'I speak *faransāwi* (French),' and when he talks about Wikipedia, he says 'Wikipedia *ingilīzi*' or Wikipedia *faransāwi*, or Wikipedia *ʿarabi* (Arabic)' and this is Wikipedia *maṣri* (Egyptian). The grammar (rules) of the Egyptian language have not yet vanished (*lit.* “gone to the bye-bye”) [...]

A third discussant joins in later with a grammatical explanation:

B: بالمصرى الصفه بتكون معظم الوقت بالمذكر لغير العاقل، حتى لو الموصوف مؤنث، يعنى مثلا: عربية يابانى، قطة صعيدى، لغه هندى، إلخ
In Egyptian, with the non-human (lit. non-rational), the adjective is most of the time masculine, even if what it refers to is feminine, such as, for example: a Japanese car, an Upper Egyptian cat, Hindi (language) etc.

Browsing through various parts of WM suggests that the phrase *wikipidiya masri* (with the deflected/degendered agreement and without the definite article) is the preferred form. However, in some of the discussions, the phrase is also encountered with the definite article. Regardless of the degendered form of the adjective and lack of the article, the entire phrase *ويكيبيديا مصرى* is apparently feminine and definite, as exemplified by its use in the subject position in the following sentence:

ويكيبيديا مصرى مكتوبه باللغه المصرى (WM: طريقة الكتابه)
Wikipedia Masry is written in the Egyptian language.

Arabic Wikipedia,²² on the other hand, at least when it comes to adjectival agreement, leaves no doubts with its expected Fuṣḥa form – *ويكيبيديا العربية* /wikipidiya alʿarabiyya/. Nevertheless, the in/definite status of the word *ويكيبيديا* is unclear in the WA as well, since it is also encountered with the definite article – *الويكيبيديا العربية*. Badawi, Carter and Gully (2004: 95) note that “[t]here is and always has been considerable variation in the presence of the def. art. [definite article] with proper names: [and that] many doublets occur, e.g. *al-iskandariyya* الاسكندرية v. *iskandariyya* اسكندرية 'Alexandria', *al-suways* السويس v. *suways* سويس 'Suez', [...]” This certainly accounts for the presence of doublets in WA where in both cases the modifying adjective “Arabic” attracts the definite article regardless of the presence or absence of the definite article on the head

22 Needless to say, some ideal “Fuṣḥanness” of Arabic Wikipedia must not be taken for granted before a – still needed – linguistic examination of its language features is conducted.

noun “Wikipedia.” The default WM phrase *ويكيبيديا مصري*, however, the one in which both the head noun and its modifying adjective remain without the definite article, yet the phrase syntactically functions as definite, remains puzzling.

3.5 WM language ideology

It is obvious that none of the names used to designate ^ʿAmmiyya in WM bear any link to (the adjective) *Arabic*. As such, these names are clear articulations of Masry Wikipedians' linguistic ideology that defines “Masry” as a separate language, independent from, and even genealogically unrelated to Arabic. According to WM, “Modern Egyptian Language” is (and here I adapt and abbreviate to a certain extent):

the language spoken by Egyptians in Egypt. Its history started in the Nile Delta and is now the dominant language in Egypt spoken by the majority of its inhabitants. It is a recognised language, its ISO code being arz (ISO 639). It is a language whose fate was such that it was not written although it sometimes is written in novels, stage plays, and poems (the “vernacular” culture), as well as in magazines, caricatures, advertisements, and somewhat in newspapers. Finally, there are some books written in it. Most of the printed media and TV news are delivered in Classical Arabic that has been developed and modified, yet there are now some channels that use Masry instead of Arabic for broadcasting news, such as OTV channel. Also, the National Democratic Party now writes its slogans in Masry. Modern Egyptian language is the native tongue of 76 million Egyptians, and it is actually a separate language, of Hamitic (African) origin, an extension from ancient Egyptian languages, with syntactic and morphological rules that are different from those of Arabic (اللغة العربية). It has taken a lot of vocabulary from Arabic, but also from other languages, such as Coptic, Turkish, English and French...

(اللغة المصرية الحديثه - WM)

Some of these claims, first and foremost the one about Hamitic origin of Egyptian ʿAmmiyya, are easily refutable from a linguistic point of view. But this is beside the point. They are traceable directly to the ideas of Bayumi Qandil whom WM, in a lengthy and elaborate article, identifies as one of the representatives of the “Egyptian School of Nationalist Thought.” Given the brevity of many WM articles, and the length at which, in their respective articles, Egyptian nationalist thinkers (such as Salama Musa or aforementioned Bayumi Qandil) or certain cultural and historical themes have been dealt with, it is clear that Masry Wikipedians are the proponents of Egyptian territorial nationalism of a kind that sets itself apart from Arab or Islamic nationalisms (and communitarianisms), seeking to carve out a specifically *Egyptian* identity. The uniqueness of such identity is confirmed by the alleged existence of a separate, Egyptian, language, and is reaffirmed by an imagined continuity of territorially bounded Egyptianness that uninterruptedly stretches back to the pharaonic times. Hence the ease with which Masry Wikipedians seem to embrace and promote some radical and even erroneous ideas about language. Since “[t]he conflict between standard Arabic and the colloquial [in Egypt] is an expression of ideological differences about Egyptian national identity” (Suleiman 2006: 142), the radical linguistic claim serves here to give strength and support to a nationalist aspiration. Therefore, it serves some “higher purpose.” Such a claim might manipulate or even distort the linguistic facts (resulting in what we might call *linguistic extremism*) but its main task is to define/establish a language as an important cultural ingredient in identification practices that would be accepted by, and inclusive of all Egyptians. Given the country's demographic composition, such nationalism can rely neither on ethnicity nor religion as possible allies in accomplishing its mission. If it is to be something shared by all, it has to be language. However, it is not enough for that language to *unite* all

Egyptians; it also has to *distinguish* them, set them apart from the “others.” This is why it has to be so “different”, so “independent”.

The fact that Ghaly, *spiritus movens* of this project, is a Christian (and, judging by their contributions and/or user pages, so are some other WM users) should not be underestimated. Members of the minorities or marginalised groups tend to be more active in the field of identity politics, more eager to look for alternatives to practices and ideologies which members of the dominant group(s) might comfortably and unreflectively adhere to. Some of the opponents of Wikipedia Masry have been quick in picking up on the religious affiliation of some prominent WM users, using it as a counter-argument against this project which is then seen as antagonistic to Islam and/or the Arab nation.²³ It almost goes without saying that there are also those who see in Wikipedia Masry yet another Jewish plot.²⁴

3.6 From a personal point of view

On January 6, 2010, in a coffee shop in downtown Cairo, I interviewed Nabil, a twenty-three year old Masry Wikipedian, who talked to me about his long-term engagement with Wikipedia.²⁵ A student of English, Nabil described himself as “passionate about languages.”

23 This is a familiar pattern. Writing about Salama Musa and Lewis Awad, two main Egyptian advocates of the use of the dialect in writing, Suleiman reminds us that “[t]he language-defenders subjected [them] to ferocious attacks. Their Coptic background was used as a stick with which to beat them.” (2004:79)

24 Watch, for example, the Youtube video listed in the App 3-1 [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmbZkUCjYbw>]

25 During our interview that was conducted in Egyptian Arabic, Nabil briefly shifted to English several times.

He was sixteen when he first opened a Wikipedia account and started contributing and editing. At that time, it was the English Wikipedia that he worked on. It was at about the same time that he joined the political movement “Mother Egypt”, later to become the Egyptian Liberal Party, the main ideological pillars of which are secularism, Egyptian nationalism and the idea of promoting ‘Ammiyya to the official language of Egypt. Although not a member of it any more, Nabil is still a fervent Egyptian nationalist. In his own words, “here in Egypt, whenever we talk, in the media, I don't know what, it's always about Arabs, Arabs this, Arabs that, our brothers Arabs... Even our name, the name of our country, Arab Republic... But where is Egypt? ... Even, [here he shifted from Egyptian Arabic to English] even the nation, it's always in the context of Arab brotherhood.” I asked him why the idea of Arab brotherhood bothered him to which he said: “I know there are some common things among Arabs, but there are also common things among Europeans, yet no one will say that a German is not a German, and that a Frenchman is not French.” When I told him that the French and Germans speak quite different languages, he quickly drew on the example of Italian, Spanish and French saying that “they are all from Latin, but nobody calls them Latin and nobody writes Latin in Italy, or France, or Spain.” He added how “Italians can understand Spanish but Egyptians cannot understand Algerians when they speak.”

Later, he spoke to me enthusiastically about “Masry” and how much it is different from Arabic. To my objection that the claim about the Hamitic origin of “Masry” is false, that it is in fact Semitic and that there is so much about its structure that is Arabic, Nabil simply said he did not write that particular article, that what I was saying could be true, but

that there are many differences between the two and that he personally had always thought of “Masry” as a different language.

Nabil is not against Fuṣḥa as a language. Neither does his support for ʿAmmiyya stem from his lack of mastery of Fuṣḥa. In fact, when the Arabic edition of Wikipedia was launched, he joined it and, just like Ghaly, the founder of Wikipedia Masry, has been an active contributor ever since. What he is against, is what he perceives to be the *status quo* in which Fuṣḥa is recognised and promoted as the only official language in Egypt, as the only language that deserves to be written. I wanted to know how he became involved in Wikipedia Masry:

Ghaly got in touch with me one day through my user page. He said he saw my articles in Arabic Wikipedia and told me about the idea of Wikipedia Masry. He was preparing the proposal and he needed people to support him so that the Wikipedia approves it. Many people were against, many supported it; there were many attacks. They still attack us. It's a real battle.

Until the day we had our interview, Ghaly and Nabil had never met each other. Nabil still contributes to all three Wikipedias – in English, Arabic and Masry. Nabil is a Muslim.

3.7 The common cause

What unites Nabil and Ghaly is not necessarily some kind of hatred towards Islam or Arabs. It is their similarly articulated nationalism, and their love and appreciation for their native tongue that brings them together. The fact that both of them, as well as some other Masry Wikipedians continue to contribute to Arabic Wikipedia is neither paradoxical nor surprising. Although it helps us see them in a light different than the one cast on them

by their opponents (for whom they are traitors, ignoramuses, illiterates, conspirators, agents, enemies of Arabic, Arabs and Islam, etc.), this should not be taken to mean that Masry Wikipedians are inevitably active supporters of Arabic Wikipedia, schizophrenics who spend their time building it and improving it by writing in Fuṣḥa just to go on later to defy it by writing on Wikipedia Masry in ʿAmmiyya. Simply, as far as contemporary Arabic and its varieties are concerned, Wikipedia in Fuṣḥa was there first to meet their desire to participate in a collaborative act of creating and disseminating knowledge, a desire that earlier could have been fulfilled only through their participation in Wikipedia's editions written in foreign languages they might have been good at.

For many people around the world, being a Wikipedian is a serious business, an endeavour to which they dedicate a lot of time and effort. At the same time, Wikipedia is a site of contest among various perceptions of what constitutes valid, reliable information, and how that information should be delivered. With numerous acts of editing, deleting, reformulating, reverting, vandalism and edit-wars, especially in the articles dealing with sensitive and controversial topics, Wikipedia is often enacted as a battlefield of competing world views, visions, and ideological positions. My argument here is that this contesting character of Wikipedia, as well as Masry Wikipedians' concern with the content and linguistic form of Wikipedia articles, should be accounted for in order to understand this kind of cross-wikipedian code-switching in which some of them engage.

When some Masry Wikipedians participate in Arabic Wikipedia, they do so because they care about the content of certain WA articles. Given that the ideological allegiances of many Fuṣḥa-only contributors to WA might differ in their treatment of

particular topics, Masry Wikipedians concerned with those topics will have to keep a watchful eye over the evolving and changing content.²⁶ The form, however, is already given and codified. All they have to know is how to write it properly. They do not necessarily have to have any emotional investment in it. And, most likely, they don't. On the other hand, Wikipedia Masry, which is to be written in a variety that, due to its uncoded state, needs their attention and elaboration, remains their primary project towards which their joint efforts and emotions are directed. It is where they have to struggle with both content and form.

I do not wish to imply here that all Masry Wikipedians think and act alike. Quite the contrary! With its discussion pages, Wikipedia offers a wonderful opportunity to look behind the scene and witness the ongoing debates, not only between Masry Wikipedians and their opponents, but also among Masry Wikipedians themselves. It opens a window onto a microcosm in which proposals are made and discussed, options debated, preferences and choices critiqued or approved, positions of power and authority negotiated and shifted, and finally, certain decisions made and general guidelines for the group's activity endorsed. Since it is made up of individuals joined around a common interest, or a set of interests, Wikipedia could be approached as sort of anthropological laboratory in which to observe how old ideologies are reproduced, and how some new ones might be coming into being. Let us look at one example:

²⁶ Go, for example, over the history of editions and changes of the WA article on Copts. Some of the editors contribute both to WM and WA.

3.7.1 Write in Egyptian, please!

This is one case where administrators of Masry Wikipedians found themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea. They had to negotiate between two, in this case conflicting, interests – between the quantity and quality of the WM content.

There was an active user²⁷ who contributed a lot of new articles to Wikipedia Masry. On numerous occasions, administrators and some other active Masry Wikipedians wrote on his user page to praise him for his efforts and contributions. Nevertheless, they also hardly ever failed to admonish him for his language use. He was constantly reminded that he should not simply copy the articles from WA, that the articles in WM should be written in “Egyptian” or “Egyptianised,” that he should stop adding new stubs while the previous articles had not been Egyptianised yet, etc. The user seemed to have ignored these recommendations, continuing with what he was doing best. As the number of his contributions grew, so did concern and dissatisfaction of WM enthusiasts who would come back to reproach him. More than once he was asked if he was at all Egyptian and if he at all knew how to speak and write Egyptian. Over the course of time, the questions and comments, which seem to have received little or no attention from the user, were posted on his user page, both in ʿAmmyya and in English. Here is but a fraction of what was going on for more than a year:²⁸

June 2009:

لو سمحت تبقا تاخذ بالك ان اللغة بتاعة الموسوعه دى هى المصرى مش
العربى. مقالاتك كويسه و فيها معلومات كثير و انا مش عايز امسحهم لان سياسة

27 The user had a male Arabic name as the username, and was addressed as such by the others, so I will refer to the user as “he”.

28 Quotations have not been edited and they are reproduced here as they appear on the user's page.

الموسوعه هنا ان اى مقاله مش مكتوبه بالمصرى لازم تتمسح. تحياتى[...]²⁹

September 2009:

You cannot contribute to English Wikipedia unless you know English Language, You cannot edit chinese wikipedia without mastering the chinese language, Dear [username], me as well other users here in Egyptian wikipedia have been, time after time, dropping you friendly reminders not to copy from other websites and paste them here, YOU JUST CAN'T DO THAT please understand there is a violation of copy rights, there is a violation of Masry wikipedia official language policy, there is a wasting of your time as well as our times trying to fix up the articles you are adding without even bothering to edit them into Masry. If you are not able to write in Masry and you find it easier for you to write in Arabic, Please go ahead and edit the arabic wikipedia and I am sure they are in need for your valuable contributions [...]

إزيك يا [username]. ممكن أسألك سؤال إنت مصرى ؟ لآنى بألاحظ إنك ما بتعرفش تترجم مقالاتك بالمصرى . لو مش مصرى قولنا واحنا نساعدك بدل ما جهدك يروح ع الفاضى . شكراً³⁰

January 2010:

Well, that's what I'm trying to do: Re-writing after you. However, it would be more appreciated if you focus on a few articles & make them look nice, instead of distressing yourself with too many articles. [...]

February 2010:

I beg you, please, do not write in Arabic in here. Save your text on your own computer & when you are done with Egyptianizing it,

29 "Could you please take note that the language of this encyclopaedia is Egyptian, not Arabic. Your articles are good and they have a lot of information, and I wouldn't like to delete them because of the policy of the encyclopaedia here is that any article that is not written in Egyptian should be deleted. Cheers."

30 "How are you [username] Can I ask you a question; are you Egyptian? Because I've been noticing that you can't translate your articles into Egyptian. If you are not Egyptian, tell us so that we help you rather than having your efforts wasted. Thanks."

type it here. What would you think if you were viewing the English Wikipedia & read an article in German language instead of English language?

May 2010:

Please do something. Please... Why do you keep on typing in Modern Standard Arabic, rather than Egyptian? [...]

Please review this [...]

[...] Are you Egyptian? أنت مصري؟

June 2010:

I'm so sorry as I'm unable to help you more in writing Modern Egyptian. I gave you all the thing I know to help you write Modern Egyptian. Leaving articles with Classical Arabic sentences greatly degrades Egyptian Wikipedia quality & can't be left like that. That's why I have to leave a notice on these pages. I'm unable to Egyptianize all the articles you post, as it is a very tiring task & takes a lot of time, so as it prevents me from creating articles or reforming other articles. If someone wanted to Egyptianize your articles, he'd be more than welcome to aid us, because we have shortage in contributors. I feel that you don't speak Modern Egyptian well, as you don't notice your repeated grammatical mistakes. Because this encyclopedia is in Modern Egyptian language, it must be written in Modern Egyptian. Thanks. [...]

حرام عليك بجد تسبب دى كده copied من العربى³¹

And finally, in July 2010:

انا اللى مسحتهم, و حمسح باقى المقالات اللى متسابه مش مكتوبه بالمصرى. القص و اللزق م العربى مافهوش تعب خالص. ممكن اى حد يفضل ليل نهار يقص و يلزق م العربى, و مافهاش اى جهد او تعب. ده اخر تحذير ليك يا [username], لو فضلت تكتب بالعربى فى الموسوعه المصرى, انا مضطر امنعك م التعديل. شكرا³²

31 "Shame on you, really, to leave this like this 'copied' from the Arabic [Wikipedia]"

32 I am the one who deleted them [the articles] and will delete the rest of those that are left as not written in Egyptian. Cutting and pasting from the Arabic [Wikipedia] is a piece of cake. Anyone can go on cutting and

The last warning was in vain, and one of the administrators blocked the user for three days. The administrator himself was heavily criticised afterwards by another administrator (who was also among those who used to reproach and warn the blocked user, but was at the same time very appreciative of his contributions). He was asked to apologise to the blocked user and explain him that he did not mean anything bad. Last time I checked it was in September 2010 – the blocked user, apparently insulted had not returned to WM yet.

It is not clear whether he was genuinely interested in expanding Wikipedia Masry yet constantly failed to conform to general Wikipedia and specific Wikipedia Masry rules. Was the reason for these failures that, as it was suggested more than once, he was not at all a native speaker of Egyptian?³³ Or perhaps even any other Arabic dialect? Or was he an active opponent to Wikipedia Masry, a disguised enemy determined to sabotage the project (the practice in Wikipedia terminology known as “vandalism”)? Whether he was acting in good will or not, is in this particular case hard to know. Anonymity and openness of Wikipedia to everyone leave these questions without answers, and at the same time, in a way render them irrelevant.

The point of this anecdote is that “Masry Wikipedians” should not be essentialised as some monolithic block of “think-alikes.” In this case, someone who was seemingly

pasting day and night without any effort whatsoever.

This is the last warning to you [username], if you continue to write in Arabic in the Egyptian encyclopaedia, I will be forced to forbid you from editing. Thanks.

33 His Egyptian grammar and usage were often commented upon. For example, he was warned that the preposition *bi* does not have a locative meaning in Egyptian Arabic, “as it does in Syrian and Lebanese,” and that he should use *fi* instead (في القاهرة vs. بالقاهرة).

acting in the interest of Wikipedia Masry, by contributing a great deal to its growth, was in fact seen as doing more harm than good given that his contributions, both content- and language-wise, were outside the general rules and regulations, thus threatening to compromise the entire project. The administrators were thus forced to choose between two kinds of growth of WM – its growth in size, and its growth in its encyclopaedic reputation. In this case, the two did not go hand in hand. Allowing the user to help WM reach the threshold of 10,000 articles as soon as possible meant running the risk of ending up with a large number of articles that would subsequently require significant editing and expanding. Nevertheless, the administrators were patient. It was only after a long period of failed attempts to socialise the user into the “WM culture” so that he would finally start to act in accordance with the accepted and expected norms and values of the community, that power was exercised. And even then without the full consensus of those who have it.

Since every single article is (at least potentially) a result of negotiations and struggle, a different kind of study than the one presented here, could cast more light on the internal dynamics and politics of WM by examining in more detail easily traceable histories of elaborate articles, and/or following the activities (i.e. contributions, discussions and actions) of a number of most active contributors in general, and administrators who have the power over the “ordinary” users in particular.

3.8 *mafiš muškila*: language planning and orthography

It would be wrong to assume that WM is all about nationalism. A lot of it is indeed about language. But it is a kind of project where language practice and its output should

go hand in hand with nationalist ideologies. This is why Masry Wikipedians are not merely a group of young Egyptians who write in ʿAmmiyya. They are at the same time – be it even on a small-scale level – language planners.

Language planning refers to the efforts to manage, modify or influence the habitual practice of individuals as part of a community. There are two kinds of language planning: status planning and corpus planning. Status planning refers to the process of selecting a language or a variety for use. Corpus planning is the process by which the language or variety selected is codified, i.e. choices are made to standardise spelling, grammar, lexicon etc.

(Bassiouney 2009a: 205)

Masry Wikipedians are engaged in both kinds of language planning. On the level of status planning, their choice is clear – it is ʿAmmiyya or Masry, as they call it, that is to be used by the community of users. However, that choice is met with certain difficulties. As Ahmad El Esseily illustrates well in the opening of this thesis with his dilemma about the right way to write the word “today”, ʿAmmiyya is anything but codified. It does not have an official status, it is not taught in schools, it has never been subjected to official corpus planning, and has therefore not received sufficient attention and treatment so as to get a widely accepted set of orthographic guidelines. Those who want to write in it are left to their own intuition, knowledge of Fuṣṣḥa, and a possible reader's experience gained through their exposure to other ʿAmmiyya texts.

In such a situation, Masry Wikipedians were compelled to come up with recommendations on how to write in “Masry” – [ارای تکتب فی ویکیپدیا مصری](#) – Masry. A special page

(ويكيبيديا: طريقة الكتابة: WM) is devoted to these guidelines, at the beginning of which we read:

ويكيبيديا مصري مكتوبه باللغه المصريه اللي بيتكلمها المصريين و مكتوبه زي ما بيكتبوها فى جواباتهم لبعضهم و فى حياتهم اليوميه. المصريين بيكتبو المصري فى الروايات, و المسرحيات, و القصايد الشعبيه و كمان فى المجلات الكوميدي و الإعلانات و شوية جرايد.

Wikipedia Masry is written in Egyptian language, spoken by Egyptians, and it is written in the way they write it in their letters to each other in their everyday life. Egyptians write Egyptian in novels, stage plays, popular poetry, as well as in comic magazines, advertisements and a little bit in newspapers.

Then follows the first instruction on how to write “Masry” which is a rather liberal one, apparently aimed at encouraging as many new contributors as possible:

ممكن يتكتب المصري بأى طريقة طالما أى مصري ممكن يفهمها. ما دام تعرف تكتب بالمصري اكتب اللي تعرفه فى ويكيبيديا مصري.

Egyptian can be written in any way as long as any Egyptian can understand it. If you know how to write in Egyptian, write what it is that you know in Wikipedia Masry.

This is followed by a list of eleven “general principles” given in the table below:

خد راحتك فى الكتابه طالما مش بتتجيز.	Be relaxed when writing as long as you are not biased.
حاول تحط المصادر اللي جبت منها كلامك.	Try to quote sources for what you are saying.
اكتب, عدّل, ترجم, حول المقالات بس ما تهينش حد.	Write, edit, translate, and change the articles, but do not insult anyone.
اكتب بالشكل اللي يعجبك, بس القاهره هيه الطريقه المشهوره لكتابة الكلام المصري; المهم يفهمها المصريين.	Write the way you like, but Cairene is the well-known way for writing the Egyptian language. What is important is that (all) Egyptians should understand it.

حاول تكون محايد.	Try to be neutral.
ما تشهرش بحد	Do not defame anyone.
ما تنقلش مواد ليها حقوق نشر محفوظة.	Do not copy sources that are copyrighted.
حاول تسجل دخولك علشان مساهماتك تسجل باسمك مش باسم عنوان ال IP بتاعك, و ماتنساش تمضى ب~~~~ فى صفح المناقشه.	Try to sign in so that your contributions are saved under your name and not your IP address. And don't forget to sign with ~~~~ on the discussion page.
الغلطات الإملائية هاتحصل هاتحصل, مافيش مشكله, لأن كل واحد من اليوزرات ممكن يصلحها.	Typos will happen in any case; no problem, because any user can correct them.
حاول دايمًا تشرح سبب تعديلاتك وبالذات سبب استرجعاتك لتعديلات واحد من اليوزرات التانيين.	Always try to comment on the reason for your edits, especially on the reason for reverting the edits of some other user.
حاول تشجع و تساعد المساهمين الجداد.	Try to encourage new contributors and help them.

Obviously, these principles are intended as a general guide of conduct for the users. Most of them are translations/adaptations of general Wikipedia rules. They are advisory much more than prescriptive and, except for the fourth one which recommends the use of Cairene and has been discussed above, they do not deal with issues of linguistic form or orthography, which are, in turn, addressed in a list of “hints on orthography” the most important of which could be summarised as follows:

Even though one of the users had developed a Latin-based alphabet (modelled after the one used for Maltese), his proposal was rejected, and the Arabic script is now predominantly used for writing Masry in Wikipedia Masry. An option is left to those who, for one reason or another, wish to use the Roman script, however, this practice seems to be discouraged. It is suggested that in the title of the articles only the conventional Arabic

letters should be used. Within the body of the article, however, it is allowed (مسموح) to use three additional letters in rendering the phonemes /p/, /j/, and /v/. These are: پ چ ف.³⁴ The letter ي should not be used with two dots written underneath it, because “it is not a common way of writing it among Egyptians.” Instead, ی (without dots) should be used, but since these two are the same letter, if someone wants to write the form with dots, “no problem” (مافیش مشكله). “Feminine -f” is to be written “according to its pronunciation”, that is, it should be marked with two dots only when the noun is the first part of a construct state. Otherwise, it should be written as ه / و. Qāf, ق, should be retained in the words “of Arabic origin.” The letter ث should be retained in those Arabic words where it is pronounced as /s/, and substituted with ت in those cases where it is pronounced as /t/. The same goes for ذ which is to be kept when pronounced as /z/, and replaced with د when it is pronounced as /d/. At the beginning of the words starting with the glottal stop, only *alif* should be used, *hamza* is to be used in its medial and final position. Again, if someone wants to mark *hamzat al-qaʿ* at the beginning of the word, “no problem”. Finally, it is considered easier and clearer to write a preposition as “separated from the word that comes after it”, such as في اوروفا or في اوروفا (“in Europe”, reflecting two different, context-bound pronunciations /fii 'urubba/ : /f-'urubba/), rather than فاوروفا.

According to Holes, “[i]n different areas of the Arab world, different traditions for transliterating the local dialect have grown up” (2004: 93), “but the general aims are the same: to spell the dialectal consonants in the way they are pronounced and reflect, insofar as that is possible in a script that lacks short vowel marks, the salient junctural, pausal and phonotactic features of the dialect that would be obscured by the standard

34 Another encouragement regarding this is: “Write Fifa or Viva, write Ifa or Iva, no problem.”

“اكتب فيفا او فيفا اكتب ايفا او ايفا مافيش مشكله”

orthographic conventions” (95). The WM orthographic guidelines, except in the case of feminine ending, do not address the issue of how “the salient junctural, pausal and phonotactic features” of ʿAmmiyya should be dealt with in writing, leaving it up to the WM article writers to decide, for example, which instances (if any) of contextual shortening or extending of certain vowels are to be marked in script. In addition, the “piece of advice” about preserving the letter *qaf* instead of replacing it with *hamza*, qualifies the above conclusion made by Holes, given that in Cairene ʿAmmiyya, as it is the case in some other urban dialects of Arabic, voiceless uvular plosive /q/ is almost exclusively backed and thus realised as a glottal stop /ʔ/ (Holes 2004: 73).

A small number of examples of substituting *qaf* with *hamza* have indeed been attested in some of the WM texts:

وَأْتِ دِرَاسَتَهُ

(for *وقت دراسته*) /waʔt^ə dirastu/ – “during his studies”, or

الأَصَايِدِ

(for *القصيد*) /il-ʔaʃāyid/ – “poems”³⁵

Also – and that being the case much more in discussions than in the articles themselves – I have encountered a few instances of hypercorrection in the opposite direction – where the usual colloquial realisation of /q/ as a glottal stop is over-generalised in writing so that *qaf* appears in an etymologically unjustified position where *hamza* would be expected:

وكانوا يبدخلوا أكل في القوده اللي المفروض انه راقد فيها عشان ما يخلوش حد
يشك

35 The second example comes from an earlier version of the article on the “Modern Egyptian language” quoted above, which I recorded in June 2009. According to the history page of this article, the *hamza* was replaced by *qaf* on 23 September 2009. (Visit the history page of the relevant article)

“They used to take food to the room in which he was supposed to be lying so that they would not make anyone suspicious.”

(القوده for الاوده / الاوضه /il-'ōḍa/ “the room” – the word is of Turkish origin and there are no etymological reasons for the restitution of *qaf* – “they used to bring food into the room”³⁶)

Still, based on my experience with ʿAmmiyya texts in general, and WM texts in particular, I maintain that, except in certain instances, the retention of *qaf* is much more common Egyptian practice of writing ʿAmmiyya.³⁷

3.9 How *maṣri* is the “Masry” of Wikipedia Masry?: actual language outputs

As was previously noted, WM orthographic guidelines are very few. Adding to that the fact that they are rather flexible and not strictly enforced, but just recommended, probably in an expectation that authors – who themselves must undoubtedly vary in terms of education, and experience in reading and writing – will “try” to observe them, it is no wonder that WM texts exhibit a high degree of variation. The paucity of rules on how to handle ʿAmmiyya in writing leaves the possible contributors with the most immediate option – to apply Fuṣṣḥa rules. And it should be stressed that even when Fuṣṣḥa orthographic rules are strictly applied to the verb phrase, the written outcome may – in many instances – leave little doubt about the word's colloquial rendering. This particularly holds true when the verb is embedded in-between the poles of the discontinuous negative morpheme *m(a)--š*, prefixed by temporal/aspectual markers *b(i)-* and *ḥ/h(a)-*, and/or followed by suffix/es indicating bound pronominal direct object and/or pronominal complement, which, according to Holes, at least in the case of Cairene “should be

36 WM: شجر الدر

37 A famous exception would be the widespread appearance of the form أوي /'awi/, particularly in its adverbial use (“very”).

included as part of the verb phrase on phonological grounds” (2004: 217):³⁸

- انتحرت كليوباترا علسان ما تقعش اسيرة في ايد العدو
Cleopatra committed suicide so that she would not fall captive to
the enemy. (WM: كليوباترا السابعة)

- كليوباترا جابت اربع-ت-اولاد³⁹
Cleopatra had four children (ibid.)

- ولما اتولد عملوله خرم حلق في وده عشان يمنع عنه العين والحسد إكمن
الناس حاتفتكره بنت، ودي عادة في الأرياف
When he was born, they pierced his ear to protect him from the
evil eye because people would think he was a girl; and that is a
rural custom. (WM: سلامه موسى)

- يتحجر لأنها تتقى بتعير (sic!) عن حاه كات موجوده زمان وما بقتش
موجوده دلوقتي
it [language] becomes petrified because it expresses something
that existed a long time ago, and no longer exists. (ibid.)

- اهلا فويكيبيديا مصرى ممكن تتدى صفحه عن اى موضوع وانا هاعمله وصله
عالصفحة الرئيسية⁴⁰
Welcome to Wikipedia Masry. You can start a page about any
topic and I will make a link to it [that topic] on the main page
(WM – main page, discussion)

It is in the realm of rendering nouns and prepositional phrases where the writers might feel tempted to “experiment” orthographically. Apart from instances of hyper-

38 In the following examples, I underline only ECA verbal forms. Needless to say, the examples also contain a number of ECA lexical items, such as ايد, دلوقتي, علسان, إكمن, etc. which all mark the selected texts as being written in ʿAmmiyya.

39 Note also the insertion of ت to mark the change of the plural of the type ʿafʿāl into t-ʿafʿāl when preceded by numbers 3-10.

40 Note the writing of prepositions, contrary to the relevant suggestion.

corrections, overgeneralisations (as in قوده) and pure mistakes (typographic or grammatical) that are occasionally encountered in WM articles, this experimentation might also be due to the fact that a strict adherence to etymological orthography could undermine the previously discussed ideological position that ʿAmmyya is a distinct language, different and separate from Fuṣḥa.

It should be kept in mind that Wikipedia is an evolving, collaborative project where new articles are being added while the old ones are being edited. While it is important for Masry Wikipedians to start new entries, thus justifying their Wikipedia by its constant growth, they are very much involved in edits and expansions of the existing articles. These interventions can be traced on the “history” pages that accompany each article. Although, as far as I was able to observe, some of these interventions are of a linguistic nature⁴¹, most of them are directed towards the content of the articles. Therefore, it is not rare to find a piece that – content-wise – has been edited many times, yet still demonstrates a very high degree of variation:

اتخرج احمد لطفى السيد من مدرسة الحقوق سنة 1894 ، واتعرف وأتِ دراسته
ع الإمام محمد عبده وتأثر بأفكاره الإصلاحية و اشتغل وزير معارف وبعدين
وزير خارجية وبعدين نائب رئيس الوزراء في وزارة إسماعيل صدقي ونائب في
مجلس الشيوخ المصري، ورأس لمجمع اللغة العربية ، و تبع كتاب "أعلام مجمع
اللغة العربية" لمحمد الحسيني ففي أسناء عمل لطفى السيد كرئيس للمجمع
عرض عليه الضباط الأحرار في ثورة 23 يوليو 1952 أنو يصبح رئيس مصر لكنو
قال لا ، وكمان إشتغل رئيسا لدار الكتب... (WM: احمد لطفى السيد)

Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed graduated from the Law School in 1894. During his studies, he became acquainted with Imam Muhammad Abduh and got influenced by his reformist ideas. He worked as the Minister of Education, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, then Deputy

41 Such as when, for example, اصايد is changed “back” to قصايد., as mentioned above.

Prime Minister in the government of Ismail Sidqy, as well as the representative in the Senate, and President of the Academy of the Arabic Language. According to the book “The Notables of the Academy of the Arabic Language” by Muhammad el-Husseini, while Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed acted as President of the Academy, the Free Officers of the July 23 Revolution offered him to become president of Egypt, but he refused (*lit.* he said “no”). He also worked as the President of the National Library...

In the excerpt above, contrary to the WM orthographic guidelines, feminine *t* is marked throughout the text in all instances where it would not be pronounced. At the same time, and again in contrast to these guidelines (that suggest retaining ث), the form *وأنت* clearly marks the correct ʿAmmiyya pronunciation, and so does the above cited *وأنت*. Similarly, the forms *أنا* and *لكنو* depart from more usual *إنه* and *لكنه*. Although in close proximity, the forms *نائب* and *نايب*, as well as *رئيس* and *رايس* are in free variation. Since “urban’ dialects, such as Cairene and Damascene [...] have SVCOMP⁴² as the normal order for all types of messages” (Holes 2004: 253), the verb-first type of sentence that opens the paragraph and continues through a syndetic coordination of several predicates (including the embedded verb-first clause “عرض عليه الضباط الأحرار”) might be seen as having a Fuṣṣḥa flavour.⁴³ Same goes for the lexical choice of the verb *يصبح* (“to become”). And finally, what is more interesting, the Fuṣṣḥa-like use of circumstantial qualifier (*ḥāl* accusative) – *اشتغل رئيسا* – could be symptomatic of an attempt at “elevating” the style in a stretch of what aim to be colloquial sentences.

42 Subject-Verb-Complement.

43 This is not to suggest that Subject-first is the only word order in ʿAmmiyya. For an elaborate contrastive overview of syntactic, semantic and discourse-related factors governing word order in both MSA and spoken Arabic varieties, see Holes 2004: 250-264. Dahlgren (1998) is still the most comprehensive, quantitatively based treatment of word order in eastern modern dialects and early Arabic.

However, this is not quite the case. Once compared to the equivalent WA article, the text quoted above is no more than an attempt at “translating”, or more precisely, “colloquialising” a paragraph previously written in Fuṣḥa:⁴⁴

وتخرج من مدرسة الحقوق سنة 1894 م. تعرف أثناء دراسته على الإمام محمد عبده وتأثر بأفكاره. [كما تأثر بملازمة جمال الدين الأفغاني مدة في استنبول، وبقراءة كتب أرسطو، ونقل بعضها إلى العربية.] عمل وزيرا للمعارف ثم وزيرا للخارجية ثم نائبا لرئيس الوزراء في وزارة إسماعيل صدقي ونائبا في مجلس الشيوخ المصري، ورئيسا لمجمع اللغة العربية، و حسب كتاب "أعلام مجمع اللغة العربية" لمحمد الحسيني ففي أثناء عمل لطفي السيد كرئيس للمجمع عرض عليه الضباط الأحرار في ثورة 23 يوليو 1952 أن يصبح رئيسا لمصر لكنه رفض، كما عمل رئيسا لدار الكتب المصرية... (WA: أحمد لطفي السيد)

Apart from omitting a sentence, what several editors have done in this case in order to “produce” a text in “Masry” by departing from a text in Fuṣḥa is summarised in the following table:

WM	←	WA	intervention
اتخرج اتعرف اتأثر	↔	تخرج تعرف تأثر	“Egyptianisation” of verbal forms according to Ammiyya morphological patterns (all examples being of pattern V)
وأث بعدين اشتغل كمان (اشتغل) تبع قال لأ	↔	أثناء (first) ثم عمل كما (عمل) حسب رفض	lexical replacements
أسناء رئيس نايب	↔	أثناء (second) رئيس نايب	orthographic modifications

44 The part which is omitted from the article in Wikipedia Masry is given in square brackets.

لكنو		لكنه	
بأفكاره الإصلاحية	↔	بأفكاره	attributivisation
وزير معارف وزير خارجية نائب رئيس الوزراء	↔	وزيرا للمعارف وزيرا للخارجية نائبا لرئيس الوزراء	transformation of the prepositional structure <small>indef</small> NOUN-/ <small>i-def</small> NOUN into an indefinite <i>iḍāfa</i>
ع	↔	على	shortening of the preposition before def. art.
أنو يصبح	↔	أن يصبح	syntactic adjustment (and, again, orthographic modification)

If the aim of these (rather inconsistently applied) changes was to produce a text in “Masry,” then it must be pointed out that the linguistic outcome represents, at best, a form of “mixed” Arabic and could hardly support Masry Wikipedians' previously quoted claim that “Modern Egyptian language is [...] actually a separate language of Hamitic (African) origin, an extension from ancient Egyptian languages, with syntactic and morphological rules that are different from those of Arabic.” (اللغة المصرية الحديثه - WM)

Similar examples could be found in other WM articles. Note in the following example the MSA remnants (one instance of an MSA relative pronoun and accusative marked by *alif*) that were apparently overlooked while translating from the corresponding WA article on the Egyptian actor Nour El Sherif (نور الشريف). What is interesting is that the WA original could have been initially written by an Egyptian, since it contains the plural of شبل (lion cub): أشبال which Hinds and Badawi (1986: 451) translate as “epithet given to junior players in a sports club (usually soccer).” This meaning is not attested in Wehr's dictionary:

WM: كان لعيب في أشبال كرة القدم بنادى الزمالك ولكنه مكملش مشواره مع
كرة القدم بسبب حبه للتمثيل الذى راحله عن طريق الفنان سعد أردش اللى

رشحه للعمل معاه فأداله دورا صغيرا في مسرحيه "الشوارع الخلفيه"

WA: كان لاعبا في أشبال كرة القدم بنادى الزمالك ولكنه لم يكمل مشواره مع كرة القدم بسبب حبه للتمثيل الذي اتجه إليه عن طريق الفنان سعد أردش الذي رشحه للعمل معه فأسند إليه دورا صغيرا في مسرحية "الشوارع الخلفيه"

It must be said however, that the article on Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed, discussed above, represents an extreme example of lexical, morphological, syntactic and stylistic “hybridisation” that sometimes occurs when Masry Wikipedians take Fuṣḥa as their point of departure. As such, it should not be taken as representative of the overall linguistic outlook of Wikipedia Masry. There are, in fact, a lot of articles that are more consistent with the Masry Wikipedians' desire and determination to write in Masry. The following is an excerpt from an article that was single-handedly written and edited by an experienced, very active and well-read contributor, Samsam22. At the time when it was written the article did not have a WA counterpart:

مدرسة الفكر الوطنى المصرى ، مدرسه ثقافيه فى مصر ظهرت بعد ثورة 1919 و سادت بالذات فى النص الاول من القرن العشرين ، اترعمها كتاب و مفكرين مصريين كتار زى توفيق الحكيم و سلامه موسى و محمد حسين هيكل و عبد القادر حمزه و اسماعيل مظهر و احمد لطفى السيد و فى فتره لاحقه بيومي قنديل و غيرهم.

مدرسة الفكر الوطنى المصرى بتأكد على هوية مصر الوطنيه و انفصالها عن الثقافه العربيه و التاريخ العربى و على قدرة مصر على نفض توبها من الشوايب اللى لزقت فيه و النهوض و التقدم مع الامم المتطوره المتقدمه تحقيق ده كان على مستويين متداخلين ، الاول تحليل و نقد الصوره الغلط [...] القايمه للأمه المصرى على انها مرتبطه بالعرب و الثانى تكوين صوره حقيقه جديده لمصر خاليه من التزييف الثقافى و التاريخى. [...] و لتحقيق الاصاله المصرىه فلازم تطهير ثقافتها من العناصر الدخيله من المنطقه العربيه بالذات ، و عشان كده رواد مدرسة الفكر الوطنى المصرىه كانوا بيعتبروا ان التراث العربى فى الواقع نتاج للأمه العربيه و الشخصيه العربيه اللى بيختلفو عن التراث المصرى و الشخصيه المصرىه

بعد ما نشر توفيق الحكيم " عودة الروح " بعث جواب ل طه حسين فى يونيه

1933 ببسأله فيه ازي ممكن خلق صوره جميله جديده لمصر[...]
[...] لأن رجوع مصر لهويتها الحقيقيه و وعيها القومي الاصيل هما الكفيلين بخلق
الظروف اللازمه لنهوض الامه المصريه و تطورها و تقدمها كدوله تقدميه
فعاله[...]
(WM - مدرسة الفكر الوطني المصريه)

The Egyptian School of Nationalist Thought is a cultural school in Egypt that appeared after the 1919 Revolution and was particularly dominant in the first half of the 20th century. Their leaders were many Egyptian writers and thinkers, such as Tawfiq el-Hakim, Salama Musa, Muhammad Hussein Haykal, Abd el-Qadir Hamza, Ismail Mazhar, Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed, and in a later period Bayumi Qandil and others.

The Egyptian school of nationalist thought puts an emphasis on the Egyptian national identity and its dissociation from the Arab culture and history, as well as on Egypt's ability to shake off from its robe the stains that had got stuck to it, rise and progress together with the advanced, developed nations.

[...] The realisation of this was taking place on two intertwined levels – first, through the analysis and critique of the wrong image set up for the Egyptian nation as if that nation is linked to the Arabs, and second, through creating a new, real image of Egypt, free from cultural and historical distortion[...] In order to achieve authenticity, it is necessary to purify the Egyptian culture of alien elements, especially those from the Arab region. This is why the pioneers of the Egyptian school of nationalism used to consider the Arabic heritage to be in fact an offspring of the Arab nation and Arab personality that are different from the Egyptian heritage and Egyptian personality.

In June 1933, after he published “The Return of the Spirit”, Tawfiq el-Hakim sent a letter to Taha Hussein asking him how a new, beautiful image of Egypt could be created [...]

[...] because Egypt's return to its real identity and its genuine national consciousness are the two guarantors for creating the necessary conditions for the Egyptian nation to rise, advance and develop as a progressive, efficient state.

Even though this article was “original” in the sense that it could not have been “translated/Egyptianised” from WA,⁴⁵ one can still notice certain syntactic and stylistic features that bring its language closer to the style of contemporary expository prose in what is usually labelled Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Apart from instances of verb-first type of sentence and strict agreement of *nisba*-adjectives, these would also include:

- deflected (masculine singular) agreement between the plural human subject and its preceding predicate:

– اتزعمها كتاب و مفكرين مصريين كتار

According to Holes, “[u]nlike in MSA, agreement between V and S in the modern dialects is not dependent on word order: an initial V agrees with a following S in the same way as it does when S is initial” (2004: 264). The initial verb in the example above clearly does not agree fully with the following subject.⁴⁶ Belnap provides a corpus-based description of agreement variability in Cairene Arabic, but his paper “focuses particularly on the variation between ‘deflected’ (*feminine singular*) and ‘strict’ (plural) agreement with plural head nouns [...]” (1992: 98 – emphasis mine), so it is hard to use his findings in accounting for what seems to be an MSA feature in these examples.⁴⁷

- the “proper”/“literary” way (from the prescriptivist point of view) of constructing *iqāfa* containing more than one head-noun:

45 But a possibility should be left open that it could have been ‘translated’ from some other source...

46 Neither, for example, do those in the sentences quoted earlier:

ويكيبيديا مصرى مكتوبه باللغه المصريه اللي يتكلمها المصريين
المهم يفهمها المصريين

47 For a description of agreement variability with non-human head nouns in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic see Belnap & Shabaneh 1992.

– هوية مصر الوطنية و انفصالها عن الثقافه العربيه / نهوض الامه المصريه و تطورها و تقدمها كدوله تقدميه فعاله

as opposed to the example found in the same excerpt:

الاول تحليل و نقد الصوره الغلط – which represents a type of coordinated structure that has become quite common in contemporary media MSA (Holes 2004: 204).

– and finally, frequent resort to nominalisation:

– قدرة مصر على نفض توبها من الشوايب اللى لزقت فيه و النهوض و التقدم مع الامم المتطوره المتقدمه
– تحقيق ده كان على مستويين متداخلين ، الاول تحليل و نقد الصوره الغلط القائمه للامه المصريه على انها مرتبطه بالعرب و التانى تكوين صوره حقيقه جديده لمصر
– و لتحقيق الاصاله المصريه فلازم تطهير ثقافتها من العناصر الدخيله من المنطقه العربيه بالذات
– ازى ممكن خلق صوره جميله جديده لمصر
– لان رجوع مصر لهويتها الحقيقه و وعينا القومى الاصيل هما الكفيلين بخلق الظروف اللازمه لنهوض الامه المصريه و تطورها و تقدمها كدوله تقدميه فعاله

Here, it is interesting to note that nominalisation in MSA, as a “syntactic ploy that allows the writer to give the required flavor of objectivity to his or her statements and claims” (Holes 2004: 320), although perfectly acceptable (yet less frequent) in dialects, is interpreted by Holes as a possible “avoidance strategy: one of the means [...] by which written style can be distanced and consciously marked as different from dialectal Arabic” (323). Here, it is obviously employed as a means of elevating the style of a *written Arabic dialect*. Therefore, at this point, I would like to propose a slightly modified take on nominalisation.

Although in full agreement with Holes that it could be interpreted as an “avoidance strategy,” I suggest that in the future, *i.e.* as the emancipation of ʿAmmyya and its growth

as a written language continues, nominalisation might also turn out to be a point of convergence between written ʿAmmiyya and Fuṣḥa – first and foremost in the writings of those authors who are not that eager to keep the two varieties (artificially and at all costs) apart from each other. Given that nominalised constructions with *maṣdar* forms syntactically behave in the same way in both MSA and ECA, we might expect that authors who will be opting for ʿAmmiyya as their exclusive or predominant vehicle of written expression will be resorting to this syntactic tool pretty much in the same manner as many MSA writers do.⁴⁸ In other words, nominalisation is primarily a *stylistic* device, and its primary domain of use is *writing*. As such, nominalisation has more to do with the act of writing (as opposed to speaking) and the writer's intentions and decisions regarding the style of his or her text, than with the chosen variety (“standard” vs. “dialect”). Of course, further systematic research of a growing number of ʿAmmiyya texts (with reference to their authors' ideological stances and attitudes, when possible) is needed to confirm or repudiate this prognosis, which for the time being I base exclusively on my impressions gained by reading some books in ʿAmmiyya.⁴⁹

Going now back to Wikipedia Masry and the “autonomy” of its promoted variety, it is worth noting that in some of the WM articles another feature of contemporary journalistic Arabic is attested – the use of periphrastic passives:⁵⁰

– وبالطريقة السلمية دي يتم نقل السلطة للأغلبية الجديدة اللي كانت أقلية في المرة السابقة

48 Unless, of course, they hold some hard-core ideological positions (as some Masry Wikipedians seem to do yet, as we have seen, even their texts resort to nominalisations) that will push them towards avoiding as many Fuṣḥa (or perceived-as-Fuṣḥa) features as possible.

49 It should also be noted that political, economic, and social demands during demonstrations are often expressed through nominalisation (see also 3.1 above), even in the contexts of strong presence of ʿAmmiyya, which could be seen as one of the instances of blurring the boundaries between the two varieties.

50 Holes 2004: 317-319.

(WM – الليبراليه)

In such peaceful manner the power is transferred to the new majority which was previously a minority.

– وتم اعدامهم في دمشق (WM – صلاح الدين صالح)

They were executed in Damascus.

In addition, there are occasional instances of internally voweled passives, clear borrowings from Fuṣḥa:

– [...] الاله المصري أوزوريس-أبيس Osiris-Apis اللى اشتق منه اسم سيرابيس (WM – سيرابيس)

“[...] the Egyptian deity Osiris-Apis, from which the name Serapis is derived”

– [...] فى العصور الوسطى كان اللاتينى هو لغة أوروبا وكان مرتبط بالدين بحيث إن الخروج عن اللاتينى كان يعتبر كفر وزندقه [...] (WM – سلامه موسى)

“[...] in the Middle Ages, Latin was the language of Europe and it was linked to religion in such a way that departing from Latin used to be considered blasphemy and atheism [...]”

3.10 Translating away

Let us now take a look at the lexical, or more precisely, terminological level which is where Masry Wikipedians appear most eager to act as language planners. The table below provides but a few examples of lexical coinages and innovations found in some of the WM articles (either as the main entries, or within the body of articles). Where possible, the AW counterparts are provided for comparison, together with the English equivalents.

Wikipedia Masry	Arabic Wikipedia	English Wikipedia
مصرولوجيا also: علم المصريات	علم المصريات also, علوم المصريات	Egyptology
ديجلوسيا	ازدواجية لغوية	diglossia

العربي القياسي الحديث	لغة عربية لغة عربية فصحى	Arabic language Modern Standard Arabic
طُرُق الإعلام (اللغة المصرية الحديثه: WM)	وسائل الإعلام	mass media
امراض تنتقل بالجنس	داء منقول جنسياً	sexually transmitted disease
الهوموسكسواليتي ⁵¹	مثلية جنسية	homosexuality
المش هيتيروسكسوالى	?	LGBT

These and many similar examples of WM “new terminology” highlight a WM tendency to coin new words and terms – a necessary step if it is to serve the task of enriching ʿAmmiyya, so as to enable it to deal with a variety of concepts and phenomena that might not be discussed regularly and at length in the coffee shops of Cairo, but are to be elaborated on in writing if ʿAmmiyya is to become a fully-fledged written language operating with various registers. Why is it, then, that Masry Wikipedians, while dedicating their efforts to this task, seem to feel the need to look up to English even when some established, morphologically more appropriate and semantically more transparent, *Arabic* equivalents are already at hand? Why do they do it at the cost of coming up with awkward solutions that hardly any Egyptian would even think of adopting? Why so much effort just to come up with a lot of stillborns?

The answer is easy – they want to run away, away from Fuṣḥa as far as possible. Unlike with morphology or syntax, playing with the lexicon provides an easier way to achieve that. But, as these examples show, the new terms can be somewhat awkward:

- العربي القياسي الحديث /il-ʿarabi l-ʿiyāsi l-ḥadīs/ is a literal translation of the English

51 When I first encountered this word in WM, it was in the form هوموسكسواليه, which is arguably a more “Arabic” way of creating abstract nouns, but was later changed to the form given here (last attested on 3 October 2011).

phrase “Modern Standard Arabic” which for the time being makes little sense in a community where the only differentiation that has traditionally been made is the one between Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya. If it were to become accepted, the phrase would be an interesting terminological contribution that recognises the difference between classical and contemporary Arabic.⁵²

- ديجلوسيا /diglosiya ?/ is a direct borrowing of an internationalism, yet the one which is opaque in comparison to semantically transparent Fuṣḥa term ازدواجية لغوية /izdiwāgiyya luḡawiyya/ that has already gained currency, at least among those scholars and intellectuals who talk and write about this sociolinguistic phenomenon.
- طرُق الإعلام /turuʔ il-iʿlām/ seems like an unnecessary step of substituting the word وسائل with طرق – both are equally Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya.
- امراض بتتنقل بالجنس /amrāḍ bititniʔil bil-gins, pl./ is a colloquial adaptation of داء جنسيًا /dāʾ manqūl ginsiyyan, sg./, in itself already a calque from English.
- مصرولوجيا /maSrologiya ?/ is a linguistic concoction and a clumsy attempt at adding an otherwise unproductive Greek suffix to an Arabic word. Although borrowings such as *biyūlūjijā* do exist in Arabic (despite the resentment of the purists), the Greco-Latin affixes such as *-logia* have never been adopted and productively used in coining new terminology.⁵³

And finally,

52 Masry Wikipedians also use the term العربي الكلاسيكي /il-ʿarabi l-klasīki/ to designate “Classical Arabic” (اللغة المصرية الحديثه - WM)

53 Cf. Holes 2004: 311-314. However, “niktalogiya”, is a term invented and jokily used by the Egyptian poet Ahmed Fuad Negm to describe Egyptian way of doing things, such as how they “conned” the Israeli forces in 1973 to cross the Suez Canal. I thank Clive Holes for bringing this to my attention. This innovative usage, however, illustrates more an individual's linguistic creativity than the morphological productivity of this particular suffix.

- *il-homoseksualiti/* and, appearing in the same article, the adjective *il(li?)-miš heteroseksuali/* are cumbersome borrowings, remote from linguistic practice and actual usage. However, they are an amusing result of an ambition to offer “politically correct” words for concepts, practices, and identities that are far from being culturally acceptable in Egyptian society.⁵⁴ The second word (*المش هيتيروسكسوالى*) is particularly odd. It is not clear whether *مش* is used to construct a negative compound adjective (“non-heterosexual”) in the same way *لا* and (occasionally) *غير* are used in Fuṣḥa, or if it represents a condensed relative phrase (“/the one/ who is not heterosexual”).⁵⁵ While the title of a recent Egyptian comedy, *المش مهندس حسن* /*il-mišmuhandis Hasan/*, with *miš* being prepositioned to a noun, is obviously a joke, a language play around the Egyptian term of address *bašmuhandis* (*lit.* chief engineer), googling of a random sample of compound adjectives coined according to the model above, does return numerous results which testify that similar forms are being used in informal writing on the Internet.⁵⁶

54 As a gay journalist whom I interviewed in March 2010 wittily put it in response to my question “How to say gay in Egyptian?”:

fiḥ aktar min kilma. gay lil-gayz, xawal wi šāzz li-lli streyt wi misli lil-musaqqafin.

“There is more than one word. ‘Gay’ for gays (to use), faggot and queer (pervert) for those who are straight, and homosexual for the intellectuals.”

For a debate that spurred around the Arabic translation of the book “Gay Travels in the Muslim World” (a compilation of stories about hardships accompanying gay life in different Muslim and Middle Eastern societies edited by Michael Luongo) wherein the word “gay” was translated as *šāzz* which historically carries negative connotations (“deviant,” and by extension “pervert”) see:

[<http://www.menassat.com/?q=en/news-articles/6942-pervert-travels-muslim-world-does-gay-equal-shazz>].

55 Commenting on this word, one interlocutor told me: “You cannot say something like that. What you can say is ‘*illi miš streyt*’ /the one who is not straight/.”

56 Some of those which I have tested (by entering them into the Google search engine under inverted commas, so that the whole phrase is being searched for) include, but are not limited to:

المش كويس (not good), المش مناسب (not convenient), المش محجيين (pl., not veiled)

The last one also appears often in the Fuṣḥa sound feminine plural form, المش محجيات

However, not all WM terms are unwieldy results of Masry Wikipedians' desire to move, or translate Masry away from Fuṣḥa. Some of them indeed capture the actual usage among the native speakers. The Appendix 3-2 gives screenshots of the sign-in pages of Arabic Wikipedia and Masry Wikipedia respectively. While some of the terms overlap,⁵⁷ some others found on WM page, even if strange-looking when seen in writing, are those that Egyptian Internet users actually use as opposed to those favoured by WA:

WM	WA	English
دخول	ولوج ⁵⁸	log in
فتح حساب	إنشاء حساب	sign in
كمبيوتر	حاسوب	computer
باسوورد	كلمة سر	password
يوزر نيم	اسم مستخدم	username

Finally, the ubiquitous Internet term “user” is used throughout Wikipedia Masry the way many Egyptian users really say it – *yūzer* (يوزر).⁵⁹ As for its plural, two forms are in free variation – one coined according to the Arabic pattern of using sound feminine plural (يوزرات – *yuzerāt*), and another directly borrowed from English (يوزرز - *yūzerz*).

3.11 Practice meets idelology

Based on the previous discussion, a general conclusion that can be drawn so far is that despite Masry Wikipedians' intention to write in “Masry,” many examples of variation

57 حساب – account, تسجيل – register, كوكيز – cookies,...

58 The WA has in the meantime abandoned the term وولوج and changed it to دخول.

59 As opposed to Fuṣḥa form - مستخدم.

can be found at Wikipedia Masry. They signal that active editors of WM articles apparently have no desire or time to intervene linguistically in already existing articles, not even when it comes to promoting those few WM recommendations. They do not seem to try to “polish” the texts and make them formally consistent, thus setting up orthographic standards for the community to use. If codification and standardisation are about reducing inconsistencies, prescribing what is right and what is wrong, what is acceptable and what is not, how much variation and under which circumstances could be tolerated, then a conclusion based on this preliminary assessment of a corpus of WM texts is that, over its two years of existence, Wikipedia Masry has been taking a more heteroglossic approach.

As for the relationship between the language of Wikipedia Masry and other, previously studied, "mixed" forms of Arabic, there are two inter-related key points at play – (1) the multi-user/writer character of the great majority of WM articles, and (2) mixing as the norm *vs.* mixing as an unintended outcome. Previous work on mixed forms (e.g., Bassiouney 2006, Eid 2002, Holes 1993, Mejdell 1996, 2002 and 2006, Rosenbaum 2000) suggests that mixing is a choice, a strategy, an outcome of a single speaker's (or, writer's) decision to mix. As such, it is a voluntary act (probably even more so when it comes to writing). Such mixing correlates to the topic, speaker's change of roles, intended effect on the audience etc. In the case of Wikipedia Masry, however, the proclaimed and promoted choice is ʿAmmiyya (Masry) and mixing, when it appears, seems to be an involuntary outcome of several contributors' attempt to write in Masry. Of course, it is not always possible to draw a clear-cut line between Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya at every linguistic level and many (particularly lexical and syntactic) features are shared between the two, especially in higher registers of educated speakers' ʿAmmiyya. Nevertheless, as shown

above, there are articles that clearly exhibit instances of mixing of salient ECA and MSA features.

Given the virtual non-existence of relevant ʿAmmiyya texts that could be looked up to as models when writing encyclopedic entries in ʿAmmiyya, an important factor contributing to the occurrence of Fuṣḥa elements in WM articles is that some of them are “translated” (or copied and modified) from Wikipedia al-ʿArabiyya. This creates opportunities for Fuṣḥa elements to creep into texts that are intended to be written entirely in ʿAmmiyya.

In her recent analysis of *ḥāl iddunya*, the first news bulletin ever to be broadcast in colloquial on an Arab satellite television – Egyptian OTV⁶⁰ – Doss (2010) traced some of the Fuṣḥa features on various language levels of this news bulletin in ʿAmmiyya. She described the resulting variety as “an unstable one” and explained identified instances of variation by the fact that the news were translated into MSA from an English source (Associated Press) and written down before they were read on air. Accordingly, a partial explanation for variation in WM articles could be found in the fact that many of them seem to be translated, or “Egyptianised” articles originally written in Fuṣḥa for WA. Nevertheless, even when translating is not directly involved, as in the case of the article on the “Egyptian School of Nationalist Thought” analysed above, the very act of writing seems to be imposing on some Masry Wikipedians a greater sense of responsibility and desire to formalise and elevate style, thus moving the actual language output closer to

⁶⁰ This channel was launched by Naguib Sawiris, a Coptic Christian tycoon and – since after the uprising - politician (For more on Sawiris and his tweeting practices, see 4.6.3 in the following chapter). It was later replaced by OnTV and, to the best of my knowledge, no longer exists.

where the underlying language ideology would not want it to be.

Due to their ideological obstinacy, Masry Wikipedians often manipulate (and at times even augment) linguistic differences between Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya in order to secure and sustain recognition for what they perceive to be an “independent language.” This, in turn, results in a highly mixed written discourse throughout Wikipedia Masry with a number of innovative and unusual (primarily lexical and orthographic) solutions. Apparently, there are two simultaneous, yet to a certain degree incongruous, tendencies at play – one that seeks to translate Wikipedia Masry *away* from Fuṣḥa at any cost, thus bringing about odd and, from the perspective of many native speakers, more often than not unacceptable results, and another that aims at capturing and registering a “real-life ʿAmmiyya,” the language as it is actually used by Egyptians to whom Wikipedia Masry seeks to cater.

In a thought-provoking study of “a unique case in the history of drama translation in Egypt”, the translation of *Othello* produced by an Egyptian psychoanalyst Moustapha Safouan in 1998, Sameh Hanna (2009: 158) discusses Safouan's “strategic use of ʿAmmiyya” in relation to its groundedness “in a hetero-doxic understanding of language, identity and the relation between them.” Hanna quotes Safouan's reflections on this apparently difficult task:

My translation of *Othello* into spoken Egyptian was meant to show that spoken Arabic, as well as any living language, has all the ingredients that make it possible to get an admirable literature out of it. I chose Shakespeare because his greatness is indisputable. If it is possible to translate him into our mother tongue, disdainfully disparaged as 'vulgar', then the proof is given that our mother

tongue too can attain the 'sublime'.

Moustafa Safouan (quoted in Hanna 2009:169)

Hanna, however, points to some instances where, despite his intention to produce a translation entirely in ʿAmmiyya, Safouan “had to use Fuṣṣḥa, both in his discourse on the translation and in the translation itself” (2009: 176), which Hanna describes as a “para-doxic” aspect of Safouan's project, apparently emerging from a discrepancy between his determination to bring Shakespeare to “disadvantaged Egyptians [...], who do not have a university degree nor mastery of classical Arabic and can only understand and appreciate the language variety they use in everyday life” (168), and his eventual use of a form that, as he later admitted, was “addressed to 'intellectuals with enlightened minds'.” (176)

Masry Wikipedians apparently share Safouan's ambition to bestow upon ʿAmmiyya the status of a fully-fledged *written language*. And just as in the case of his translation, their “hetero-doxic” endeavour brings about “para-doxic” results. Their programmatic statements and lexical coinages reflect an ideology that sees ʿAmmiyya as separate and different from Fuṣṣḥa. But their texts, whether “translated” or originally written, suggest that – lexically, grammatically and stylistically – this “wikipedic” ʿAmmiyya is still very much dependent on Fuṣṣḥa.

Wikipedia Masry is still in its beginnings. It is yet to be seen how it will be developing over time. English Wikipedia is the result of a work of many individuals across the world with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. I started my research on Wikipedia Masry assuming that all the contributors to Wikipedia Masry are native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. As the case of the kicked-out Wikipedian reported in 3.7.1

above suggests, this might have been a wrong assumption. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that, for the time being, even if not all, then definitely the great majority of Masry Wikipedians *are* native speakers of Egyptian ʿAmmiyya. Yet, as has been illustrated by the “bye bye to grammar” debate, when looking at their discussions about some formal aspects of Egyptian Arabic, we can sometimes find them in dispute.

Egypt has been, and will continue to be host to very many foreign students coming not only to improve their Fuṣṣḥa, but also to learn ʿAmmiyya. Among Arabic dialects, Egyptian Arabic is arguably the one that is studied and learnt by the majority of students of Arabic. It may not be long before some of them decide to become Masry Wikipedians. If that happens, who is going to be there to “correct” them? How will Wikipedia Masry look if non-native speakers of Egyptian Arabic start contributing to it one day the same way many non-native speakers of English contribute to English Wikipedia?

In their genre analysis of on-line encyclopedias, Emigh & Herring conclude with an expectation of “increasing formality and homogeneity across the lifespan of a Wikipedia entry, as well as differences in formality between beginning and experienced contributors” (2005: 10). This finding, they argue, goes against expectations of greater informality which is conditioned by the very principle of open-access. If formality comes with age, it will be interesting to follow young Wikipedia Masry as it grows older. For the time being, it is characterised by a high degree of informality and linguistic variation. Its multivocality might at times amount to cacophony. However, it remains an ambitious and in a way daring attempt at creating yet another place in cyberspace for Egyptians to do something which, in the realm of social practice, is still often perceived as “ugly” (Amin 2009) – to write in

their native tongue.

3.12 Wikipedia Masry Exposed?: ideology meets practice

In his essay “The Internet and the isolationists,” Sabry Hafez (2010) made a direct reference to my presentation on Wikipedia Masry delivered at the symposium “e-Arabic and Cyberspace: Marginalised Voices.” The symposium was held at the University of Durham in June 2010. Hafez was the keynote speaker, my presentation followed his talk.

Concerned about a potential “harm” of Wikipedia Masry and aiming to open a “far-reaching and profound dialogue” among “the readers and Egyptian intellectuals,” Hafez poses several questions about “this odd website:”

Do we need such a website and its covert mission? Does Egyptian culture benefit from it in its present condition? Does this encyclopaedia contribute to sharpening the knowledge of Egyptians about the world, or is it laying the foundation for their isolation from their Arabic surroundings and the Arabic language itself? Can this 'Wikipedia Masry' enrich our knowledge of Egypt or ourselves? Or are we here facing a new forging of Egyptian national identity? Is this an intellectual project or an ideological one disguised in the call for knowledge? Most importantly, how does all this affect the Arabic language? And the position of Egypt in its Arabic environment?

(Hafez 2010)

In short, the sole focus here is on the ideology behind Wikipedia Masry. And almost all of these questions have been already answered by Wikipedia Masry itself – its very existence and insistence on using Egyptian Arabic as a vehicle of written expression proves that, first and foremost, Wikipedia Masry is intended to be *about* and *for* Egypt, Egyptians and Egyptian ‘Ammiyya. Masry Wikipedians might actively define Wikipedia

Masry, Egyptian ʿAmmiyya, and/or themselves in opposition to the Arabs, Arab culture and Arabic language (as they actually do in their statement of mission), or they might not. But the very fact that they have been contributing to this Egyptian Wikipedia, proves that Arabness is not on their agenda. Yet a conclusion that does not go beyond stating the obvious – that building an on-line encyclopaedia in Egyptian Arabic is an ideological project – fails to account for a deeper sociology that is at play here.

First, elementary knowledge of sociolinguistics says that it is hard, if at all possible, to imagine a human being who does not have a set of evaluative ideas, beliefs and perceptions about language and language use. For centuries, the sociolinguistic situation in the Arabic-speaking world has been shaped by powerful, formative language ideologies and concomitant practices that confer a “high,” revered status on a variety that is no one's native tongue and seek to relegate the native vernacular to cultural domains outside writing and print.

Second, concern about the kind of knowledge that is being produced in Wikipedia Masry, *i.e.* the quality and reliability of information in WM articles, is understandable. The same kind of criticism is raised against Wikipedia in general. In the case of Wikipedia Masry, however, the backbone of this critical concern is ideological as much as it is epistemological. Simply put, this kind of criticism is based on the view that the use of ʿAmmiyya for knowledge-production is not “appropriate.” As Haeri puts it,

[...] the change from the use of a sacred language to that of a vernacular changes a community's conception of knowledge because what comes to be created in the vernacular will also be considered knowledge. In Egypt, Classical Arabic continues to be viewed as the prime container of knowledge – by learning it, one

automatically acquires knowledge.⁶¹ Hence generally what is outside of it, is either of secondary importance or none at all. Indeed, Egyptians are discouraged to produce work in their own language. In this way, vernacularization changes a community's relation to its past and present through a transformation of what constitutes knowledge.

(Haeri 2003: 147)

As already mentioned, throughout Wikipedia Masry there are indications that many of its creators are Coptic Christians, but it is difficult to talk about some “secret agenda” and “covert mission” of WM until a more thorough content analysis of WM articles and sources referred to in them has been conducted. Even then, after some “subversive” character of WM is to be documented, a critical yet anthropologically and sociologically informed reading should approach it primarily as indexical of the processes of exclusion and marginalisation operating within Egyptian society and extrapolate where it is within broader Egyptian social structure and cultural constellation that these marginalised minority voices are speaking from, rather than satisfying itself with dismissing Wikipedia Masry as a whole, thus marginalising even further those who use cyberspace – presumably a space of free expression – as a platform to articulate their dissatisfaction with and resistance to dominant discourses and practices.

To illustrate his main point that Wikipedia Masry is something unnecessary, even harmful, Hafez chose one single example from the word-list which I presented here and in Durham while discussing a number of WM lexical innovations as indicative of Masry Wikipedians' attempts to engage in corpus planning. The word is المش هتروسيكسوالية

61 One might want to disagree with Haeri at this point, given what an important container of knowledge in Egypt English has become, a point which Haeri is undoubtedly aware of and touches on elsewhere in her work (in 2003 from which this quote is taken, but primarily in Haeri 1997).

/il-miṣheteroseksualiyya/ – which Hafez goes on to analyse wittily as a term where the only part belonging to Egyptian ṽAmmiyya is the negation, to which the definite article has been added so that “it became something else, *mišš*,⁶² which is eaten with its maggots.” Not without a touch of sarcasm, he strategically picks this particular word⁶³ to discredit the entire Wikipedia Masry in which, way too many stubs notwithstanding, one can still find a number (and a variety) of long, informative, ambitiously written articles.⁶⁴ Hence his interpolation before announcing the word:

“لاحظ اهتماماتها في انتقاء مداخلها المعرفية” - “Notice its [WM's] interests in the selection of encyclopaedic entries.”⁶⁵

As if to suggest that not only this infelicitous word, but the very concept it was coined to signify, have almost nothing to do with things Egyptian, Hafez provides an explanation:

As for the original term “هيتروسكسوال” [“heterosexual”], it is an English or French word that has no relationship whatsoever with *al-miṣriyya*.⁶⁶ And Egyptians, most of whom belong to the ordinary

62 A kind of cheese fermented for a long time in a special liquid. Apparently, a very good kind of *mišš* should contain cheese maggots in it.

63 One might add that *هوموسكسواليتي* /homoseksualiti/, which was also on that list, would have served just as well.

64 To name just a few: *الاسلام* (Islam), *سقوط بغداد* (Siege of Baghdad, 1258), *الحملة الصليبية الثالثة* (Third Crusade), *اسبانيا* (Spain), *تخن* (obesity),... and now, expectedly enough, *ثورة 25 يناير* (Revolution of 25 January)

65 It might be instructive to note in passing that there exists a list of 1000 “vital subjects” that should be dealt with in the appropriate articles in *every* Wikipedia. Homosexuality is one of them. At least on those grounds then, both Arabic Wikipedia and Wikipedia Masry could be “excused” by Sabry Hafez for having dealt with the topic. Interestingly enough, while the concept can be found on the 1000-list of Arabic Wikipedia, it is missing from the the same list of Wikipedia Masry:

(WM - مقالات لازم تكون في كل ويكيبيديا - link from the WM main page)

(WA قائمة مقالات يجب أن تحتويها كل ويكيبيديا - WA)

66 Here it could be understood as either “Egyptian ṽAmmiyya (used earlier in the conjunction with this adjective)”, or as “Egyptianness.” It is less likely that the latter interpretation was intended by the author

people, do not know it except for those who adhere to foreign cultures, and foreign preoccupations, one of which is that “المش هيتروسكسوالية” [“non-heterosexuality”]. Or is that the worm which those in charge of the website want to let in? And that one being more malicious than the simple, ordinary one.

(*ibid.*)⁶⁷

It turns out that only Egyptians corrupted by “the foreign” might end up being gay, the “common people” are okay. And as such, they should be protected from those alien words and concepts... A skilful critical reading in the service of one ideology to brush off another!

As discussed above, I am in full agreement with Hafez regarding the form, status and awkwardness of this particular noun (as well as some others), but my decision to include it in the presented (admittedly very selective) list was based on a motive other than to merely show the absurdity of linguistic extremism that seeks to promote written ʿAmmiyya by inevitably and forcefully pushing it away from Fuṣṣḥa. In fact, this word points to something which Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya have in common – the problem of terminology.

Hafez actually misquoted the word which he used as his example, and my insistence on precision here is not a mere exercise of pedantry: المش هيتروسكسوالى is not found in Wikipedia Masry to mean, as quoted by Hafez, المثلية /al-miṭliyya/ (homosexuality), itself a relatively recent coinage intended to be a “politically correct” term (found both in

since it implies that “heterosexuality” has nothing to do with Egyptians. But it becomes interpretable as “Egyptianness” in the context of what follows right after it.

67 أما المصطلح الأصلي « هيتروسكسوال » فهو مفردة انجليزية أو فرنسية ليس له أي علاقة بالمصرية، ولا يعرفه من المصريين، وأغلبهم من العوام، إلا أصحاب الثقافات الأجنبية، والاهتمامات الأجنبية ومن بينها هذه « المش هيتروسكسوالية ». أم أن هذا هو دود المش الذي يريد المسئولون على الموقع تمريره؟ وهو أكثر خبثاً من دود المش العادي البسيط .

Arabic Wikipedia and Wikipedia Masry, albeit as secondary in the latter). The currency of the word *mitliyya* is questionable, which is probably the reason why Hafez felt the need to “translate” it immediately for his readers into the politically less so correct الشواذ جنسيًا.⁶⁸

As for المش هيتيروسكسوالى, the word is used in Wikipedia Masry to refer to “LGBT,” an acronym coined in the 1990s so as to be inclusive of a variety of – as WM unsuccessfully tries to capture – “non-heterosexual” sexualities and gender identities.⁶⁹

The equivalent term cannot be found in Arabic Wikipedia.⁷⁰ Far from advocating that it

68 In full quote, Hafez says:

فبدلاً من اعتماد هذه الويكيديا مصري لكلمة « المثلية » للشواذ جنسياً، لاحظ اهتماماتها في انتقاء مداخلها المعرفية، اختارت بدلاً منها كلمة « المش هتروسكسوالية » وهو اصطلاح ليس فيه من العامية المصرية غير أداة النفي، وإن ظهرت هنا وقد دخلت عليها أداة التعرف، فأصبحت شيئاً آخر وهو « المش » الذي يؤكل بدوده.

A comment is needed here. I was told once that “pervert” was my mistranslation of the word *šāzz* which in Arabic means “deviant,” as in “deviating from something,” and that my interpretation of it as “politically incorrect” or insulting is somewhat exaggerated. To this, I have to say two things. First, I do not claim that the verb “to deviate” and adjective “deviant” are by themselves necessarily insulting (when we discuss the matters of language, for example, it is common to talk about the forms that “deviate from the pattern/norm/etc.”). However, the adjective “deviant” becomes less acceptable, even insulting once it is applied to people - at least in my native tongue, Serbian, and apparently in English judging by several native speakers whom I consulted. Second, which is I believe is more important, my interpretation of this particular word as carrying negative connotations in Arabic is not based on a lexicographic definition found in an Arabic dictionary, but on the perceptions and attitudes of those whom it refers to and many of whom simply reject it. As already mentioned, the meaning “pervert/ed” is by extension only.

69 Gender is yet another problematic concept in/for Arabic. In her critical reading of achievements, legacies and discourses of the growing field of Egyptian gender studies, Samia Mehrez draws on translation studies scholarship and points to a plurality of translations and lack of consensus (even within this academic field itself) about which word to use in order to capture the notions of social constructedness, formation and performativity of identities, so as to “construct meaning” in a social and cultural context of the target-language where dominant discourses are far less responsive and receptive to the cultural and intellectual baggage which this (originally Western) concept has been assigned to carry. What at first sight appears to signify giving in to “untranslatability,” is in fact symptomatic of gender studies proponents’ lack of sensitivity and readiness to engage in a constructive, non-confrontational, meaningful and meaning-creative dialogue with (at best suspicious, if not hostile) proponents of discourses dominant in the target culture (Mehrez 2010: 107-122) .

70 For example, the first LGBT advocacy group in the Arab world, Lebanese non-profit and non-governmental organisation Helem, the name of which (حلم “dream” with Lebanese Arabic pronunciation) is in itself an acronym of “Lebanese Protection for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgendered” (<http://helem.net/ar/>), abbreviates LGBT to م م م م:

should be coined as soon as possible and at any cost, I am equally hesitant all too easily to dismiss *intentions* and *motivations* of the author/s of WM article on homosexuality to fill in this terminological void, simply by alluding that the term/concept is somehow alien to the Egyptian way of life.

Joseph Massad (2007) argued compellingly “that it is the very discourse of the Gay International, which both produces homosexuals, as well as gays and lesbians, where they do not exist, and represses same-sex desires and practices that refuse to be assimilated into its sexual epistemology” (162-163). Such “imperialist epistemological task is proceeding apace with little opposition from the majority of the sexual beings it wants to 'liberate' and whose social and sexual worlds it is destroying in the process” (189-190).

It is difficult to speculate about capacities in which the author/s of the WM article in question were implicated in translating “homosexuality.” What are their personal concerns and self-perceptions, and what are their perceptions and imaginations of the targeted readers? Are they straight? Perhaps men who have sex with men? Have they been externally transformed into “subjects who identify as 'homosexual' or 'gay',” (*ibid.* 162) and are now complacently participating in their own self-destruction? And if they have, what would be some possible ways out of that vicious circle? Ignoring “foreign” concepts, formative discourses, and words, is not a solution. Certain identification practices, concomitant cultures, and even languages are indeed being “globalised,” or “translocalised” (Leap & Boellstorff 2004), but this process is neither unidirectional, nor exclusively directly transplanted by the Western(ised) scholarship and NGO activism onto

some mouldable local non-subjects. Rather, this translocalisation is mediated through increasingly flowing ideas, discourses, images and imaginations, and is negotiated in a variety of ways whereby the (already transformed) “global” gets rephrased and incorporated into the (always re-negotiated and changing) “local”.

Whether born or created, some “gays,” “homosexuals,” “lesbians,” “LGBT people” etc. *do exist* in Egypt (in that they identify themselves as such), notwithstanding many “practitioners of same-sex contact” for whom these labels mean little or nothing. Although intellectually stimulating, genealogies of these identities and discursive excavations of how they came into being do not negate their existence. In fact, the issue is not whether there are LGBT persons in Egypt or not – if not in Egypt, they exist elsewhere. The issue is how the “culturally unacceptable” can be talked and written about without immediately being insulted or discriminated against.

When people do not have a word for something that is “out there” and needs to be talked and written about, they have to invent it. Or some kind of linguistic authority tries to invent it for them. In this particular case, it is not that nothing was already available. It was. But for some reason (which should have been critically elaborated in the given article before the new terminological proposal had been made) what was available was not seen as “appropriate.” So, my criticism to whomever has come up with *هوموسيكسواليتي* for “homosexuality” and *المش هيتيروسكسوالى* for “LGBT” is: Why this particular approach? If the main concern was “political correctness” (in itself ideologised and problematic concept that cannot be further discussed here) wasn't there another strategy to “re-appropriate,” or “re-claim” some of the already existing words, even the pejorative ones? If a strong need

was felt to come up with something new against what had already been there, why is not that need adequately explained in the relevant article? Lexical intervention of this kind is a sensitive, yet significant issue since it aims to intervene in the field of identity politics. Most importantly, if the “rules of Masry” are not going to be said “bye bye” to, why are they not put to work? In other words, why is “Egyptian” being promoted as a “language” and at the same time its internal capacity to cope with translation is negated?

Samia Mehrez raised the same issue regarding “translating gender.” She reminded those who prefer to Arabise the English word (جندر, *jindar*) instead of translating it to Arabic that such a practice “alienates rather than communicates anything to an Arabic speaker, and given the hypersensitivity to 'western' hegemonic discourses today, can result in combative nationalistic responses” (Mehrez 2010: 111). And that is exactly the kind of response articulated by Hafez, response that really hits the target, but is then extended so as to dismiss Wikipedia Masry as a whole and negate its usefulness to “common people.”

It is interesting that it was exactly the “common”, “ordinary” Egyptians whom, as quoted above, Ghaly had in mind when submitting his proposal to Wikimedia Foundation Language Committee. Wikipedia Masry was to be “written in layperson terms.” If that really is the case, and if for some reason Mehrez's critical advice is to be ignored, then, at least in the case of the word “gay” and at least among those “laypersons” who identify themselves as “being gay,” an acceptable, non-insulting word is already in wide circulation. It is one of the many that testify how easily Egyptian Arabic has been incorporating English vocabulary. It is *gāy* and its plural is *gayz*. It definitely is not

“homoseksuali”.

On a more general level, this terminological escapade of Wikipedia Masry is reminiscent of the problem of coining new terminology and modernisation of Fuṣḥa that has been a troubled and contested issue since the early nineteenth century. Arabic language academies have been set up throughout the Arab world in order to protect and preserve the language and at the same time equip it with what it lacked to cope with all too many new concepts and technical terms. Principles that are to be followed in accomplishing this task are: semantic expansion of existing words (usually archaisms), derivation by analogy (*iṣṭiqāq bil-qiyās*), and, less favoured (but in scientific fields particularly productive), coining of composite constructions (*naḥṭ*). Arabisation (*taʿrīb*), as the process of incorporating loanwords and adapting them as much as possible to phonotactic and morphological rules of Arabic, has been strongly disapproved of and discouraged, yet it has been inevitable, as testified by the existence of Arabised words for “television”, “radio”, “democracy”, “ideology”, and many others.⁷¹ Despite many coinages that have been successfully incorporated into contemporary Fuṣḥa, the efforts of the Arabic language academies have been constantly challenged by a very fast pace at which new words are needed, a very slow pace at which the academies are able to meet these needs, and lack of authority to promote the solutions they come up with. Moreover, “the very proliferation of the language academies themselves, a reflection of the political fragmentation of the Arab world, has itself been a factor in ensuring that the terminological inconsistencies that the academies sought to avoid have come about and continue to plague communication in Arabic in the sciences” (Holes 2004: 309). And so, just as some

71 For a discussion of the work of the Arabic language academies see Holes 2004 (309-314). For a comprehensive treatment of the development of Arabic scientific vocabulary in particular, see Ali 1987.

of the new ʿAmmiyya terms coined by linguistic amateurs in Wikipedia Masry are indeed stillborns, so are some of the Fuṣṣa terms coined by the recognised authorities on Arabic language.

Communication, however, must go on, for which words are needed. In a discussion of this type, for example, we need the adjective “sociolinguistic.” Hafez used it twice in his essay. The question is how many purists would be comfortable with his lexical choice that combines *naḥt* and *taʿrīb* – سوسيوولوجوي /sūsiyū-luḡawī/.

3.12 *Vox populi, vox... mīn?*

It might have been the case that my twenty-minute presentation in Durham was poorly organised, thus failing to account for the complexity of what is going on in and around Wikipedia Masry. Perhaps Professor Hafez would have been less concerned about this “odd website” had I not (quite intentionally!) included those two incriminating WM words. Nevertheless, my argument is that it is not particular words and entries in Wikipedia Masry, it is its very existence and with it its sociolinguistic dissidence that are objectionable and troubling to those who see the use of ʿAmmiyya in writing as “inappropriate”, and even “harmful” and “dangerous” for the future of the Arabic language and the Arab world. And in such a climate, Masry Wikipedians are actually not doing themselves a favour. Their ideological obstinacy and occasional linguistic extremism stand in the way of prospective discursive reconfigurations that could recognise and sanction the sociolinguistic reality *away from binary oppositions and dualistic either-or arguments*.

Over the course of my fieldwork in Egypt, I have encountered and read a lot of books written in ʿAmmiyya. I mention some of them in the first chapter, and I return to some others in the last one. Here, I want to stress that very little of what is going on under the rubric of “the spread of written ʿAmmiyya” in Egypt, is happening “à la Wiki Masry.” Most of the authors who decide to use ʿAmmiyya when writing (either exclusively or to a certain extent), do so without necessarily taking a confrontational approach to Fuṣṣḥa – neither ideologically, nor practically. Most of them do not write against Fuṣṣḥa. They simply write. And they do so by resorting to one variety or another as they see fit. Their reasons and motives are many and cannot all be addressed here. Often are their written products inspiring documents of creative cross-fertilisation between Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya. Still, their “quiet encroachment” (Bayat 2010: 43-65) on what are generally perceived to be “traditional domains” of Fuṣṣḥa is often seen as something “degrading” (Amin 2009).

Here, I freely borrow from Asef Bayat his concept of “the quiet encroachment of the ordinary,” and transplant it into a discussion of sociolinguistic issues for which it has not been envisioned by the author. The reason is simple: despite the fact that, in the case of Fuṣṣḥa-ʿAmmiyya friction, we cannot talk about human “survival” and “improving ones’ lives,” what Bayat describes as “the silent, protracted, but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied, powerful, or the public,” (2010: 56), is here metaphorically used to capture hegemonic discursive elaboration of certain language domains as being somehow the property of Fuṣṣḥa, domains that have to be protected and preserved from the encroachment of ʿAmmiyya. But the encroachment is well under way. While in Bayat’s writings “the ordinary” is to be understood primarily in socio-economic terms (=poor), I use it here as a cultural category – various producers of texts whose

variously written products have been increasingly filling the public spaces through a variety of media, both online and offline, breaking along the way many established writing conventions and expectations, reconfiguring the sociolinguistic setting and slowly but steadily appropriating the domain of the written word in an unprecedented manner.

As pointed out by Suleiman “[t]he belief that S[tandard] A[rabic] is under attack from external provocateurs and internal agents is a common feature of the debate over language in the Arabic-speaking world. This is reflected in the use of variations on the war metaphor to describe the conflict between SA and its 'enemies'” (2004:92). But for this discursive tradition to live on, it is not even necessary that straightforward, uncompromising calls for the use of colloquial in writing are publicly articulated. For the conservatives, the rise of ʿAmmiyya simply means the fall of Fuṣṣḥa. And the fall of Fuṣṣḥa is indicative of the decline of the entire society. It is a national catastrophe.

Linguistic conservatism in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Arab world) is very strong. It cuts across all levels of social structure. It is not directly related to other forces or expressions of social stratification, such as those pertaining to class, education, economic status, gender, religious or political affiliation, etc. It does not even have anything to do with one's mastery of Fuṣṣḥa. Those who adhere to it can equally come from among the intellectuals and the illiterate, Islamists and secularists, Muslims and Christians. High reverence with which Fuṣṣḥa is held by many Egyptians is what Masry Wikipedians fail to acknowledge. That opens up their endeavours to criticism and rejection. Marginalised from the very beginning due to its “inappropriate” encroachment upon scientific discourse and knowledge production, Wikipedia Masry is perpetuating its own self-marginalisation.

Wikipedia is by definition *of* the masses and *for* the masses. With Wikipedia Masry this does not seem to be the case. Masry Wikipedians' efforts to write in the language of the masses are met with resistance and resentment of those who prefer an encyclopaedia for the masses to be written in a language those masses do not know well. At the same time, Masry Wikipedians, as their struggle with the form shows, do not always seem to know with certainty what that language of the masses actually is and how it should be employed and developed so as to serve this new, encyclopaedic function.

The future of Wikipedia Masry is uncertain, and given how things are now, probably not very bright. How long it will last, how big it will grow and how reputable as a source it will become, will entirely depend on the enthusiasm and persistence of its current creators, on their readiness to keep on writing new articles while refining the existing ones, on their resistance to incessant attacks by their opponents, and on their ability to attract new users and contributors. But perhaps first and foremost, it will depend on their willingness to critically reflect on and re-assess some of their fundamental premises.

3.13 Producing knowledge, practicing language

Here, in the conclusion to this chapter, I wish to refer again to the concept of language as a local practice (Pennycook 2010). To think of Masry Wikipedians from a practice-oriented approach is to think of what it is that they do. It is to think of a group of young enthusiasts primarily engaged in a locally situated practice of producing knowledge. That practice is in itself predicated on certain ideologically reinforced perceptions, interpretations and visions of the locale *in which*, and – more importantly – *upon which*

they wish to act. This leads to a series of simultaneous imaginations and constructions of what it is that this locale, Egypt, *was/has been, is, and should be(come)*.

First, Egypt is primarily defined with reference to a linguistic variety natively spoken by all Egyptians – what Masry Wikipedians label Masry, Egyptian language. Second, Egypt is perceived as being populated by people in need of knowledge, and, by extension, in need of emancipation. Third, Egypt is also defined by the existence of another variety (perceived as superimposed) that has traditionally been employed for producing and disseminating knowledge – Arabic, which for them stands for Fuṣṣḥa. The great majority of Egyptians, however, do not know that variety well. They should therefore be catered for in Egyptian. Egyptian, however, has traditionally been excluded from knowledge-production practices. As such, this primarily spoken language needs to be emancipated and employed for what it has not been employed before. And here is where the real challenge lies. Such a language cannot all of a sudden be simply “used” for what it has not been used before; it has to be used and at the same time acted upon. It has to be reinvented. It simultaneously becomes a tool for action and an object of intervention. It needs to be elaborated as a written language to serve a new function, yet at the same time it has to be written. The task is difficult, almost paradoxical – the language has to be simultaneously practised and be an object of practice. The emancipator is itself in need of emancipation.

In the fourth chapter of her book *Sacred Language, Ordinary People*, under the title “Creating Contemporaneity: struggles with form” Niloofar Haeri (2003: 73-111) goes on to illustrate difficulties and artificiality faced by those who, at the end of the nineteenth century, all of a sudden had to start “transforming Classical Arabic into a medium fit for a

wide readership and the exigencies of 'news'." (73) She "argue[s] that the critical and paramount struggle for writers was finding the means to render Classical Arabic into a language of contemporary life." (77) Ten pages later, under the subtitle "Local Correspondents: cracks in the fortress of the case system"⁷² in order to illustrate her point, she ventures into a would-be-linguistic analysis of several examples. That is arguably the weakest part of her book. Haeri's comments are, at best, impressionistic, and at worse..., utterly bad and erroneous. Every Arabist can only look in disbelief at what she is saying, how she is misrepresenting and misinterpreting the data (and the data are 5 sentences!).⁷³ This is all done in order to illustrate some kind of creeping in of Egyptian Arabic onto texts that were supposed to be written in Classical. So, for example, in (89)⁷⁴ – *hādīhi hiya al-marra al-'ūlā allati zurtu fīha (sic!) hāḡa al-bandar...* – Haeri, having otherwise provided a correct translation goes on to comment: "[...] after '*hādīhi*' 'this' at the beginning of the sentence, there would not normally be any pronoun acting as a copula (the verb 'to be') in Classical Arabic: '*hiya*' (lit. 'she'). The presence of that pronoun in that function is, on the other hand, very common in Egyptian Arabic (sic!)" - obviously, Haeri has never heard of the existence of *ḡamīr al-faḡl*, which is a rather normal feature in Fuḡḡa. Continues Haeri, "Similarly, the verb 'zāra,' does not normally take the preposition 'fī' in Classical Arabic but it does in Egyptian Arabic" - actually, preposition *fī(ha)* in this example refers back to the adverbial phrase *al-marra al-'ūlā* (the first time *in which*), and has nothing to do with verb *zāra*. And so on,... perplexing number of mistakes on a handful of examples, all that in

72 And then, in the section, no word is said about "the fortress of the case system," or case endings at all.

73 Mistakes are found throughout the book, particularly in transliteration, but in this section, they reach the climax since the data and comments are strategically employed to support her argument. In the acknowledgements at the beginning of the book, Haeri expresses her gratitude to two renowned Arabists for "correcting many of the grammatical examples." If one is not to see the two of them as implicated in this catastrophic act of linguistic amateurism in Chapter 4, one can only assume that their corrections never reached the editor and publisher.

74 My transliteration.

order to illustrate a rather commonsensical claim. The reason I critically refer to this part of Haeri's book is because of her ideological position maintained throughout her book that somehow Egyptian would do it all better.

In this chapter, I offer a study of ideology at work, and *in vivo*. And what I show is that it is not that easy for Egyptian Arabic either. Just as the pioneers of Arab journalism faced difficulties when they had to develop an expository style suitable for the modern time (and they worked with a language whose written tradition was at the time more than ten centuries old!), so do Masry Wikipedians today when trying to develop an encyclopedic idiom. The former could have probably benefited from the colloquial of their time (but did not for ideological reasons, i.e. Pan-Arabism). The latter can also benefit a lot from Fuṣṣḥa, but Masry Wikipedians do not want that (again for ideological reasons, i.e. Egyptian nationalism).

What Wikipedia Masry illustrates is what Joseph (1987) described as “creole standardisation problem.” Languages usually develop literary standard based on an available model. In the case of ʿAmmiyya that would and should be Fuṣṣḥa. However, Masry Wikipedians do not want that because they perceive Fuṣṣḥa as a superposed variety, just like in the case of creoles. When emancipating itself from its superposed variety (which is also its lexifier, like in the case of Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya), creole needs to distance itself from the superposed variety and, not only achieve, but confirm its “independence,” in which case loses the connection with its lexifier and most immediate model for developing a standard.

Masry Wikipedians often 'translate' (i.e. copy and paste and then Egyptianise) contents (and along the way forms as well) from Wikipedia Arabia, which inevitably leads them to model its Masry on Fuṣḥa against their will. Since this contradicts the main ideological postulate that Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya are two different languages, they feel pressured to intervene linguistically, but more often than not find themselves in linguistic dead-ends.

Its current status, still marginal and peripheral, might suggest that Wikipedia Masry is no more than a linguistic oddity, a shooting star in Arabic cyberspace, maybe not even worth of scholarly attention. Yet, I argue that the story of Wikipedia Masry is a story of a struggle for a linguistic form in an ideological battleground, and as such, it is in many ways the story of *written* ʿAmmiyya.

Chapter 4

TWEET LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

micro-blogging, major mixing

انا تويت واتوتت.. ريتويت واترتويت.. انا ورايا فيفوريتس
(@nawaranegm, Twitter, 30 May 2011)

“A journalist, blogger, tweeter, democracy advocate, promoter of freedom of expression, human rights and political activist, translator, news editor, columnist, careful follower of rather volatile dynamics of the contemporary Egyptian society, insightful commentator on matters of politics and culture in Egypt and the Arab world, outspoken critic, active intellectual, one of the voices and faces of the Egyptian revolution,...” This would be just the beginning of a list in my attempt to introduce a courageous Egyptian woman, Nawara Negm.¹

“The Blossom of Victory” – as her parents named her for being born on October 8, 1973, two days after the outbreak of the October War² – Nawwārat al-'Intiṣār Aḥmad Fu'ād ʿIzzat Nigm (نواره الانتصار أحمد فؤاد عزت نجم) is the daughter of the celebrated ʿAmmiyya poet and leftist dissident Ahmed Fouad Negm (أحمد فؤاد نجم) and Islamist thinker and

1 See, for example: <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/CBB18F1B-7847-462A-ACFF-9F5F4247ADC0.htm> , <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/5325> and (sound/video): http://alkoga.blogspot.com/2010/01/blog-post_2996.html.

2 This was the fourth Arab-Israeli War (also known as the Yom Kippur War or Ramadan War), fought by a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria against Israel whose forces had kept the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights under occupation since the Six-Day War in 1967 (June 5-10).

journalist Safinaz Kazem (صافى ناز كاظم). Nawara holds a BA in English Language from Ain Shams University and works at the Nile Television Network as a translator and news editor. As a student in 1995, she was arrested and imprisoned for twelve days for organising and participating in demonstrations against the presence of Israel at the industrial fair in Egypt. Since 2006, she has been a prolific blogger whose posts, mostly political and mostly written in ʿAmmiyya, or occasionally in admixture with Fuṣḥa, have been continuously receiving thousands of hits.³

A Nest on the Wind (عش عَ الرّيح), is her first book (Negm 2009); it is a collection of articles previously written for newspapers al-Helwa (الحلوة) and al-Wafd (الوفد). She is one of the contributors to *I Am Female* (أنا أنثى), an edited volume featuring twenty-seven Egyptian female bloggers, each one represented by one text.⁴ In 2010 Nawara Negm co-translated with Abduh el-Barmawy (عبدہ البرماوي) a selection of Egypt-related Wikileaks documents. These were first published by the newspaper *al-Dustur* (الدستور)⁵ and subsequently appeared in a book under the title *Documents that Shook the World* (الوثائق التي هزت العالم: وثائق ويكيليكس).⁶ Despite all these activities and achievements, it was not until the revolution started that Nawara became widely known in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. Having given several television interviews over the course of the uprising, primarily for Al Jazeera, she came to be regarded as one of the spokes-

3 Nawara's blog, *جبهة التهيس الشعبية – The Popular Front of Rowdiness*, can be reached at <http://tahyyes.blogspot.com/>.

4 The book was jointly published in 2009 by *Dar Dawwen* (دار دَوْن للنشر والتوزيع) and *Dar Oktob* (دار اكتب للنشر والتوزيع), as the third in the series *Pocket Egyptian Blogs* (مدونات مصرية للجيب – See Chapter 5). A related interview with Ahmed Mahanna (أحمد محنى), the editor and co-owner of *Dar Dawwen* could be seen at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAUgOTR2RuA> (part 1) and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWZqpf2_7GA (part 2) – last accessed 10 July 2011.

5 Also known as *al-Dustur al-Asli* (الدستور الأصلي).

6 Published by *Dar Dawwen*.

persons of the protesters in Tahrir in general, and of those who are often referred to as the “youth of the revolution” (شباب الثورة) in particular.

Here, I would like to refer to three of these interviews. But before I do, a brief clarification is needed. This chapter is not a case-study focused on a particular native speaker's linguistic behaviour. Far from it, my aim is to provide a fairly comprehensive treatment of a specific form of technologically mediated writing practices. Even if not inclusive of large sections of Egyptian society, the type of writing I set out to describe and examine here has nevertheless come to play a significant social, cultural and political role in contemporary Egypt. Nawara Negm is one of those Egyptians who actively, daily engage in this writing in order to exchange short messages with large groups of people. Studying this writing only for what it is, and only where it takes place is legitimate and much of what I do in the second part of this chapter is exactly that. Yet I believe that at least a cursory glance at Nawara's linguistic strategies across the speaking/writing divide is helpful. It will put things into perspective without overlooking the fact that communicative written practices discussed here, regardless of how banal and marginal they might seem at first glance, are not some isolated, whimsical acts of time-wasting, but meaningful and motivating parts of some people's lives, fully integrated within a complex repertoire of linguistic activities through which they constantly renegotiate who they are, who they wish to be, and what kind of society they would like to live in.

Also, such a detour might be appealing to students of spoken Arabic as an additional illustration of a correlation between the topic and a context of a media statement on the one hand, and speaker's different linguistic choices on the other. Factors

such as the speaker's mood and emotional state regarding the situation of the communicative act, the effects he or she wishes to produce on the audience, as well as his or her perceptions of symbolic significance and indexicality of the chosen variety, all partake in shaping the dynamics of the verbal output.

In all three statements selected here, Nawara Negm comments for Al Jazeera on the course of the uprising and current revolution-related developments. In the first two, she articulates the demands of the protesters.

The first statement, of which I give a transcript, was given on January 26, a day after the uprising started.⁷ It is not clear whether and to what extent the statement had been prepared, *i.e.* written down beforehand, but Nawara herself was obviously prepared for the interview. They did not stop her in the street to give a statement on the spot; we see her at a television studio facing the camera. At several points during her relatively short speech (1.19min), she could be seen looking down quickly, as if glancing at a note, but it is not possible to say whether there was a note in front of her or not. Nevertheless, she was not reading, even if reminding herself about what it was that she wanted to say.

7 The video clip is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eE2itEB_v8&NR=1 (last accessed 10 July 2011). It was the topic of the second translation assignment for students who took the course "Translating the Revolution" (ARIC 402/513) taught by Samia Mehrez at the American University in Cairo during the spring semester of 2011. The relevant entry at the blog of the course ("Unsettling the Dust: translating the 25th Jan Egyptian uprising") is available at <http://translatingrev.wordpress.com/2011/03/21/nawara-negms-al-jazeera-interview-on-january-26th/> (last accessed 10 July 2011). It contains a transcript (in Arabic script) of Nawara's statement and two versions of its translation done by the two groups of students who worked on the assignment. The transcript which I provide here is practically a (slightly modified) transliterated version of the Arabic transcript found on this blog – I compared it with the actual video clip, corrected some minor imprecisions and provided a version in Latin script. I did not aim at a precise representation of all actual phonetic realisations, neither have I marked consistently all paralinguistic features of the statement.

She appears remarkably confident, but a trace of nervousness could be noticed on a few occasions when she makes a mistake and quickly corrects herself.⁸ She delivered her statement in an admixture of Fuṣḥa (italics) and ʿAmmiyya (bold):⁹

miš hadafna inn iḥna nizʿig innizām walla nuxuḍḍ innizām wala ayy° ḥāga... il.../ imbāriḥ innās lamma hatafit ilhitāf illi ʔalitu aššaʿb yurīd isqāt° nniḥām innās di kanit gadda wa hāḍihi... ḥaqīqatan intifāḍit algimāl naḥnu fāḍa bīna¹⁰ alkayl wa naḥnu sanastamirr ḥattā nasmaʿ kilmit ana fhimtukum... hādā huwa maṭlabnā alʿaxīr wa maṭlabnā annihāʿi wa hādā huwa saqf maṭlabnā yaʿnī dah miš ḥanwattī ssaʔf¹¹ ʿan kida il.../ alʿalāf ḥayinzilu 'in šā' allāh... alʿalāf mutašaggaʿīn imbāriḥ innās ʿandaha 'iṣrār gaʿīb innaharda baʿd° ma ḍarabūna bi lqanābil ilmusīla li dd.../ imbāriḥ baʿd° ma ḍarabu nnās bi lqanābil ilmusīla li ddumūʿ ana kunt° mawgūda lamma nnās kanit biṭiḍḍirib wi tirgaʿ... wi baʿd° ma.../ illi ḥaṣal imbāriḥ wi baʿd iʿtiqāl alf wāḥid.. ana 'aḥibb aṣaḥḥaḥ lil gazīra ana 'axadt min markaz hišām mubārak ilqānūni inn iḥna ʿandina alf ism muʿtaqal ḡēr innās ilmutaḡayyiba ill iḥna miš ʿarfīn humma fēn... baʿd... baʿd° hādā innās nizlit innaharda bi lʿalāf tāni fi ʿiddit 'amākin wi fi ʿiddit muḥāfazāt fi maṣr wa naḥnu mustamirrūn ḥatta nismaʿ kilmit ana fhimtukum.

*Translation:*¹²

It's not our aim to annoy the regime, or frighten it, or anything like that. Yesterday, when people shouted the slogan “The people want to overthrow the regime,” these people were serious. This is indeed the uprising of the downtrodden.¹³ We have had enough, and we will continue until we hear the words “I've understood you.” That is our last demand, our ultimate demand, and that is our final word... meaning, we won't settle for anything less... Thousands will take to the streets, God willing. Thousands were encouraged yesterday. People have a surprising persistence. Today, after they hit us with *tear*.. Yesterday, after they hit people with *tear gas*, I

8 Marked in the transcript as “.../”

9 The instances of overlapping between the two varieties, *i.e.* elements that could be interpreted as both MSA or ECA are left unmarked.

10 The lengthening of the vowel in this prepositional construction is a ECA feature, but it is clear that the entire segment is rendered in MSA.

11 Note the repetition of the same noun (*lit.* “roof; ceiling”) in two variants in close proximity: the first rendered in MSA (*saqf*), the second in ECA (*saʔf*).

12 Again, I am indebted to the translations made by the AUC students for the course “Translating the Revolution” which I consulted while working on mine. (See footnote 7).

13 Literally, “the revolt of the camels” (*intifāḍit al-gimāl*) – the revolt of those who had patiently endured for a long time.

was present when people **were being hit and were returning...** **And after what happened yesterday** and after one thousand people were arrested – **I'd like to make a correction** for Al Jazeera, I **got** (the information) from the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre **that we have** one thousand names of those who have been arrested **apart from** those *who are missing, whom we don't know where they are*. After... After (all) that, **people took to the streets today again, in thousands**; in many places in many governorates in **Egypt**. *And we are continuing* until **we hear the words** “**I've understood you.**”

In this brief account given to a pan-Arab television channel two days into the protests, Nawara Negm is practically spelling out that what is happening in Egypt is indeed a revolution, the ultimate goal of which is nothing less than the overthrow of the regime. She clearly states that the protests are growing larger and will continue until the regime is toppled. And she does it in a way that makes her statement recognisably Egyptian. Throughout her statement, she resorts to pan-Arabic Fuṣḥa for emphasis – to highlight the main demand and the expected outcome of the demonstrations (the overthrow of the regime), as well as the determination of the protesters to endure. The moment until which they will endure, is metaphorically expressed in colloquial. Regardless of how we interpret the direction of switching (from an educated ṣAmmiyya further “up” to Fuṣḥa or from Fuṣḥa “down” to ṣAmmiyya), it is necessary to stress that – except in the case of interpolation “dah miš ḥanwaṭṭi ssaʔf^e ṣan kida” (ECA) which is introduced by discourse organising *yaʔni* and could be seen as both clarifying and emphasising the preceding sentence “wa hādā huwa saqf maṭlabnā” (MSA) – neither variety is used as some sort of “translation” of the other.¹⁴ Both ECA and MSA parts are integral, organic elements of the entire statement. On the other hand, the well-known linguistic security an

14 Which could be analogous to a situation in which an Egyptian preacher, for example, would be “translating” or recapitulating (in ECA) parts previously said in MSA to his Egyptian listeners, a kind of practice first noted by El-Hassan (1977) and later studied in more detail by other scholars (For example, Bassiouney 2006).

Egyptian speaker has (and expresses) in cross-dialectal contexts¹⁵ could give but a partial explanation for Nawara's code-choice. After all, despite the fact that hosts and anchors on Al Jazeera by default use MSA, the overall programme (talk shows, statements, vox-pop, interviews etc.) is considerably multi-dialectal, and many speakers, not only Egyptians, can nowadays be seen and heard speaking in their own dialects and expecting to be understood. Therefore, Nawara's apparent "desire to sound Egyptian" is *not only* a mere expression of some nationalistic sense of linguistic supremacy in the context in which "Egyptian Arabic has spread far and wide through the mass media" (El-Hassan 1978: 42, also quoted in Holes 2004: 386-387). It is also a way of signalling that "this is *the Egyptian* revolution." As if to say: "it's *our* turn now, and we'll continue until *we* achieve what Tunisians have achieved." Clear, albeit indirect, reference to the success of the Tunisian revolution is made twice – "ana fhimtukum" were the words which the ousted Tunisian president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali had uttered in his last speech before he was forced to resign the presidency on January 14, 2011.¹⁶

It could be said that in this interview, as much as informing the Arab audiences about what is going on in Egypt and cross-referencing it to Tunis, Nawara Negm is also

15 See, for example, El-Hassan 1978.

16 On this note, it is interesting to point to Ben Ali's linguistic choice in his last address (See <http://www.mashahd.net/video/af427924abdbe3493de&s=1> – last accessed 10 July 2011). Unlike Mubarak, who was otherwise known for resorting to ^ʿAmmiyya freely and often in his speeches, as demonstrated by Bassiouney (2006), but who clung on to MSA every time he addressed the Egyptians during the 2011 uprising, Ben Ali had opted for the Tunisian Arabic in his attempt to calm down his angry nation - "nkallamkum bi luġ^ʿt kull^ʿ ttūnusiyya w^ʿ ttūnusiyyāt" ("I am talking to you in a language of all Tunisian men and women")... In vain. Lahlali (2011) provides a comparative analysis of three last speeches of Mubarak and Ben Ali, and shows how both of them resorted to different discourse strategies at different stages of the uprisings. Nevertheless, the pattern of how they did it is the same, with the exception of the use of dialect mentioned above.

sending a clear message to the Egyptian regime about the intentions of the protesters. Furthermore, she is here also (one might argue, even more so) addressing, calling out to and encouraging other Egyptians (on whom the official media had imposed information blackout while bombing them with anti-protest propaganda) to come and join what will continue until the downtrodden, who are “serious” and “have had enough,” overthrow the regime. In order to accentuate the seriousness and persistence of the protesters, she is punctuating her statement with *Fuṣṣa*.

My second example is her interview given after Mubarak, on February 1, had addressed the nation for the second time since the protests began, only to confirm that he did not intend to step down any time soon and to promise that he would not run for the elections that were to take place six months later. Of course, the question was how many people would take his offer. In a way, this was one of the turning points during the uprising. Were the demonstrations going to lose momentum or continue with vehemence? By that time, it was no longer police brutality, but another form of violence that had taken place despite the army presence in the streets – the pro-regime thugs (*balṭagiyya*), abusing the security breakdown created by the total withdrawal of the police forces on the evening of January 28, had already started to attack the protesters at rallying places around the country and spread a general feeling of insecurity among everybody else elsewhere.

In such a situation, Nawara Negm is angry and emotional, yet zealous and defiant, just as were many other Egyptians at that moment. During the statement, we cannot see her; she is giving it over the phone. The statement is longer than the one referred to

above (3:27min). It might have been scripted, but we cannot know that for sure. Judging by her cadence it is clear that she was overwhelmed by emotions while throwing accusations at Mubarak, whose speech she described as insulting and full of lies and propaganda. After killing the protesters and unleashing the thugs, Mubarak was planning to stay in power till September... How could he be trusted?...

In Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill: Volume 1* (2003), there is a scene in which O-Ren Ishii¹⁷ is shown presiding at a council meeting of the bosses of the Tokyo Yakuza as their newly elected leader. The joyous atmosphere is spoiled by the outburst of one of the bosses, Tanaka-san, frustrated and insulted by what he described as “the perversion done to the council [...] by making a Chinese Jap-American half-breed bitch its leader!” In a flash, O-Ren Ishii runs across the table, cuts off his head, turns to the rest of the bosses who are looking aghast at the blood gushing from his still seated, decapitated corpse, and addresses them in Japanese, the language they had spoken throughout the evening: “So you all will know the seriousness of my warning, I shall say this in English!” And so she does.

O-Ren's quote vividly illustrates the sociolinguistic fact that there are contexts and situations in which the use of a particular linguistic variety is influenced by a set of underlying, culturally constructed perceptions and attitudes about connotations and effects the chosen variety is expected to produce.

17 Played by Lucy Liu, O-Ren Ishii is a half-Japanese, half-Chinese American who witnessed the brutal murder of her parents at the age of nine, took revenge two years later by killing a Yakuza boss who had murdered them, became an assassin and eventually managed to impose herself as “the queen of the Tokyo underground.”

Metaphorically speaking, it could be said that in her reaction to Mubarak's second speech, in which he had insulted and angered the protesters by calling *them* responsible for the emerging chaos and destruction, Nawara Negm did something similar to what O-Ren Ishii did in *Kill Bill*. Of course, she did not cut off Mubarak's head although it might be argued that she did behead him symbolically by exposing his crimes and depriving him of legitimacy. Also, she did not announce or declare her code choice as explicitly as O-Ren did. Neither did she choose English in this case. Nevertheless, the sharp stylistic difference between her first statement and this one, or between this one and the third one briefly referred to below, strongly indicates that her choice of how to encode her “seriousness” linguistically, was deliberate and strategic.

She delivered her statement almost entirely in high-flown Fuṣḥa.¹⁸ In fact, there was only one quick resort to ʿAmmiyya (at 2:19m), when she quoted her grandmother:¹⁹ “subḥāna llāh, yaʿni > gidditi kānit bitʿūl: rabbina lamma yiḡḍab ʿala insān yisallaṭ ʿalē muxxu.”²⁰ She then continued to talk about Mubarak in Fuṣḥa, thus illustrating what she meant by the previous quote: “kullamā takallam kullamā aṭāra ḡaḍaban, law sakata kan akram lah...”²¹ And here is where the twist came into play – not only that the bar (*saqf*) had not been lowered, but it had actually been raised in the meantime: “ḥasanan, naḥnu lā nuṭālib bi raḥīli rraṭs bal sayabqā wa sayuḥākam.”²² The stakes had changed. Those who had been “generous and kind” when asking him to leave only a few days earlier, were now

18 See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVlx-0kZaVs> – last accessed 10 July 2011.

19 The switch is clearly introduced by the discourse organiser *yaʿni* (“meaning, that means, that is, etc.”).

20 “Praise be to God! I mean..> My grandmother used to say: When angry at a man, our Lord sets his brain against him.” This is said in the context of her description of how counter-productive Mubarak’s speech actually was; the quote is immediately preceded by her qualification that his speech had only “added oil to the fire” (laḡad waḡaʿa azzayt ʿala nnār). In other words, Mubarak had gone crazy.

21 “The more he speaks, the more he provokes anger. It would be more honourable if he kept silence...”

22 “All right! We do not demand that the president leaves, instead he will stay and will be prosecuted!”

furious and determined to put him on trial.²³ The reasons were many, as listed by Nawara. In terms of linguistic choices, she could have easily produced a statement similar to the one analysed above. However, given a completely different context, we might conclude that she must have felt a need to suppress spontaneity and invoke seriousness and determination much more emphatically than she did in her first statement. What she was saying at the beginning of the protests, was then still much more of a desire dependant on the ability to mobilise more people, for which a mix of Fuṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya had served her well. Now, speaking at a critical moment, she had to mobilise those yet undecided, and inspire those already mobilised to endure. The first time she was talking about an amorphous regime, this time it was the president himself whose despotic authority she had to smash. The first time she felt it was necessary to explain that people “were serious” when chanting in Fuṣḥa what has since become the most potent linguistic emblem of people's will throughout the Arab world. This time she gave them a Fuṣḥa voice, 'so all would understand the seriousness of their warning.' Speaking on behalf of the humiliated but resolute, she opted for the variety imbued with gravity.²⁴

23 (3:06) “naḥnu kunnā kuramā' wa kunnā ṭayyibīn gidḍan ḥīna ṭalabnā minhu 'an yarḥala ʿala lfawr. ḥasanan! lan nakūn kuramā' wa lan nattasim bi ṭṭība wa lan yarḥal sayuḥākam fawran...” – “We were generous and very kind when we asked him to leave immediately. All right! We will not be generous nor will kindness be our trait, and he will not leave, he will be prosecuted right away...”

24 This effective statement left a strong impression on many people who heard it. Among the comments posted on the Youtube, for example, we read:

(Lion's Heart Negm) قلب الاسد نجم -

(Well done, Nawara) ينصر دينك يا نواره -

(That's the true daughter of the country) هيه دى بنت البلد -

-ايه يابنتى القوة والابداع فى الحوار ده صحيح هذا الشبل من ذاك الاسد

(How powerful and marvellous that speech is, my girl! /ECA/ It's true what they say: a chip off the old block /MSA/)

Finally, in the evening of February 11, while the streets of Egyptian cities were flooded with exhilarated people celebrating what less than a month earlier hardly anyone would have believed to be possible, an anchor sitting in Al Jazeera studio in Doha called Nawara Negm to hear her off-the-cuff comments on Mubarak's ousting and impressions from the euphoric streets of Cairo:²⁵ "Yesterday you were with us and you were talking about hysterical sorrow (*ḥuzn histīrī*)," says the anchorman, referring to a general sense of disappointment and despair felt by many the day before when Mubarak did not step down despite numerous indications and rumours that he would: "Can we tonight talk about hysterical joy (*farḥa histīriyya*)?" Instead of answering immediately, Nawara, elated and excited, first lets out a long *zaḡrūta*.²⁶ Then she launches into a lengthy, moving description of how and where she received the news (while being by the Presidential Palace in Cairo's neighbourhood of Heliopolis), how surprising the news was, how she felt at the moment and how she feels now, how the streets look like, what a wonderful country the new, free Egypt will become... Throughout the interview she is spontaneous, bewildered and moved. We can hear her crying. At those moments of joy and national pride, apparently no need was felt and no room left for *Fuṣḥa*. She spoke in *ʿAmmiyya* end-to-end.²⁷

Having taken a glance at context-bound variation in Nawara's linguistic performance as a public speaker, let us now briefly look at her as a writer. Nawara

25 Watch <http://youtu.be/UdV5nc1BZXQ> – last accessed 10 July 2011. The interview is a bit longer, but the video clip stops at 3:18min.

26 A characteristic high-pitched, trilling cry that (usually) women in the Arab world utter on happy occasions and celebrations

27 For an episode of the programme "A Long Way to the Square" (*مشوار للميدان*) in which Nawara Negm shares her memories and experiences of the days of the revolt, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dg-9BDcrLhg&feature=relmfu> (part 1) and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBo3114I_BM (part 2) – last accessed 10 July 2011.

occasionally contributes to the online edition of *al-Dustur*.²⁸ Unlike in the majority of her posts when blogging, Nawara writes these columns in Fuṣḥa, but she does not shy away from employing ʿAmmiyya – sometimes to quote someone else's words, sometimes to convey the internal monologue, and sometimes, as the excerpts below will illustrate, to make a point, give a brief comment, explanation or justification.

The following examples come from an article in which Nawara spells out her scathing critique of forms of oppression and discrimination to which an ordinary citizen might end up being exposed. She describes her failed attempt to attend a Christmas Eve service in a Coptic church in Cairo.²⁹ Having arrived there with her Christian friend Hany George, she saw a group of young Muslims, including two girls without head-scarves, entering the church without any problems. Nawara, however, was not allowed to enter. She is veiled (محجبة - *muḥaggaba*), and apparently that was the only reason why the

28 A collection of her articles is available at <http://www.dostor.org/authors/11/910> – last accessed 10 July 2011.

29 On the 2011 New Year's eve, some twenty minutes after midnight, a terrorist attack took place in the Church of the Two Saints (كنيسة القديسين) in the neighbourhood of Sidi Bishr in Alexandria. Twenty-three people died, nearly a hundred were wounded. Following this tragic incident, the bloodiest in the recent history of sectarian violence and tense Muslim-Christian relations in Egypt, many Copts took to the streets. Demonstrations in Alexandria, Cairo and some other places lasted for several days during which Coptic protesters clashed with the Egyptian security forces on more than one occasion. Some fights also broke among civilian protesters and counter-protesters along the Muslim-Christian divide. The bombing had fortified an already strong sense of insecurity among many members of the Coptic Christian minority and fuelled their anger with the regime which they blamed for being directly or indirectly responsible for the attack. On January 23, the former Minister of the Interior Habib el-Adly pointed the finger at the *Army of Islam*, a terrorist organisation based in Gaza, as being responsible for the attack. The organisation promptly denied its involvement. In the meantime, however, many reactions, protests and activities aimed at strengthening the sense of national unity had been organised around the country. Many Muslims decided to support the fellow Copts and literally protect them with their bodies during the Christmas services. Nawara Negm was one of them.

security officers at the entrance decided to discriminate against her even though her Christian friend and some priests from the church had asked them to let her in:³⁰

[1]

فبي تلك الأثناء وصل الأستاذ لؤي محمود، من جريدة القاهرة، ولدواع أخلاقية بحتة رفض انتحال المسيحية، أو حتى استغلال الوقوف على باب الكنيسة، وأخبرهم دون أن يسألوه بأنه مسلم، والحقيقة لم أفهم لماذا تمسك الأستاذ بهذه القيم الأخلاقية؟ لو كنت مكانه لدخلت، ولو سألوني لقلت بأنني مسيحي، عادي على فكرة، خلال الواحد يكذب على الأمن.

In the meantime arrived Mr. Louay Mahmoud from the newspaper al-Qahira. For purely moral reasons, he refused to claim he was Christian or even take advantage of the carelessness of those standing at the church door. Without being asked, he informed them that he is a Muslim. In fact, I did not understand why he held on to these moral values. If I were him, I would have entered, and had they asked me, I would have said I was Christian. **Why not; by the way, it's allowed to lie to the police.**

[2]

لا أعرف لماذا لم تشرع قوات الأمن في اصطلياد المحجبات إلا فور حضوري، وشي مستفز؟

I don't know why the security forces started hunting down the veiled women only after I appeared; **is something wrong with my face?**³¹

[3]

جلست أنا والأستاذ لؤي في محل الميكانيكي المقابل للكنيسة ورفضنا الذهاب: احنا قاعدين هنا بنحرس الكنيسة. فتحت موقع التويتر من هاتفي، فوجدت أن كل المسلمين سمح لهم بالدخول إلى الكنائس، بما فيهم المنقبات، الله.. ده استتصاد (sic) بقي.

30 The ʿAmmyya parts are given in bold.

31 Literally - "is my face provocative, rabble-rousing" - the author's intervention in the original is minimal though, she substituted the MSA وجه (وجهي) for ECA وش (وشي) thus securing the ECA rendering of the sentence.

نوارة نجم تكتب عن تجربتها لحضور قداس عيد الميلاد: ليلة اضطهاد وطنية)³²

Mr. Louay and I sat down at the mechanic's store facing the church and refused to go away: **We're sitting here, protecting the church.** I opened the Twitter from my phone only to discover that all the Muslims were allowed to enter the churches, including the women wearing the niqab³³ ... **Gosh... these are really picking on me!**³⁴

In all these examples, Nawara resorts to ECA to punctuate her texts written in MSA. While Fuṣḥa is reserved for the main narrative and description, ʿAmmiyya is used to wrap up a segment, insert a comment, bring in an observation, or express an attitude. In all these examples the ECA interpolations “stand out” not only because of the actual code-switching, but also because of tense-switching (all of them happen to be in the present tense). This involves perspective-switching that animates the past-tense-MSA-narration. Therefore, even the sentence “We're sitting here, protecting the church” (example 3) is not a mere description of what Nawara and Mr. Louay were doing. Nor it is a direct quote of what they might have actually said to the hostile security officers, the mechanic to whose store they went to keep guard on the church, or to a curious passerby who might have asked them what they were doing there. Their refusal to

32 “Nawara Negm writes about her attempt to attend the Christmas mass: A Night when a Patriot was Oppressed,” *al-Dustur al-Asli*, 7 January 2011 (<http://www.dostor.org/authors/11/910/11/january/7/34600>).

33 Veil, face-covering cloth.

34 This translation is a bit liberal. The form used in the original is <استنصاد>. It could be explained as a typo, since the relevant root *n-ṣ-d* is not found in the dictionaries of Wehr or Hinds & Badawi. However, it is found online with (judging by the context) a similar meaning as it has in this case (See, for example, <http://unimasr.com/~unimas5/community/viewtopic.php?f=405&t=57952> or google for more). So, a possibility of the emergence of a co-variant form should not be ruled out. The appropriate form, however, comes from the root *q/ʔ-ṣ-d* (as a friend of mine recognised it during our chat: “it’s supposed to be *este2sad* not *estensad*” was his response when I copied it for him) with spelling variations attested online: <استنصاد>, <استنصاد>, <استأصاد>. According to Hinds & Badawi (1986 :702-703, (ق ص د), this form (X) has the same meaning as the form V (“*istaʔṣad* = *itʔaṣṣad*”), thus “to single out for harassment, plague.”

go away and their sitting across the street from the church until the end of the service, as already described in MSA in the previous sentence of the text, constituted an act of defiance in the face of discrimination which they experienced. Here, this sudden switch to ʿAmmiyya and quick shift of the perspective of the narrative (past-to-present) put an additional stress to this act of defiance and Nawara's annoyance with "being picked on" because of her veil.

Among those who read her texts, Nawara Negm has come to be recognised as a writer that has a distinctive, witty style, often impregnated with irony, even sarcasm. The examples above illustrate some of the skilful ways in which she manipulates linguistic codes at her disposal in recreating that style in a context (newspaper) that has traditionally favoured the use of Fuṣḥa, the variety which, as we have seen, she undoubtedly knows well.

A partial explanation for the presence of ʿAmmiyya in this text, as well as in a growing number of others that are published in al-Dustur (and not only those written by Nawara Negm), is to be found in the fact that this newspaper in particular and, as recent research suggests, the opposition papers in general, tend to have much more relaxed editorial policies regarding the use of ʿAmmiyya. In her comparative analysis of thirty-five consecutive issues of three Egyptian newspapers – two independent papers (al-Dustur and al-Masry al-Youm) and one official (the state-run al-Ahram), Zeynab Ibrahim (2009) points to an increasing use of ECA in the former. The author discusses the stylistic role of ʿAmmiyya in the opposition press, the occurrence of which is most prominent in headlines and direct quotations. She elaborates on contextual factors and social meanings of

code-switching in written texts, highlighting the purpose of establishing “solidarity with the reader” as one of the main motives for resorting to ECA.³⁵ These findings are intriguing since they suggest that there might be a correlation between “opposing voices” and their articulation in (or, with occasional resort to) ʿAmmiyya. Many findings presented throughout this thesis suggest the same. Although further and more focused research in this direction is still needed in the case of Arabic, this situation is neither new nor unknown to sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists. While it is not always easy and straightforward to postulate a causal relationship between the speaker's/writer's positioning of herself in relation to centres of authority and power, and her linguistic strategies, there is a strong likelihood that “voices” which could be labelled as alternative, unofficial, off-mainstream, dissident, sub-cultural or marginalised, would be much more comfortable with, and inclined towards linguistic practices that could be labelled as non-standard(ised), unregulated, non-conformist, innovative and experimental.³⁶

It does not come as a surprise then, that an opposition figure such as Nawara Negm, when writing for an opposition newspaper such as al-Dustur, would incorporate MSA-ECA code-switching in her stylistic repertoire. All the more so since Nawara herself appears to be one of the promoters of *written* ʿAmmiyya – if not through public advocacy, than certainly in practice. This is particularly evident in her blog. There, she is far less constrained by editorial practices other than her own, and she usually opts for ʿAmmiyya. So does she when she *tweets*. And she tweets a lot.

35 This motive to establish “solidarity with the reader” is also nicely illustrated in the few examples from Nawara's column presented here. For an earlier discussion of the growth of ECA in Egyptian press, which the author does not directly relate to the opposition or official status of the newspaper, see Rosenbaum 2000.

36 For an excellent account that stresses this point with reference to orthography, see Sebba 2007: 26-57.

4.1 Tweeting

Tweeting is what people do when they use Twitter (www.twitter.com), a microblogging and social networking site founded on July 15, 2006. Over the first five years of its existence, the number of its users has grown to an estimated 200 million (Shiels 2011, Perez 2011).³⁷ It is considered to be one of the most successful and popular social networking services. Two years ago Steven Johnson (2009) described it as something that “will change the way we live.” In his recent assessment, however, Mike Elgan (2011) claims that Twitter “has been rendered obsolete by Google's new Google+³⁸ service and also by the company's failure to capitalize on its five-year window of opportunity to innovate its way to indispensability. It's only a matter of time before Twitter becomes a ghost town.”

Whatever its future turns out to be, at the time of writing this thesis, Twitter is still alive and growing. Its function – to spread the word quickly – has turned it into a popular and powerful networking and communication tool worldwide. Limited to 140 characters,³⁹ a *tweet* – “an SMS of the net” – can be just about anything: a trivial update on one's

37 The figure refers to the number of registered users. The number of “active” users is smaller. According to Elgan (2011), “Twitter defines an 'active user' as one who follows at least 30 people and has at least 10 people who follow him. A source with access to Twitter's API [application programming interface: an interface that enables different software programs to interact/communicate with each other] who was quoted by Business Insider in April says that there were only 21 million people or accounts on Twitter that met the 'active user' criteria.”

38 Basically, Google+ is a project, at the time of writing still under development and not open to everyone (the initial users/testers were “admitted” by invitations only), aimed at integrating all forms of online communication and social networking previously dispersed around various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Foursquare, etc. It is yet to be seen whether it will indeed “render them obsolete” and eventually replace them.

39 If the text is longer than 140 characters, the tweet gets truncated. This limit was initially imposed so that tweets could be sent through the SMS platform, but has remained a defining feature of Twitter regardless of the fact that many mobile phone applications have been developed in the meantime.

mundane whereabouts; a wise thought; an answer to what-are-you-doing kind of question no one has actually asked; an enquiry, real or rhetorical; expression of boredom or joy; a link to something on the net; breaking news, opinion, advertisement, announcement, cry for help, comment, joke, insult, call, or a lie. Any snippet of information, misinformation or nonsense, as long as the tweeter is concise and able to squeeze into the character-limit of his microblog whatever it is that he wants to “share” with those who care... To celebrities, Twitter has given an opportunity to fill in their fans with every move they make, party they go to, cocktail they sip and things they intend to do. Fans, in turn, can live in a blissful illusion of being able to talk to their idols. Politicians can now touch base with the masses without making public appearances. Expectedly enough, commercial businesses and marketers were quick to tap into Twitter in order to stimulate consumerism and make more money. Broadcasters, newspapers and media personalities forward the latest headlines in the blink of an eye. And while activists and revolutionaries can stealthily coordinate their activities, millions of us from among the “ordinary” can exchange all sorts of short messages within our social circles, or just lurk, follow what others are posting, and enjoy what Clive Thompson (2008) refers to as “ambient awareness” created by unceasing online contact we have been increasingly and promiscuously engaging ourselves in.⁴⁰

40 Ambient awareness is a form of peripheral social awareness, created through a constant online contact with a group of people through social networking sites. “It is, [social scientists] say, very much like being physically near someone and picking up on his mood through the little things he does – body language, sighs, stray comments – out of the corner of your eye. [... The] paradox of ambient awareness [is that each] little update -- each individual bit of social information -- is insignificant on its own, even supremely mundane. But taken together, over time, the little snippets coalesce into a surprisingly sophisticated portrait of your friends' and family members' lives, like thousands of dots making a pointillist painting.” (Thompson 2008)

A tweet may be uploaded on the Internet via the Twitter website or another compatible application, or (depending on the country and mobile operators' services) sent as a text-message from a mobile phone. The tweet then appears on the user's homepage and is automatically sent to all of his or her *followers*. Some of them may decide to *retweet* it (RT), that is, forward it to their followers. Unlike Facebook, for example, where users have to send a *friend request* to anyone with whom they wish to connect and then wait for their approval, or *confirm friendship* (approve a received friend request), after which they become “linked,” building one's own network on Twitter is usually much more simple and practically immediate. The user clicks on the “follow” button next to the username of whomever he or she wants to follow and the latter's tweets immediately start being fed into his or her *timeline*.⁴¹ The imposed shortness of posts and this asymmetric following (as opposed to reciprocity of Facebook “friendships”) are among the defining features of Twitter.⁴²

A tweet, one's own or someone else's, can be marked and thus stored as “favourite” or, in Twitter terminology, *favourited*. The user may choose to *reply* to it (comment on it, say something back even if not directly mentioned or asked to do so). In order to mention, call out or reply to someone, the “@” symbol is used as a prefix to a

41 Users have the option to set their privacy settings in such a way that their approval is needed when someone wants to “subscribe” to their posts, but – from my experience – this seems to be a relatively rare practice. Firstly, tweets are always public, they are displayed on users' homepages and visible to everyone, the only difference being whether or not they will be automatically distributed to other users and displayed on their homepages. Secondly, and more importantly, most people who tweet do so exactly because they want to gain large number of followers and reach out to as many people as possible with whom they want to share whatever it is that they want to say.

42 Elgan (2011) in fact mentions “four core attributes of Twitter” - asymmetric following, instant feeds, brevity and “an API that enables other companies to tap into the stream and do interesting things with the flow of tweets,” or, according to Johnson (2009), “the fact that many of the core features and applications [of the Twitter platform] have been developed by people who are not on the Twitter payroll.”

username, thus becoming a link to the mentioned user's profile.⁴³ Tweets are often hypertextual. They may contain links, in which case they serve as pointers to something else on the net (websites, photos, videos, etc.).

Hashtags are words preceded by the “#” symbol which tweeters may apply when they want their tweets to be classified under specific topics or keywords.⁴⁴ A tweet containing one or more hashtags thus becomes archived and easily retrievable. Hashtags are significant in that they allow users to track all the tweets pertaining to a topic of their interest, and not only those written by the actual group of those whom they follow at the moment. Furthermore, hashtags could be said to defy the apparent ephemerality of tweeting. Regardless of how catchy, engaging or urgent it may be, regardless of how many people retweet it, reply to it, or favourite it, every tweet is quickly buried under the deluge of hundreds and thousands of other, virtually simultaneously mass-produced, equally short, even if much less attention-getting, tweets. As such, tweets are Internet texts that, even if recycled, have an extremely short lifespan. Hashtags, however, can potentially give a tweet its afterlife. Tweets are also retrievable through search engines such as Google. If their content matches the searching criteria, tweets will be returned together with other relevant results found elsewhere on the net, not necessarily on Twitter. However, when tweets themselves are the focus of a search, hashtags can do a much better job in excavating the relevant material from the textual abundance in cyberspace.

What keywords are for archives and library catalogues, hashtags are for Twitter.⁴⁵

43 This is actually the common form of a Twitter username, e.g. “@ivanescape.”

44 According to Johnson (2009), the conventions of using both these symbols (@ for replying to another user and # for grouping tweets), have been spontaneously developed, not by the creators of Twitter, but by the community of users.

45 So, for example, a future historian of the Arab world in general, or Bahrain in particular, will have very interesting material at his disposal by retrieving all the tweets containing “#bahrain,” or other relevant

In the case of Egypt, a unique, timely and unputdownable book published less than two months after Mubarak's ousting, testifies to the fact that tweets are not (or do not have to be) all that ephemeral as they may seem at first sight. *Tweets from Tahrir: Egypt's revolution as it unfolded, in the words of people who made it* (Idle & Nunns 2011) is a collection of tweets sent out by protesters in Cairo during the eighteen days of the uprising.⁴⁶ As the editors point out in the preface,

[...] the revolution [...] was televised. But [...] the most compelling coverage was on Twitter, coming directly from the people in the square. The tweets were instant, and so emotional and exciting that anyone following them felt an intense personal connection to what was happening in Tahrir.

This book is an immediate attempt to document a fraction of those remarkable messages before they disappear into the vacuum of cyberspace, and to allow the story of this historic uprising to be told by the people who made it happen.

The tweets are valuable for two reasons: as firsthand, real-time accounts of events (a primary source for historians of the Egyptian Revolution); and as testimony to the significant role that Twitter and other social media played in those events.

(Idle & Nunns 2011: 13-14)

The editors are right. As readers go through the exciting flow of tweets collected in this book, those eighteen days that have changed Egypt unfold before their eyes dramatically, minute by minute. The editors' focus was on tweets in English. Such a decision is understandable and justifiable. The book is, first and foremost, targeted at English-speaking readership. Given how quickly it came out, it is obvious that the editors

hashtags.

⁴⁶ For a thought-provoking take on the questions of copyrights, intellectual property and profit making as these pertain to tweets, see Crouch 2011.

aimed at putting it out as soon as possible. It would have taken them much longer had they decided to prepare a similar, yet bilingual book. Such a project would have entailed not only editing, but translating, as well. After all, many Egyptian tweeters tweet in English, some of them almost exclusively in English, and during the uprising in particular, as much as to communicate with each other, very many of them also wanted to inform the world about the events on the ground. The sheer volume of English-language data was already much larger than could have been presented in a single, monolingual volume.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it would be invaluable if a similar book were also compiled from a selection of the related tweets in Arabic.

4.2 Twitter in Egypt and the Arab world: some facts and figures

At this point, it would be instructive to take a quick look at the latest available statistics on the use of Twitter in the Arab world in general, and Egypt in particular. The data presented here (pertaining to the first quarter of 2011) are cited from the second *Arab Social Media Report* (2011), produced by the Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation Program:

- The estimated number of active Twitter users in the Arab region at the end of March 2011 was 1,150,292. Multiplying by the ratio of total users to active users above (an average of 200 million/35 million = 5.7), we get a total Twitter population of 6,567,280.
- The estimated number of tweets generated in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2011 (Jan. 1 – March 30) by these “active users” was 22,750,000 tweets. The estimated number of daily tweets is 252,000 tweets per day, or 175 tweets a minute, or roughly three tweets a second.
- The estimated number of daily tweets per active user in the Arab region in the first quarter of 2011 is 0.81 daily tweets)
- The most popular trending hashtags across the Arab region in the first quarter

⁴⁷ According to the editors, “one activist alone managed to tweet 60,000 words during the revolution!” (Idle & Nunns 2011: 14)

were #egypt (with 1.4 million mentions in the tweets generated during this period) #jan25 (with 1.2. million mentions), #libya (with 990,000 mentions), #bahrain (640,000 mentions), and protest (620,000)

(Arab Social Media Report 2011: 16)

According to this report, Egypt is among top five countries regarding the number of Twitter users, together with the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. With estimated 131,204 active users, Egypt is the third Arab (after UAE and Qatar) and fourth Middle Eastern country.⁴⁸ More than 60% of all tweets in the Arab region over the first quarter of 2011 were generated in these top five countries, with Egypt generating 9.50%, or 2,160,000 tweets.⁴⁹ However, given the large population of Egypt, the so-called penetration⁵⁰ of Twitter in Egypt is very low (0.15%), “especially given that the country has close to 7 million Facebook users and 17-18 million Internet users” (ibid. 24). The report suggests two possible reasons for this low penetration. One is that “Twitter usage has not really caught on outside the capital” since 51% of the users are concentrated in Cairo, and another is the lack of an Arabic interface which “could deter many potential Twitter users” (ibid. 24).

This explanation, however, seems a bit too simplistic and reductionist. A more nuanced and culturally sensitive study needs to be conducted taking into account some fundamental structural and functional differences between Twitter and Facebook; motives and expectations that incite people to join one or the other, or both; as well as possible

48 Including also Turkey, Iran and Israel. In the MENA region, Turkey is ranked first both in terms of number of Twitter users and Facebook users.

49 The report also indicates that there is a correlation, or concurrence between important events in a country (such as protests in Bahrain, or Mubarak’s ousting) and the increase of the daily tweet volume from that country.

50 Penetration refers to the ratio between the number of users and the overall population of the country.

economic obstacles that might be at play here. The fact that “Egypt’s Facebook users are evenly split between using Facebook’s Arabic and English interfaces” (ibid. 24)⁵¹ is undeniably significant. So are the recent indicators showing that the release of an interface that enables Facebook users to interact with the site in Arabic has been a success and that the number of Arabic interface users has been continually growing.⁵²

But what worked for Facebook might not necessarily work for Twitter. According to the rankings at Alexa.com, Facebook was the absolute number-one site in terms of popularity in Egypt in July 2011. Twitter ranked the twentieth.⁵³ In comparison to what Facebook has to offer,⁵⁴ Twitter is rather dull. A lot of the content on a Facebook user's profile (such as photo albums, or “about” section) is of a more permanent nature; tweets are fugacious. In its simplicity, Twitter might be more suitable for information exchange and social activism. Facebook, with its diverse in-built capabilities to present one's own or gain an insight into someone else's life, might be much better for finding a suitable match. Every day, groups of young Egyptian men, their hairstyles carefully and firmly stiffened by quantities of hair gel, could be seen along the Qasr al-Aini bridge in Cairo, enthusiastically taking pictures of each other while posing by the stone lion statues or leaning against the

51 Language breakdown is: Arabic – 49.88%, English – 48.98% and French – 0.39% (ibid. 14).

52 An earlier report on Facebook demographics done by Spot On Public Relations and released on May 24, 2010, identified that “Facebook’s decision to add an Arabic interface in March 2009 [had] opened up access to a whole new demographic of Internet users and added 3.5 million Arabic users over the past year. Egypt and Saudi Arabia’s Facebook communities [had] seen the strongest growth among Arabic users during the past year with each adding 1.1 million Arabic language interface users” (Spot On 2010: 1). For an update on the growth of Facebook's Arabic language interface users, see <http://www.spotonpr.com/facebook-arabic-uprising/> (last accessed July 25, 2011).

53 For an update check <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/EG>. (The data presented here were last accessed on July 31, 2011.)

54 More detailed user's profiles, photo albums, dynamic and interactive “news feed”, groups and fan pages, online games, chat, integrated email, etc.

iron fence with the Nile river and Cairo cityscape in the background. If one is to stop and engage with them in a conversation, as I did several times, one may learn how eager these young people are to upload their latest photos on their Facebook profiles as soon as possible. Twitter is for chatterboxes and those who like to read them regularly; Facebook is for everybody else. In other words, while the primary purpose of Twitter is – *to say*, the primary purpose of Facebook is – *to display*.

Also, those who have virtually constant access to the Internet through their “smart phones” are in a much better position to keep up with what goes on on Twitter, than those who access the net from a cybercafé every once in a while. The overall living standards in Egypt are nowhere near those in the six Arab monarchies that form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC),⁵⁵ four of which are among “top 5” when it comes to Twitter penetration.⁵⁶ Very many Egyptians simply cannot afford these new gadgets and the mobile phone expenses that would keep them online as much as dedicated tweeting requires. Even though one would have a hard time finding a Cairene who does not have a mobile phone, one should also remember that very many Egyptians from the lower brackets of the social structure use their phones to give a *ranna* (send a missed call) far more often than to call and talk to someone, let alone keep up with the latest tweets. Checking one’s Twitter account once every few days does not make much sense given how many words will

55 At the time of writing, GCC members were Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In May 2011, a surprising piece of news came that the Council was considering whether to extend its membership to Jordan and Morocco, both being non-Gulf Arab states, but, conspicuously enough, the only remaining monarchies in the Arab world that are not members of this, until now regional, alliance. For an interesting comment that came from the Egyptian blogosphere, see Zeinobia’s entry at her blog *Egyptian Chronicles*: <http://egyptianchronicles.blogspot.com/2011/05/gcc-to-include-jordan-and-morocco-neo.html> (last accessed July 25, 2011)

56 These are Qatar (8.46%), Bahrain (7.53%), UAE (4.17%), and Kuwait (3.63%). The fifth is Lebanon with the penetration at the rate of 1.85%. (Arab Social Media Report 2011: 17)

have been said in the meantime. On one's Facebook profile, however, all the important stuff – Notifications, Messages and Friend Requests – will be saved and waiting. Given all this, I argue that a fuller explanation of the discrepancy in popularity between these two services must go beyond user's location and preferred language interface, and understand more thoroughly what it is that these services do for their users, and what it is that users do with them.

So instead of asking why there are no more Egyptians on Twitter, it is more relevant to look at those who are already there. Who are some of the most popular tweeters in Egypt? How much do they tweet? How do they tweet? Definite answers to the first two questions are hard to give, but the lists offered below, which are based on the table given in the Appendix 4-1, might serve as a springboard in pinpointing some of the “nodes” of a much larger network of Egyptians who actively tweet.⁵⁷ As pointed out in App 4-1, except for the two top-ranked ones, the table *does not* represent the “top-25” most popular tweeters. What it offers is a fragmentary snapshot of otherwise constantly and dynamically evolving state of the Egyptian Twitterverse, as it was in mid-2011:

57 A very interesting visualisation (mapping) of Egyptian Twitterverse (or, more precisely, “influence network” of Egyptian tweeters) during the uprising is done by Kovas Boguta and is available at: <http://www.visualizing.org/html5/12846>. See also related articles at: (1) <http://t.co/8PbutZ1> and (2) <http://www.kovasboguta.com/1/post/2011/02/first-post.html> Pertinent to this chapter is that the author colour-codes tweeters according to their language choices – blue for English, and red for Arabic (some nodes are coded in shades of violet/purple signalling apparently the use of both languages). Unfortunately, the author says nothing about how he reached these conclusions regarding language choices and preferences (e.g. the number of tweets per user, time span etc.). According to his classification, for example, both @Zeinobia and @Sandmonkey are marked as English-only tweeters which, particularly in the case of @Sandmonkey, is simply not true (See Appendix 4-2).

List 1 - popularity

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mohamed ElBaradei | 14. Alaa Abd El Fattah |
| 2. Wael Ghonim | 15. Hossam <i>عمو حسام</i> |
| 3. Naguib Sawiris | 16. Ramy Raoof |
| 4. Amr Khaled | 17. Ahmad El Esseily |
| 5. Amr Waked | 18. Hend Sabry |
| 6. Yosri Fouda | 19. Amr Diab |
| 7. Mona Eltahawy | 20. Asmaa Mahfouz |
| 8. Khaled Abol Naga | 21. arabist |
| 9. Ayman Nour | 22. Zeinobia |
| 10. Amr Salama | 23. salma said |
| 11. Nawara Negm | 24. gamaleid |
| 12. Mahmoud Salem | 25. Gigi Ibrahim <i>جيسج</i> |
| 13. Wael Abbas | |

Obviously, the list is dominated by politically and socially active, outspoken individuals who are present in the Egyptian public sphere either as active opposition politicians (1, 3, 9); journalists, media personalities and celebrities otherwise politically and socially active (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17); and, most prominently, those who have been engaged for a long time in various forms of activism (Internet activism included), human rights advocacy, citizen journalism etc. (e.g. 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25).

A look at the data given in the Appendix suggests that a user's popularity does not always correlate with either his or her tweeting activity (how much he or she tweets and retweets), or the number of users that he or she follows. This is especially true in the case of celebrities: already famous people will have a large following regardless of how much they tweet and whom they follow. This becomes clear when we look at the two top users. Wael Ghonim tweets nearly 12 times more than Mohamed ElBaradei does. In fact, when we look at the ranking of the same group of tweeters according to the number of tweets (see List 2 below), ElBaradei is the last. Ghonim follows 16.5 times more people than ElBaradei, but ElBaradei still has around 21 thousand followers more than Ghonim – this

difference only being bigger than the numbers of followers of the five last-ranked users on the first list. However, despite their different approaches to tweeting, both of them stand out in terms of popularity inasmuch that they outnumber the third-ranked Sawiris by nearly (Ghonim), or more than (ElBaradei) 100,000 followers. This lack of correlation between the number of tweets and the number of followers is further illustrated in the second list that ranks the same users according to the number of tweets they generated.⁵⁸ For comparison, their rankings on the popularity list are given in brackets:

List 2 - activity

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Alaa Abd El Fattah (14) | 14. Asmaa Mahfouz (20) |
| 2. Zeinobia (22) | 15. Ahmad El Esseily (17) |
| 3. Wael Abbas (13) | 16. Amr Salama (10) |
| 4. Mona Eltahawy (7) | 17. Ayman Nour (9) |
| 5. Hossam (15) | 18. Amr Diab (19) |
| 6. Mahmoud Salem (12) | 19. Khaled Abol Naga (8) |
| 7. Gigi Ibrahim (25) | 20. Amr Waked (5) |
| 8. Nawara Negm (11) | 21. Yosri Fouda (6) |
| 9. arabist (21) | 22. Amr Khaled (4) |
| 10. Ramy Raouf (16) | 23. Naguib Sawiris (3) |
| 11. gamaleid (24) | 24. Hend Sabry (18) |
| 12. salma said (23) | 25. Mohamed ElBaradei (1) |
| 13. Wael Ghonim (2) | |

Despite its “low penetration” in Egypt, Twitter has nevertheless gained a remarkable significance. As these lists of popular/active Egyptian tweeters signal, tweeting can be seen as a profoundly political activity. Of course, not all tweeting in Egypt is politically motivated, as will be illustrated below.⁵⁹ However, communication within a

⁵⁸ It should be noted that the total number of someone's tweets includes retweets as well.

⁵⁹ An example from the presented list would be the Twitter account of the famous singer Amr Diab. Tweets posted there (mostly in English, some in ECA, and relatively few in MSA) do not engage with the current situation in Egypt but rather follow in the footsteps of a number of international, self-centred celebrities' updates. For example:

ENG: Digital mastering my album / Working in the studio on my new album / Listening to Diabfm.com :) / My new album will be released in september 2011 / On my way to AUC concert, see you all in awhile

network of Egyptians whose primary interests and activities revolve around the ideas of active engagement with sociopolitical realities of the country is indeed extraordinarily vibrant.

4.3 What's in a tweet? - facing a linguistic quandary

The reader must have noticed that I used one tweet sent by Nawara Negm as the epigram to this chapter... and I did not translate it. I was not careless. That was a deliberate decision. There is a reason for my breach of the established academic practice which dictates that, when one language is being dealt with and discussed in another, every single example from the former should be, even if “inadequately,” translated into the latter. The reason is quite simple: I wanted to signal that I was not sure how to translate it. I was amused and intrigued by it. I got the main point that it was about “tweeting,” “re-tweeting” and “favourites.” Moreover, I had a feeling that it was about the joy of using Twitter. I pondered over a possibility that something in it might have been misspelled. But then again, what is a “typo” in a short line of text in which the majority of the used lexical forms could not be looked up in any of the existing dictionaries or encountered easily in more conventional types of texts? Given the large amount of my data that I cannot even try to present here and to which some selective approach had to be applied anyway, as well as keeping in mind the fact that thousands, indeed tens of thousands of tweets are being generated as I am typing these lines, I could have easily excluded this tiny piece of text from the analysis, thus sparing myself the embarrassment of admitting that “I don't

(*sic*) / In Morocco...

ECA: نحبوا تسمعوا عارف حبيبي في الألبوم؟ (Would you like to hear “Do you know, my love” on the album?) / بشكركم علي اختياركم وأن شاء الله حتسمعوا عارف حبيبي في الألبوم, أتمنى دائماً أكون عند حسن ظنكم (Thank you for your choice and, God willing, you will hear “Do you know, my love” on the album, I always wish to live up to your expectations)...

bilingual: Thank you all for the gift.. love you all وصلتني هديتكم... بشكركم كلكم.. و بحبكم من قلبي

understand it.” Instead of neglecting it, however, I decided to ask four Egyptian friends of mine to tell me what it meant. All four of them (age 24-34) are native (Egyptian) Arabic speakers highly proficient in English. Two of them (1 and 2) are avid users of Twitter.

Given that the experiment was about a piece of written material, I decided to keep it in the realm of writing, so I wrote them emails. Since it was not only the meaning of the tweet in question that I found puzzling but its pronunciation as well, I asked them to write me back with their translations and Franco (Latinised) rendering of it. As pointed out in the relevant section of Chapter 1, the use of Latin script to write Arabic is highly idiosyncratic and cannot be taken as fully representative of how exactly the informant would pronounce what is written. Franco is somewhere in-between transcription and transliteration and can thus only give us a hint at pronunciation. Nevertheless, since all four informants do employ Latinised Arabic occasionally, it is interesting to have a comparative look at how they employed it to transcribe/transliterate Nawara's tweet. They do not all know each other personally (two of them do). None of them knew that someone else was asked the same question (until after they sent their replies). So the possibility that some of them collaborated or consulted with each other is ruled out. In the table below, their unedited answers provide a comparative insight into their understandings of Nawara's rather opaque tweet:⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Translations are italicised. Latinised Arabic is given in bold.

انا تويت واتوتت.. رتويت واترتويت.. انا ورايا فيفوريتس			
1	2	3	4
<p>[...] Anyway, back to Nawara's tweet now. "I am a tweet and I have been tweeted; I am a retweet and I've been retweeted; I am backed (?) favourites"</p> <p>Transliteration: ana tweet w etawet ; retweet w etratwet ; ana waraya favorites</p> <p>I think so anyway. NAWARA IS FUCKING WEIRD!</p>	<p>ana tweet wa atawit... retweet wa atrawit... ana waraya favourites...</p> <p>What does it mean???</p> <p>I have no clue. but something like 'I tweet and tweet again, retweet and retweet again, i have favourites behind me'.</p>	<p>lol... Oh my God, that's really complicated... Some parts are even too exotic to be properly translated!</p> <p>Ok, here is how I got it: 1st, this is the way I think I pronounce it: Ana tweet we atwattett.. re-tweet, water-tweet... ana waraya favorites!</p> <p>2nd, this is the way I think I understand/translate it: <i>I am tweet, and I tweet... re-tweet, water-tweet... I have favorites (to concern or to look after).</i></p> <p>Awkward! :)</p>	<p>Hey ivan, how are you? I'm fine, thnx for asking ya 7ayat!</p> <p>Ana tweet we etwateet, retweet we etrtweet, ana waraya favorites ...</p> <p><i>Basically it means I'm famous!</i></p> <p>Tell me if it is clear or not, I can elaborate more if you want ;)</p>

When I received these four interpretations, I found them to be both funny and reassuring. I thought to myself: "if four native speakers come up with such a variety of interpretations of a single tweet, then it's not such a big deal if I don't know what to make out of it." On a more serious note though, it is instructive to point to what these four interpretations have in common regardless of their apparent differences, as well as what it is where they diverge from each other.

It seems that there is not much ambiguity in interpreting the sections انا تويت/رتويت as nominal sentences "I am a tweet... (and I am) a retweet." The point of divergence, however, is the pair of denominative verbal neologisms اتوتت/اترتويت.⁶¹ Combined, they

61 Judging by their transliteration suggestions, informants 1 and 2 both interpreted the form <اتوتت> as if it had been written <اتويت> which further complicates the matter. This indicates that this form, as pointed out earlier, could indeed be a typo, in which case these two informants interpreted it "correctly," i.e.

raise a double morphological (and thus semantic) ambiguity, both in terms of pattern they belong to and tense they are supposed to express. Pattern ambiguity is raised by the form اتوتت, inasmuch as it is not clear whether it should be interpreted as belonging to pattern I (“to tweet”) or *t*-prefixed passive (“to be tweeted”), but is then tentatively resolved in favour of the latter interpretation (*t*-passive) by the form اترتويت. Tense ambiguity, on the other hand, refers to the fact that it is not easy to determine whether these two forms express the present tense (as the form اترتويت might suggest), or the past tense (as the absence of the progressive/habitual -د and the form اتوتت would lead us to conclude).

I opt to interpret these two verbal forms as the perfect of *t*-prefixed pattern I (passive), thus aligning myself with the translation of the first informant – “I am a tweet and I have been tweeted, (I am) a retweet and I have been retweeted.” As far as the sentence “انا ورايا فيفورتيس” is concerned, two interpretations seem plausible. One is based on the proposal of the third informant, “I have to take care of favourites” (*i.e.* “I have to mark other tweeters' posts as 'favourites'.”). The other relies on the understanding of the first and second informant, “I (who am a tweet and retweet) have been marked as 'favourite'.” In Twitter terms then, these two interpretations would respectively read as “I have to favourite (others)” vs. “I have been favourited (by others).”

As for the pronunciation of this tweet, I would, very tentatively, suggest: *ana twīt w-ittwatitt(?)... ritwīt w-itrattitt(?)... ana warāya fayvorits*. The difficulty arises since, judging by my additional interviews with native speakers, there are no indications that the English verb “tweet” has been re-analysed and stabilised as belonging to a fictive root

reconstructed, the intended form. Otherwise, it would mean that their native linguistic intuition led them to reinterpret it “incorrectly,” *i.e.* to construct some expected form.

t-w-t, and subjected to morphological patterning according to form II, which is a rather common way of forming denominative verbs from foreign borrowings in all Arabic dialects (Holes 2004: 139-141), as in the case of, for example:

- *šayyik-yišayyik* (“to make chic/elegant”, or, more recently, and from English, “to check”),
- *šayyar-yišayyar* (Eng. “to share,” particularly in the context of Facebook and other social media),
- *sayyif-yisayyif* (Eng. “to save”)
- *dallit-yidallit* (Eng. “to delete”)
- *fayyil-yifayyil* (Eng. “to fail an exam”)

A reason for this lack of application of pattern II in this case might be avoidance of a potential homonym since there already exists a *t-w-t* denominative verb *tawwit-yitawwit* (“to turn or make black or blue” - from *tūt*, “mullberry”). Hence the form *twīt-yitwīt* in current usage, analogous to another, albeit by now more than a decade old loanword, morphologically also reinterpreted as a pseudo-hollow verb of pattern I: *(t)šāt-yi(t)šāt*,⁶² “to chat.”⁶³

As it turns out after all this pondering and speculation, a lot of it regarding this small textual fragment remains unsettled. But it is exactly this unsettledness, this openness to multiple readings rather than any concrete, fixed translation, that makes this particular tweet (and many other similarly ambiguous or obscure pieces of writing that

62 Depending on the speaker's level of emulation of English pronunciation.

63 I did, however, attest the form *šayyit*, when after a long conversation with a neighbour in front of my building I had to excuse myself telling him that I needed to go home and work – *āh hatitlaʿ fo? tišayyit miš kida* (Yeah, you'll go up to chat, right?). Pretending that I did not understand well what he meant, I made sure to have him repeat the word and explain that “chatting” is what he was referring to. I then investigating some more, again in my neighbourhood, and 19-year-old Khaled confirmed the form. When I heard it for the first time, it was in 2001, ten years ago. The form was negative – *ana mabatšatiš*. It is quite possible that co-occurrent, *šayyit* form has by now evolved. Nevertheless, I do not know how frequent this form is and whether it is more used by speakers of certain social background or not.

could nowadays be found online) interesting, illustrative and significant. This tweet and those four different interpretations of it given by my friends, together flesh out one of the main arguments of this thesis – once we step into the realm of less regulated or unregulated writing practices, we are stepping into rather unmapped zones of borrowing and neologisms, zones of language contact and communication that unfolds despite being paradoxically riddled with misunderstandings or partial understandings, zones of linguistic innovation and language artefacts that all bring out a sociolinguistic picture of Egyptian society which is far messier and more complex than many of the traditional approaches that focus exclusively on MSA-ECA relationship would be able to capture. Tweeting undoubtedly belongs to these unregulated writing practices that are changing and diversifying the Egyptian linguascape.

4.4 How “marginal” is tweeting?

One might argue that tweeting is marginal and ephemeral. In a way, this might be a sound remark, but it is not a valid reason to exclude it from a kind of research that aims to look at vernacular writing practices and literacy as social practice. In fact, I decided to offer the lengthy sociolinguistic profile of Nawara Negm as an introduction and background to my reflections on sociolinguistic aspects of tweeting in Cairo for several reasons, one of them being to counter a possible remark on the apparent marginality of Twitter – Nawara Negm is an accomplished writer, yet she actively tweets. Furthermore, as shown in App 4-1, in the Egyptian “Twitterverse” she is in the company of many people whose work and public engagement, spanning politics, literature, art, journalism, religion and social activism, shape the contemporary Egypt in one way or another.

Another reason why I decided to write about Nawara Negm in this chapter, is not so much because she is “special” (although, of course, in many ways she is), but exactly because I could have easily chosen to focus on so many other people instead. Nawara Negm belongs to (but *does not* necessarily represent!) a large number of young, versatile, socially engaged Egyptians, men and women in their twenties and thirties, the majority of whom might not have risen to fame comparable to hers, but all of whom wear many hats while striving to make a difference. For all of them, various forms of writing, tweeting included, constitute an important daily activity. From that perspective, it is clear that singling her out is admittedly unfair and highly subjective; it should be attributed solely to my personal preferences – I enjoy reading her writings and admire her activism. There are many Egyptians who prolifically write for other people to read and equally deserve to be presented, if that were possible, through sociolinguistic profiles or rough sketches that similarly aim to offer more or less integrated perspectives on their diverse linguistic strategies across different mediums of expression. Presenting each one of them, most of whom will, unfortunately, remain unmentioned in my work, would warrant a long list of attributes, qualifications and activities similar to the list I gave in the opening of this chapter.

Once the aforementioned messiness of tweeting is exemplified below, it will become evident that, despite her hard-to-understand tweet discussed above, Nawara Negm – given her adherence to Arabic with a strong preference for ʿAmmiyya – could be seen as a rather consistent and, with tongue in cheek one might even say, conservative tweeter.

Finally, while tweets themselves are eventually ephemeral, tweeting as an activity is not necessarily marginal and strictly confined to the realm of the Internet. Apart from the role Twitter and other social media played (and continue to play) in the uprisings and social movements,⁶⁴ at least two noteworthy Twitter-driven initiatives took place in such a way that their larger social impacts both underscore the artificiality of the frequently invoked virtual-real divide and strengthen the argument that tweeting is a relevant topic for social sciences.

Tweetback, a humanitarian fundraising project initiated in July 2011 by Mahmoud Salem (محمود سالم), a famous and influential Egyptian blogger and activist, internationally and locally still better known by his blogger's pseudonym – Sandmonkey,⁶⁵ aimed at raising 2 million Egyptian pounds as a support to the NGO Khair wa Baraka working in Ezbet Khairallah, an informal settlement in the southern part of Cairo where more than 650.000 people live without some of the basic facilities and infrastructure. On July 27, 2011, it was reported that the initiative, in which around twenty most followed Twitter users participated by “live-tweeting” the event using the hashtag #tweetback, managed to raise nearly 70% (1.3 million LE) of the targeted sum within ten days.⁶⁶

64 As mentioned in Chapter 1 (and later again in Chapter 5), this “role” and its evaluation have become an important topic in much writing on the so-called Arab Spring in general, and Egyptian revolution in particular.

65 Mahmoud Salem, ranked 12/6 on the lists above, only revealed his real-life name during the 25 January uprising. He blogs, nearly exclusively in English at: <http://www.sandmonkey.org>.

66 The idea was to publicise the project and announce each contribution in Arabic and English to networks of followers. See <http://tinyurl.com/3u5f4yb> – last accessed July 31, 2011.

Another interesting idea was the Tweet Nadwa,⁶⁷ which was launched under the slogan/proverb “الطيور على أشكالها تلتقي”⁶⁸ by Alaa Abd El Fattah (علاء عبد الفتاح),⁶⁹ as a series of discussion meetings – in the flesh – for tweeters who otherwise debate through their 140-character-long microblogs in cyberspace. The first Tweet Nadwa was organised at the Development Support Centre for Consultancy and Training in the neighbourhood of Dokki in Cairo. The topic of discussion was Islamism, particularly among the youth. The flow of tweets pertinent to the discussion (hashtagged as #tweetnadwa) sent by both online followers from afar and those sitting in the room, was being projected on a large screen while those in attendance debated by adhering to certain rules of discussion that were modelled on the Twitter norms – speakers were limited to 140 seconds per answer to a question, while the members of the audience were instructed not to disrupt the conversation with applause if they liked something, but to silently wave their hands in approval, as if retweeting.⁷⁰ This very original take on debating inspired by tweeting practices turned into a weekly event and continued with the second Tweet Nadwa that was organised at Rawabit theatre, a part of Townhouse Gallery in downtown Cairo. The topic was “a decade of street activism.” After the three-week sit-in in Tahrir started on July 8, 2011, Tweet Nadwa moved to the square.⁷¹

67 *nadwa* (ندوة) – symposium; seminar.

68 “Birds of a feather flock together.”

69 Alaa Abd El Fattah (14/1) is an Egyptian blogger, activist, and software developer who dedicated a lot of his knowledge and efforts to various projects on Arabisation of computer software and platforms. He and his wife Manal co-founded the Egyptian blog aggregator www.manalaa.net.

70 See, for example, <http://t.co/PnDD9X4> – last accessed, July 25, 2011.

71 The sit-in was organised by the April 6 youth movement against the interim military leadership, particularly as a denouncement of the delay in trials of Mubarak and other arrested officials and politicians, and simultaneous hasty military trials of civilians. Twenty-five political parties and movements that backed the sit-in decided to suspend it on July 31, at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan. Protesters who decided to continue were soon afterwards brutally assaulted and dispersed (some of them arrested) by military police. (See: <http://t.co/TyF4lSh>)

A particularly fascinating aspect of every Tweet Nadwa is its “live broadcasting” via Twitter, since it is through the constant comments and updates of those attending it that those who are following it *in absentia* get the feel of the ongoing discussion. One such comment from the first #tweetnadwa illustrates how a tweet, despite its shortness, can become a site of effective language mixing. In his reaction to a question posed to one of the participants in the discussion, a tweeter managed – in 69 characters only – to reproduce the question as it was asked, in ʿAmmiyya, and to comment on it wittily, in English, thus producing a bilingual and, script-wise, biscriptal and bidirectional tweet, clearly targeted at bilingual Egyptians:

عرفت انك اسلامى امتى؟ Sounds like a coming out of the closet question
↔

There were at least three other options for the tweeter to choose from. First, to translate the question and write the entire tweet in English: “When did you first know that you were an Islamist? Sounds like a coming out of the closet question.” This would have somewhat diluted the wittiness of his comment and pulled the question away from the *nadwa* that was simultaneously taking place in Arabic. Second, he could have tried to write his comment in Arabic, but would have certainly had a hard time finding an Arabic equivalent for “coming out of the closet question.” The effectiveness of his joke would have most likely been lost in translation. Third, which is far more often the case when Egyptian Arabic and English are juxtaposed in a single tweet, he could have opted for Franco. Such a bilingual solution would have probably served him much better than the other two. But by choosing none of the above and opting for the solution in which Arabic and English are juxtaposed in the way that their identities are preserved in their respective

scripts, his culturally provocative, one might even say taboo contrast becomes further accentuated visually. And it is exactly this of all four possibilities that turns his tweet simultaneously into a site of language contact and a site of cultural encounter. Metaphorically speaking, in this quick act of writing, Islamism and gayness are brought next to each other, yet at the same time kept worlds apart.

4.5 From activism to broadcasting one's life: linguistic devices for putting 140 characters to work

هو إحنا كنا بتتويت عشان ثنور.. ولا تُرنا عشان تتويت؟⁷²
a random tweet

4.5.1 A word on method

Having decided to learn “how Egyptians tweet,” I joined Twitter in October 2010. The task, as it turned out, was going to be anything but easy. It took me several weeks to build my own list of *tweeps*⁷³ by starting from a handful of active and popular tweeters and then browsing and picking through their respective lists of those whom they followed and of those whom they were followed by. I stopped at a fairly modest number of about two hundred people. Even that was enough for me to end up with a timeline of more than 1000 new posts per day. And once the revolution broke out, the number of daily tweets started skyrocketing.⁷⁴

My approach to collecting data for nearly nine months was, for the most part, qualitative, selective and random. I spent a lot of time observing what goes on in the

72 “Did we tweet to rebel, or rebel to tweet?”

73 Depending on the individual usage, this Twitter-jargon word (*tweeps* = tweet+peeps/people) can designate people on Twitter in general, tweeters who follow each other, a tweeter’s group of followers, or, as I used it here, a group of tweeters followed by a particular tweeter.

74 Except, of course, during the Internet-blackout (January 28 – February 2, 2011).

Egyptian Twitterverse, saving the tweets that I found interesting. Sometimes I would save one or two, sometimes a hundred in a row. I did not restrict myself to the tweets of those whom I followed. Their retweets would often lead me to homepages of other users where I would then spend time scrolling deeper and deeper down their timelines, reading their posts, taking notes and often allowing myself to click on a username of someone else whose post would catch my attention. Following hashtags was another way to explore the vast unmapped territory of snippets of text. This approach of allowing myself to wander around and get lost led me to tweeters whom I could have easily overlooked had I stayed focused on those who are prolific and popular while tweeting “for a cause.” There are also those for whom Twitter is neither a news source nor a social arena in which to debate political views, but a communication tool used to interact with the followers or send out announcements and thoughts that even in the moments of heightened tension of which the post-Mubarak Egypt had witnessed quite a few, seemed as if untouched by any revolutionary concerns or latest developments in the political field. However, their language choices and linguistic strategies deserve to be taken into consideration. Let us now take a look at just a few examples of those small textual products that all fall under the rubric of *Egyptian(s) tweets*:

4.5.2 EgyTweets

(1)

مقال فيه اتزان كويس بين تهمين ما يقوم به أسانج من خلال تسريبات الويكيليكس دون تجاهل لإمكانية كونه مدانا في التهم الجنسية المنسوبة إليه

[An article containing a well-balanced appraisal of what Assange is accomplishing through WikiLeakes without ignoring the possibility of him being convicted of the sexual allegations held against him.]

MSA/ECA – the only ECA insert is the adjective كويس. The element فيه could be interpreted as an ECA existential, but is equally part of an MSA relative clause “an article in which there is.”

=== === ===

(2)

على صفحات الاهرام محمد عادل يتهم اسراء عبد القتاح وباسم فتحي والمعهد المصري
الديمقراطي بتلقي تمويل أمريكي -- قرف على الصبح

[On the pages of Al-Ahram Mohamed Adel accuses Esraa Abdel Fattah, Basem Fathy and the Egyptian Democratic Academy⁷⁵ of receiving American funds – disgusting stuff first thing in the morning]

ECA←MSA – inter-sentential code-switching: the first part is MSA; the switch to ECA (قرف على الصبح) is “flagged” (marked by the dash); an example of metaphorical code-switching with affective dimension, used to accentuate the tweeter's negative stance towards the content of the MSA part.

=== === ===

(3)

انتعجب ممن يطالبون الرئيس بحل مجلس الشعب, فالرئيس رجل مؤمن لا يحل ما حرمه الله و
هذا المجلس حرام فى حرام

[I am amazed at those who are demanding from the President to dissolve the National Parliament because the President is a devout man who would not declare legitimate (dissolve) that which God has declared illegitimate; and this Parliament is illegitimacy piled on illegitimacy]⁷⁶

MSA

=== === ===

(4)

الهاكرز وقعوا الموقع بتاع ماستر كارد انتقاما لويكيليكس واسانج

[Hackers have taken down the website of MasterCard in revenge for Wikileaks and Assange]

ECA/MSA – intra-sentential mixing through the use of the ECA analytic genitive (بتاع) and MSA purposive accusative (*al-maf'ūl li/min ajlih*); note also the borrowing of the English word “hacker” together with the English plural marker and its “blending” (Sebba, forthcoming) with the Arabic definite article ال.

=== === ===

(5)

75 <http://egyda.org/>

76 A pun, playing around the multiple meanings/uses of the word *ḥarām* (حرام) - “forbidden (primarily in Islam); sacred; taboo; illegal, illicit...” but is also used in expressions like *ḥarām ʿalēk* (حرام عليك) - “shame on you!; have a heart!” More importantly, it illustrates how the Arabic script underspecifies the phonological substance of speech. The tweeter is here manipulating the root *ḥ-l-l* across Patterns I (*maṣdar* in the first occurrence - “to dissolve”) and Pattern IV (يحل in the second - “to declare legitimate, permissible”).

يا نهار اسود لو بتوع كوريا وكازخستان لقوا اكسير الحياه والخلود دا معناه ان مبارك هيفضل
معانا للابد؟

[Good grief, if those guys in Korea and Kazakhstan were to find the elixir of life and
immortality, would that mean that Mubarak will stay with us for ever?]

ECA – a locally relevant jest in reference to the reports that Kazakhstan's
autocrat Nursultan Nazarbayev (for the third time within a year) had called on
scientists to focus on the study of anti-ageing, prolongation of life and
immortality.⁷⁷

=== === ===

(6)

I hate the politics of language, how to explain to people that Chadian Arabic is
just Arabic, at least when it comes to high register

ENG

=== === ===

(7)

الأخوة الأقباط دلوقتي أنا معزوم على عشاء كريسماس و مطلوب مني أجيب طبق تقليدي
كريسماسي النزعة. ايه بقى طبق مصري تقليدي في عيد الميلاد المجيد؟

[My dear Copts, now I've been invited to a Xmas dinner and asked to bring a
traditional Xmassy⁷⁸ dish. So, what is traditional Egyptian dish for Christmas day?]

ECA – note the lexical alternation regarding the word “Christmas” - the
tweeter first resorts to the English borrowing كريسماس/ي thus giving to his
colloquial sentence an additional slangy dimension evocative of the speech
patterns of middle- and upper-class urbanites, but then closes his query much
more solemnly by alternating to the default Arabic option عيد الميلاد المجيد
which in this context becomes also more formal.

=== === ===

(8)

دليل نوارا لمواجهة قوى المخبرين اللي مش جبارة

http://tahyyes.blogspot.com/2010/12/blog-post_7639.html

[Nawara's manual on how to confront detective forces that are not huge.]

ECA – the post is interpretable as ECA based on the relative clause (اللي مش)
(جبارة) whereas the first part (دليل نوارا لمواجهة قوى المخبرين) could be
interpreted as both MSA and ECA

=== === ===

77 See, for example, <http://gu.com/p/2yk98>

78 كريسماسي النزعة - *lit.* of/with a Christmas/y inclination/tendency.

(9)

أنا عايز أفهم مين المتخلف اللي قرر دبلجة توم وجيرى

[I'd like to know (*lit.* understand) who is the retard who decided to dub Tom and Jerry]

ECA

====

(10)

My dad at lunch today "who the he'll is lady gaga" lol

ENG

====

(11)

الآن في التحرير "ضل راجل ولا ضل حيلة" أصبح "ضل خيمة ولا ضل فاسد". إعتصام إعتصام حتى يسقط النظام

[Now in Tahrir (the saying) "better married than alone"⁷⁹ has become "better in a tent than in corruption". Sit in, sit in and protest till the regime is laid to rest.]

MSA←ECA←MSA←ECA←MSA – parts in ECA, flagged by quotation marks, embedded in an MSA sentence.

====

(12)

UNBELIEVABLE! RT: @[username]: #Jan25 صدق أو لا تصدق ، الصفحة الأولى من <http://yfrog.com/hsynvtj> جريدة الأهرام

[UNBELIEVABLE! RT: @[username] #Jan25 Believe it or not, the front page of Al-Ahram]

ENG→MSA – original tweet in MSA retweeted and commented on in English.⁸⁰

====

(13)

Yenfa3 adfa3 lel sha3'ala (law gebt wa7da y3ni) bel credit card? So2al mohem.

[Is there any chance I could pay the maid (that is, if I get one) by credit card? An important question.]

latECA – Latinised ʿAmmiyya

====

79 Literally, the proverb says "a man's shadow rather than that of a wall."

80 At this point, it should be mentioned that tweets written in Arabic script will necessarily involve script-shifts every time their authors reply to someone ("@[username]"), or apply hashtags ("#hashtags_are_always_in_latin_script"). This mixing is technologically induced, inevitable, and consequently irrelevant for this discussion.

(14)

هوا الدكتور كاتب لضباط اسكندريه علي قتل مواطن كل اسبوعين؟ ايه الخره دا؟
[Has the doctor prescribed to the police officers in Alexandria to kill a citizen every two weeks? What kind of shit is that?] - ECA

=== === ===

(15)

لم تترك لنا الشرطة خيار الا العنف المضاد تسلحوا بقى دفاعا عن النفس يسقط الكلب حبيب العادلي

[The police have not left us with any other choice but counter-violence, so arm yourself in self-defence. Down with the dog Habib el-Adly]

MSA/ECA – the tweet is written in MSA with an insertion of a single ECA “tag” (بقى) for emphasis of the imperative; note also the lack of the indefinite accusative case marking with *alif* on the word خيار.

=== === ===

(16)

مع إستثناء الثلاث أمامير اللي شفتهم في المطار، مفيش حريم عدلة هنا
[With the exception of the three really beautiful ones that I saw at the airport, there are no decent-looking women around here]

ECA

=== === ===

(17)

لقد قربنا من الإفلاس، الكريدت كارد بيشتغل فالمحلات و لكنه لا يسحب فلوس من الإيه-تي-إم، و مصيبتاه

[I (*lit.* we) have almost gone bankrupt, the credit card works at the stores, but it's not withdrawing money from the ATM – how disastrous]

MSA-ECA-MSA

=== === ===

(18)

عاجل : أنا أردين التي إتهمت جوليان آسانج إنه نط عليها من غير كاندام على علاقة بالسبي آي إيه ونفذت عمليات ضد فيدل كاسترو في كوبا !!!

[Breaking news: Anna Ardin who accused Julian Assange that he jumped on her without a condom is connected to the CIA and has worked on operations against Fidel Castro in Cuba!!!]

MSA – a form of a news headline, but note the form of the complementiser (إنه) instead of (أنه) which might suggest that the following clause (نط عليها من غير) could have been intended as ECA (this interpretation being also reinforced by the lexical choice of the borrowing كاندام /kandam/, “condom”)

=== === ===

(19)

باحلم باللحظة اللي اقول فيها: معلىش يا حبييتي، جوازنا يبقى سري في المرحلة دي بس
لأسباب متعلقة بطبيعة شغلي

[I dream of the moment in which I'd say: Sorry, honey, our marriage should remain
secret for the time being, that's only because of the reasons related to the nature of
my work]

ECA – a joke

=== === ===

(20)

Güte nacht boys and girls of the world. Gute doesn't actually come with the ü
on it. But it looks more German. I'll go to bed now.

ENG

=== === ===

4.5.3 Tweets as sites of code alternations

Even this small selection of tweets randomly selected from a corpus of nearly 3000
illustrates the fact that, despite its brevity, the tweet can often be a site of linguistic
alternations. Two categories of linguistic choices are involved in these alternations:

- code choices – *MSA*, *ECA* and *ENG*
- script choices – *Arabic script* and *Latin script*.

In the examples above, at least six tweets exhibit some form of mixing (1, 2, 4, 11,
12, 15), five of which involving MSA and ECA, and one (12) involving MCA and ENG.
Among these, at least two (2, 12) represent instances of metaphorical and affective
code-switching, thus functioning as “contextualisation cues” (Gumperz 1982:131). In a
situation such as the one represented in the example 15, where the colloquial particle بقى
is introduced for emphasis (of the imperative) within otherwise MSA sentence, instead of

code-switching, code-mixing, or borrowing, it would probably be more accurate to talk about *affective inserts*, elements belonging to one variety that are inserted for stylistic purposes into sentences expressed in another variety.

Given how idiosyncratic tweets generated by Egyptian users are in terms of content and linguistic choices, it is clear that they cannot be approached as a genre, but as a specific, length-wise constricted *textual format* that nevertheless leaves some space for linguistic creativity and manipulation of available linguistic resources.

It is often through replying, retweeting, or sharing⁸¹ that tweeters produce instances of mixed written discourse by adding their comments to forwarded posts. In (21) below the tweeter forwards a headline written in English accompanied by a comment in Arabic. Structurally similar is the example (12) above. In terms of the distribution of linguistic varieties used in the main text and the comment, the examples (12) and (21) mirror each other.⁸² In the former, a comment in English is juxtaposed to an Arabic text. In the latter, it is the Arabic that is chosen as a variety to comment on a text in English:

(21)

81 Nowadays, there is a growing number of websites on the Internet that feature some form of a “share” button enabling the Internet users to instantly refer to the relevant page through a variety of social networking platforms they might be subscribed to. If there exists an option to share through Twitter, then clicking on this button generates a tweet containing some form of a headline (or a part of it) and the embedded link to the relevant content (this might often be a so-called “short URL”). Once such a tweet is automatically created, the user can still modify it and even add a personal comment on the shared link before posting it (this, of course, provided that there is still some place left for a comment, and within the limits of the number of the remaining characters).

82 In the case of (12) it is interesting to note that the tweeter still felt the need to position himself emphatically in relation to the content he referred to (“UNBELIEVABLE!” - in CMC, the use of caps is usually interpreted as yelling) even though his juxtaposed comment is virtually a translation of the the first part of the Arabic content it was added to (“Believe it or not...”) - an instance of what Sebba (forthcoming) labels “parallelism” in his classification of “degrees of separation of languages in multilingual texts.”

لا تعليق WikiLeaks cables: Saudi princes throw parties boasting drink, drugs and sex [+ link]

[WikiLeaks cables: Saudi princes throw parties boasting drink, drugs and sex No comment]

MSA←→ENG

In cases like this, hypothetically speaking, only the followers who are to some extent bilingual can fully understand the tweet. But since posts like these primarily have a referential function, they might still successfully target those who are monolingual in the language of the main part. It is the main text that could eventually prompt a user who otherwise might not understand the comment, to click on the embedded link and reach whatever it is that is written in the linguistic variety that he knows.

In 22 below, there seems to be triple layering at play. The main content, a media MSA kind of headline (مسنول بمحافظة جنوب سيناء يغطس فى منطقة هجمات القرش لطمأنة السياح)⁸³ was first introduced (“tagged”) by a pair of rather colloquial exclamations (يا عيني يابني) – another instance of affective code-switching through which the user expresses her sarcastic stance towards the headline. Once posted, the tweet was picked up by another tweeter and, again sarcastically, commented on in Latinised ʿAmmiyya (latECA) - elmo7fez l2?. The result is a bidirectional composite:

(22)

elmo7fez l2? يا عيني يابني مسنول بمحافظة جنوب سيناء يغطس فى منطقة هجمات
القرش لطمأنة السياح

[*Oh poor chap* An official from the Governorate of South Sinai dives in the area of the shark attacks to reassure the tourists It was the governor, wasn't it?]

MSA←arECA←→latECA

83 Check, for example, <http://t.co/GQGyoBU>.

Sometimes, the same content on the Internet might be tweeted about by different users who might add different comments to it. In 23 we find that the same headline as in 22 inspired another tweeter to tag it with an Egyptian proverb:

(23)

مسئول بمحافظة جنوب سيناء يغتس في منطقة هجمات القرش لطمأنة السياح!! (اديني
عمر و ارميني في البحر)

[Hinds & Badawi (1986:599): “(grant me a long life and you can throw me in the sea) ≈ you can do as you like if you can control the outcome.” In this context it could be interpreted to the effect “anybody (including me) would do what he did (dive in shark infested waters) if it meant having/keeping a job”]

ECA←MSA

4.5.4 Types of tweets and intra-tweet mixing

As will be further illustrated below, mixing does not occur only through a tweeter's subsequent intervention on (or more precisely, addition to) a text written by someone else. Very often, it is a result of a deliberate decision.⁸⁴ But the examples (12), (21), (22) and (23) are important inasmuch as they should be understood as outcomes of what I refer to as augmented retweeting/forwarding, or, more broadly – *composite tweeting*. This term is based on my distinction among:

- *single-authored tweets* – when the entire text is composed solely by its sender (yet the tweet may still contain additional elements such as links or hashtags),
- *simple retweets/forwards* – when the entire text is not at all composed by its sender (e.g. a retweet without a comment, an unedited headline with a link, etc.), and

⁸⁴ See, for example, (1), (2), (4) and (11) above.

- *composite tweets* – when the tweet is composed of at least (and in most cases, only) two parts, one of which is not composed by the sender; the part written by the sender thus represents a kind of value added to, or augmentation of the part written by someone else (e.g. a retweet with an added comment, a headline with a comment, etc.).

It should be mentioned in passing that the last category of tweets – (c), could be seen as belonging to a category of textual formations which I refer to as *sequentially multi-authored textual composites*, the kind of texts which I illustrate below. For the present discussion they are interesting inasmuch as they increase the likelihood of occurrences of otherwise virtually non-existent intra-tweet script-shifting within Arabic-only tweets, such as the one exemplified in the composite tweet 22.⁸⁵ Even in the case of composite tweets, script-shift is more commonly encountered in Arabic-English bilingual tweets, as exemplified in (12) above, or in:

(24)

i like :D RT: @[username]: قال ملقيتش حد يناوئني ... قال فرعون إيه فرعنك ...
#AnaMonawe2

[I like :D RT @[username]: (One asked:) Tyrant, what turned you into a tyrant? He said: I haven't found anyone to oppose me]

ENG-emoticon-RT-@[...]:→←MSA←ECA--#hashtag – a modified rewrite of an Egyptian saying *ya faraʿōn 'ēš farʿanak ʔāl maḥaddiš raddini* (“no one corrected me”). The second part of the saying is modified so as to incorporate the borrowing from MSA – ناوَأ - يناوئ - “to oppose, resist, defy” since the original tweet, as well as the composite retweet quoted here, belong to a hashtag-campaign “#AnaMonawe2” (“I resist, I oppose”). The hashtag itself is an instance of a technologically imposed Latinisation of Fuṣḥa. The retweet+comment (“i like :D”) is posted by a tweeter who tweets almost exclusively in English.

85 Similarly, in her analysis of the use of Latinised Arabic in two emailing groups, Aboelezz found that her data “shows that the dichotomy in the sort of online communication studied is not between Arabic in Arabic script and Arabic in Latin script (LA), since *these hardly feature together*” (2009: 19 – emphasis mine).

The fact that tweeters hardly ever alternate between the two available scripts when single-authoring their Arabic-only tweets does not mean that this kind of shifting is somehow non-existent. It certainly exists, but is for the time being encountered either in graffiti-type of texts, or in longer, experimental literary texts where its markedness has a stylistic function. Drawing on Sebba's discussion of orthography as social practice (2007: 26-57, *passim*), I argue that to mix Arabic in Arabic script with Arabic in Latin script is by all means culturally odd, and it is this oddity that can make its "unlicensed" use socially meaningful in those situations when orthography is to be deliberately and conspicuously "focused on anti-standard." For the most part, tweeting is simply not that kind of writing. Tweeting is indeed not governed by highly regulated "orthographic regimes" and therefore many, albeit not all, Egyptian tweeters tend to be relaxed when it comes to strict adherence to the standardised usage. This should not be taken to mean that tweeters are sloppy, or that they do not reflect on what and how they write. On the contrary, as many of the examples presented throughout the chapter show, tweeters take tweeting seriously, and very many of them do care about the content and the form of their tweets. But at the same time, due to its transient character and limitedness in length, the tweet, even when its primary preoccupation is aesthetic, will hardly ever motivate a user to focus on the far end of the non-standardness as much as a graffiti artist or an experiment-oriented writer might be tempted to do.⁸⁶

86 This, I believe, is also the reason for the apparent paucity of this type of script-switch in the emails analysed by Aboelezz (2009). Since these emails came from two mailing lists of (A) a group of university students who used their list "to plan and discuss upcoming meetings and events [...] associated with a simulation of the Arab League," and (B) a group "associated with a club within an English teen magazine," whereby their mailing list was "designed to coordinate and discuss article-writing and to plan meetings and events" (ibid. 7), it is hard to imagine that these young people would often choose to resort to such saliently marked orthographic practice and alternate scripts when writing in Arabic while discussing the practicalities pertaining to their upcoming meetings and events.

The instances of intra-tweet script-switching involving Arabic-English code-switching and code-mixing are also few and far between. It seems that they are most likely to occur when the tweeter wants to preserve not just the content of the Arabic part of the text unmediated through translation (for which Franco can be used), but also the visual identity of the Arabic language itself, thus indexing, even iconicising, a larger cultural baggage of associations emerging when the Arabic text “stands out” next to English by being written “as it should be.” This was already illustrated by the “coming out of the closet” tweet and it is further exemplified in (25) below. Unlike ECA-English code-switching in the former, it is MSA in the latter that is interpolated in an English sentence. Hence more responsibility on the tweeter's shoulders to preserve it orthographically:

(25)

The challenge facing us now in Egypt is the gap between the "Great isn't good enough" generation & "ليس بالإمكان أفضل مما كان" generation.

[... & “it can never be better than it used to be” generation”]

ENG-MSA-ENG

The tweet is targeted at bilingual Egyptians and Arabs. In order to accentuate the contrast between the two generations, the tweeter (in this case, Wael Ghonim) employs highly metaphorical code-mix discursively linking the younger (presumably - optimistic, proactive and ambitious) generation with an American-sounding cliché, and the older (pessimistic, cowardice and reactionary) with rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) of an Arabic expression which apparently dates back as far as the 11th century AD.⁸⁷

87 Namely, it seems that the origin of the saying is a sentence attributed to one of the greatest theologians, jurists and philosophers in the history of the Arab-Islamic civilisation, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazzālī (1058-1111). The original sentence is slightly different (containing أبعد in place of أفضل) and it reads: “ليس بالإمكان أبعد” - with the meaning that the world could not have been created by God any better than it was - See,

However, when alternating between ECA and English without being particularly keen on preserving the visual identity of the Arabic component, tweeters are more likely to employ Franco, smoothly transit from one language to another (and back) and produce something like:⁸⁸

(26)

Fi wa7d motakhalef bey2ool"da el 'mating' season 3shan keda el 2ersh 'hayeg' wa beyhbesh fi 2ay set!?"Walahii mabahazar 3ala OTV #egysharks
[There is a retard saying "it's the 'mating' season so that's why the sharks are 'horny' and snap at every woman!?" Honestly, I'm not kidding, it's on OTV]

(27) an exchange⁸⁹

A: I had a fight with flook⁹⁰ in #Tahrir. she2 ye2ref. old people should be at their retirement houses and shut the fuck up

B: @A yep the extreme majority of the flook I hv met r old ppl with a nasty loud voice :(m3rfsh byn2oohm kda wla eh

[A: I had a fight with flook in #Tahrir. *disgusting*. old people should be at their retirement houses and shut the fuck up

B: @A yep the extreme majority of the flook I hv met r old ppl with a nasty loud voice :(I don't know if they are picking them to be like that]

4.5.5 Tweeting as conversation and conversational inter-tweet mixing

This last example brings us to an important aspect of tweeting, its *conversational character*. As was mentioned earlier, a tweet can trigger responses from followers and before long, two (or more) tweeters may end up in an exchange that sometimes follows the monolingual pattern (28, 29), but can also very often involve both intra- and inter-tweet

for example, <http://pubcouncil.kuniv.edu.kw/jsis/arabic/showarticle.asp?id=1047>

88 ECA italicised, ENG underlined.

89 In presentations of exchanges, actual usernames are substituted with letters A, B, C...

90 الفلول has become a shortcut noun to refer to the "remnants of the previous regime."

language alternations reminiscent of conversational code-switching (30-32). Unlike intra-tweet shifting discussed above, inter-tweet code-shifting is much more susceptible to script-shifting across tweets (32):

(28) *a monolingual exchange in arECA:*

@B: A
انا سألتك قبل كده انت عمرو ولا مدير للأكونت⁹¹ وانت مردتش يا ترى مشفتش ولا
مش عاوز ترد ولا ايه
@A: B
اينعم عمرو

[A: @B I've asked you already, are you Amr, or the manager of the account and you didn't answer. You didn't see [my question], or you don't want to answer, or what.

B: @A Yes, sure, Amr]

(29) *a monolingual exchange in ENG:*

A: I'm calling my bed Tahrir these days. So whenever someone asks me where I am; I sound patriotic without lying. So yeah, I'm in Tahrir now

B: @A bed, no. Call your girlfriend that. It works better.

(30) *nearly monolingual in ENG but with an latECA-tag*

A: I don't know u but I have a question, what are u doing in India mate ? :)

B: I'm working, seeing the world, running away from politics, pick the one you feel more comfortable with.

A: call center offshore Wel Klam da ? ("and things like that")

B: LOL, no, that's for Indians. I work in a marketing and advertising agency.

(31) *ENG-latECA*

A: The level of panic on twitter regarding #tahrir is hilarious. stop being so weak. This is nothing to worry about.

B: Definitely something to be pissed off and sarcastic about, no?

C: @B @A well he [A] always has patronizing comments & thinks 'gab el dib min delo' b4 all of us. *Al ra7ma*⁹²

91 Note, however, the use of the English borrowing "account" (أكونت).

92 It is interesting to note here how the shift to ECA (*gāb ildīb min dīlu*) seems to be governing the shift back

[well he always has patronizing comments & thinks *he's seen it all* b4
/before/ all of us (thinks he's doing something no one else can). *mercy*]

A (responds to C): @C *basha, eyaky teday2y nafsek. :) el unfollow button
mawgood dayman.*

[my dear, don't bother yourself :) there's always the unfollow button]

C: @A Too late. Am addicted. & #[hashtag] made hell of a
difference.

A: "@C *Tobby* :)
[my love :)]

In this case, A posts in English and elicits two comments: B comments first, in English, then C (thus incorporating both A and B in her reply), in English with an embedded Egyptian expression in order to describe A (*i.e.* reproach him for being always too smart by half). C's ECA-insertion is a local expression with strong reference to Egyptian culture and tradition, which prompts A to shift to ECA and stick to it until the end of the exchange: to C's ENG-ECA-ENG tweet he first responds in ECA (with one ENG borrowing, "unfollow"), C replies without abandoning her preferred code (ENG), A replies in ECA, and the exchange stops.

(32) *ENG-arECA*

A: Ahmed Shafik ya ragal is speaking on Al Arabiya , I love your sweater !!
[comments on what she is watching on TV in English, but with an interpolation in latECA,
meaningful to those who know Arabic: "ya ragal" (*sic*) - "(oh) man, oh boy"]

- divergence (B shifts away from A's code):

B: @A الراجل دا عنده شوية بلوفرات حلوه احنا مقبلين⁹³ على مرحلة بلوفرات

to English according to ECA syntax - "before." The saying *miš hatgīb ildīb min dīlu* is used "in disparagement of someone's efforts" (Cf. Hinds & Badawi 1986: 315) since it literally means "you will not bring the jackal by its tail," *i.e.* "you're not exactly doing the impossible." By reformulating it (without the negative), the commentator in this tweet gives a sarcastic comment to the effect "he thinks he's doing wonders when he can't." Also, it is possible that the closing of the tweet "*Al ra7ma*" may be a typo for, again sarcastically intended "*alf ra7ma*" ("pity the poor boy").

93 It is interesting to note B's use of the active participle of form IV (مقبلين). Hinds and Badawi (1986) do not list pattern IV of the root *q-b-l*. This form is encountered in Egyptian Arabic, but according to Woidich,

[@A, this guy has a few nice sweaters, we are entering a sweater phase]

In his reaction to A's tweet in English, B shifted to Egyptian Arabic with a borrowing from MSA (مقبلين على) to accentuate the sarcasm and parody contained in his comment by establishing a reference to media discourse (“we are entering, embarking...”) and juxtaposing it to the word “sweater(s).”

- convergence (A accommodates – fully – to both B's code-choice and script-choice):

A: @B و الاجندات كمان حضرتك رجل⁹⁴ الاجندات عمر سليمان

[@B, and agendas too, Sir, the man of agendas is Omar Soliman]

- closing of the exchange (B sums up the exchange, this time without calling out to A):

B: مصر مقبلة على مرحلة البلوفرات مع شفيق و الأجنيدات مع سليمان داخنا هنضحك⁹⁵ ضوحك

[Egypt is entering the sweater phase with Shafiq and the agenda phase with Soliman.

We'll be laughing big time]

In this example, both tweeters are Egyptians in their twenties (A is female, B is male). A closer examination of their tweets shows that A nearly exclusively tweets in English and B predominantly tweets in Egyptian Arabic (arECA). It is important to stress that B is not an Arabic-only tweeter, he does, albeit occasionally, tweet in English.⁹⁶ So,

“verbs from stem IV have been borrowed from Modern Standard Arabic” (2004:189). Similarly, Holes (2004: 138): “The dialects taken as a whole have virtually eliminated Pattern IV from their repertoire of devices for meaning augmentation.”

94 Instead of a more colloquial <راجل>, she opts for <رجل> – seemingly an MSA lexical item which, however, is not absent from ECA either, *but* – judging by the first occurrence of this item in her initial tweet, A seems to be giving it a non-MSA pronunciation /ragal/.

95 According to one of my Egyptian friends, the form ضوحك captures the slang word *duhk*, the letter و does not mark the vowel length.

96 As in: (1) single-authored status update: “everything is getting on my nerve i really need anger management therapy” (a status update to which another user commented: “@A remember how much control u have by remembering the process: thoughts create feelings, feelings create actions.u chose step 1 xx”)

(2) composite tweet (retweet+comment): “@CarlosLatuff: Annoying the Zionists is my favourite sport. :) - #Gaza #flotilla #Palestine #Israel” *me too :D its amusing*”

(3) single-authored reply: “@A i think its only one in manial its so closed to masr adema at some point” (in response to A's query “What body in Manial , someone with killed other than the boy !?” - interestingly enough, the “A” in this example is the same girl as in the example under discussion.)

his shift to ECA in this case should not be interpreted exclusively as divergence (which it certainly is to a large degree), but perhaps as an act of redefining the social situation, first by picking up on a contextualisation cue given by A in her post (ENG-{ya ragal}-ENG) and then shifting the topic brought up by A in English, back to its Egyptian context.

A day or two after this exchange took place amidst the uprising, “Shafiq's sweaters” became the object of wide-spread ridicule. Ahmed Shafiq was a senior military officer whom Mubarak had appointed as prime-minister on January 29. He resigned on March 3. While sweater-jokes were in circulation, it was not Shafiq's style (or lack thereof) that was the main reason why fun was poked at him. Of course, Western-style, ‘casual’ or ‘relaxed’ dress for politicians was something new in Egypt, but I propose that it was not this “newness” itself that was rejected on some conservative grounds by the public. Quite the contrary, it was Shafiq’s attempt to present himself as ‘cool’, ‘casual’, ‘relaxed’ and thus more likeable that was rejected through these jokes. Therefore, these jokes should be understood as jokes against Mubarak; they were an expression of the overall dissatisfaction with his decision not to step down. The “agenda jokes” were a reaction to the official media campaign that portrayed demonstrators as “agents with (foreign) agendas.” So, I argue that one of the keys to interpreting B's motivation behind this English-to-Arabic switch is the “local” character and relevance of the topic of A's comment, A's engagement with day-to-day, even minute-to-minute course of events which, at that moment at least, would have made little or no sense to a foreigner following the uprising from afar, through Twitter. Therefore, it could be argued that B might have seen A's code choice as incongruous with the topic choice. Although, at first sight, B appears to be imposing his linguistic preference, his choice could nevertheless be seen, in the light of

Bell's theory of *audience design* (1984), as the initiative towards the potential “referees” of this exchange – Egyptians in Egypt who saw Shafiq's sweater on TV and for whom the joke would be better positioned, both linguistically and culturally, if told in Egyptian Arabic. The tweeter A, who initiated the exchange, was the first to respond to B's initiative. For a moment she abandons her usual code and fully accommodates to that of B.

4.6 Language choices

My discussion so far has been mostly focused on language mixing. But a lot of tweets and exchanges among tweeters are consistent code-wise and script-wise and do not involve any kind of language alternation.⁹⁷ Also, with respect to MSA-ECA relationship, it must be noted that there are instances when a tweet is ambiguous and could be interpreted as belonging to either of the varieties:

(33)

تعليق من الفيسبوك: تحية كبيرة إلى اعتصام شرف

[A comment from Facebook: Big greetings to E'tessam Sharaf]

MSA=ECA – an ironic take on the name of the Prime Minister Essam Sharaf (عصام شرف) who assumed office on March 3, 2011, with a strong popular support, but whose interim government subsequently came to be perceived as having done little or nothing except generating more protests and sit-ins – thus the use of the word “اعتصام” (sit-in) in place of his name “عصام” (both words being derived from the same root)]

(34)

سيد مشعل هو وزير الانتاج الحربي من 1999 وعضو مجلس الشعب من سنة 2000

[Sayed Meshal has been the Minister for Military Production since 1999 and Member of the National Parliament since 2000]

MSA=ECA

97 See above: 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 for single tweets, and 28 and 29 for exchanges.

Sometimes a tweet suggests that its writer had clearly aimed at a “higher” register, such as media MSA, but due to some low saliency ECA features, which are among the easiest to penetrate spoken MSA, eventually produced a tweet that from a prescriptive point of view deviates from the MSA norm.⁹⁸

(35)

خطاب د. شرف تجاهل مطلب أساسي للمعتصمين وهو إلغاء المحاكمات العسكرية للمدنيين،
على الأقل كان المفروض يبرر سبب تجاهل الموضوع مش تتجاهله تماما

[Dr. Sharaf's speech ignored a fundamental demand of the protesters and that is abolition of military trials of civilians. He ought to have at least justified the reason for disregarding the issue, not ignored it altogether.]

The elements that “lower” the standardness of the tweet are the lack of clear marking of the accusative case (مطلباً أساسياً instead of مطلب أساسي), juxtaposition instead of the use of complementiser (كان المفروض/ أن/ يبرر), and the use of ECA negative particle مش.

In cases like 35, we could speculate that the character-limit – which is the most important formal feature of tweeting – compels the tweeter to disregard the norm to a certain extent for reasons of linguistic economy.⁹⁹

Every attempt to access language choices of Egyptian tweeters, must start from the aforementioned tripartite character of main code options (MSA-ECA-ENG)¹⁰⁰ and bipartite character of script options (ar-lat). From that perspective, it is clear that tweeting as social practice in Egypt has a *multilingual* character, or more precisely, it does not conform to the monolingual norm.¹⁰¹

98 See the discussion of the first text analysed in Chapter 2 (2.1).

99 This concrete tweet is 139 characters long, one character less than the maximum.

100 Needless to say, some other languages could be encountered, such as French, but these instances are so rare that they could be disregarded for the purposes of my discussion.

101 I take “-lingual” part as referring to variety, code, or code+script, and not as pertaining to “language” as in Arabic vs. English. By “monolingual norm” in this context I refer to consistent use of only one of the three

In fact, an Egyptian tweeter of a younger generation who adheres strictly to the monolingual norm is more of an exception than the rule. Among the tweeters of the older generation, however, the monolingual norm might still be prevalent. Not because these tweeters have only one code at their disposal, they have at least two – Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya (some of them have English as well), but because they want to use only one – Fuṣṣḥa.

Among the younger users, there are those who tweet exclusively in Arabic, but when strict adherence to one code is encountered, it is usually ʿAmmiyya that is adhered to. Then there are those who tweet in English,¹⁰² but who can easily resort to Arabic on certain occasions (32), or at least engage with tweets in Arabic (24) even when writing in English.

In the Appendix 4-2, I provide a glimpse at language choices of a small group of Egyptian tweeters. The table presented there shows that even those with strong preference for only one linguistic resource occasionally resort to at least one more.

Nawara Negm is a good example. A translator with a degree in English though she is, Nawara never tweets in English. She also stays away from Franco and uses exclusively Arabic script to tweet predominantly in ʿAmmiyya. She could be said to adhere

codes that constitute the main linguistic resources in the Egyptian Twittersphere – Fuṣṣḥa, ʿAmmiyya and English.

102In their research on the Arabic blogosphere Elting et al. (2009) use the term “bridge bloggers” to refer to bloggers who exclusively or mainly blog in English. Accordingly, those who tweet in English would be labelled “bridge tweeters.”

to the monolingual norm, but from time to time she does post something in Fuṣṣḥa. Although rare, these posts suggest that what she does with ʿAmmiyya in the context where Fuṣṣḥa is the culturally defined norm (her newspaper column), she does with Fuṣṣḥa in the realm where she herself sets ʿAmmiyya as the norm (her blog posts and tweets) – uses it sparingly for special effects:

(33) – rhymed comment on the importance of a book:

من لم يقرأ الإحياء فهو ليس من الأحياء

/man lam yaqra' al-'iḥyā' fa-huwa laysa min al-'aḥyā'/

[Those who have not read the Revival,¹⁰³ have not lived at all]

(34) – an interesting hybrid: a verb borrowed from English treated as Arabic *maṣḍar*:

لم اكن انتوي السايين إن على هذا الاكاونت

/lam akun antawi s-sayn-in ʿalā hāḡa l-'akawnt/

[I did not intend to sign in to this account]

4.6.1 Strictly monolingual tweeting

Notable exceptions on the list given in App 4-2 are Amr Khaled and Ayman Nour in that tweets coming from their accounts are nearly exclusively in MSA.¹⁰⁴

Amr Khaled (عمرو خالد) is one of the most popular television preachers¹⁰⁵ not only in Egypt, but in the entire Arab world.¹⁰⁶ What makes his Fuṣṣḥa-only tweets particularly striking is the fact that one of the secrets of his success as a *dāʿiyya*, according to Moll

103The Revival of the Religious Sciences (إحياء علوم الدين) by al-Ghazzali.

104But see the relevant footnotes in App 4-2.

105“Preacher” is in fact a loose translation for Arabic *dāʿiyya*, pl. *duʿāh* (داعية ج دعاة), which in the religious context designates someone who calls to Islam, propagates Islam.

106“The phenomenon of Amr Khaled” has received a lot of attention. Asef Bayat (2003) gives a brief yet insightful comment on Khaled's appeal among the youth. In her excellent article, Yasmine Moll (2010) discusses what she refers to as “Islamic televangelism,” highlighting contemporary cultural reconfigurations that have paved the way for rising popularity of Amr Khaled and other popular *duʿāh*. See also Wise (2004).

(2010: 1), is “his trademark preaching style, since copied with equal success by a handful of other young du’ah – an easy-going yet energetic performance that is *in colloquial Egyptian*, the linguistic register of everyday life and conversation, and that makes frequent rhetorical use of allusions to popular culture and contemporary issues among youth” (emphasis mine).¹⁰⁷ In his tweets, however, one cannot find a trace of that “trademark preaching style.”¹⁰⁸ When in the realm of the written word, Amr Khaled is nowhere near

107Abdelmeneim Soliman (2008) makes an attempt at sociolinguistic analysis of Khaled’s religious discourse, but apart from presenting some interesting data (which the author does not approach with much analytical depth), his thesis promises more than it actually delivers. Working within the framework of Functional Grammar, Jacob Højgilt (2011) offers a path-breaking linguistic analysis of Islamist rhetoric in Egypt with reference to the written discourses of Yusūf al-Qaraḍāwī, ‘Amr Khālid and Muḥammad ‘imāra. The author (28 *passim*) is aware that all three of them are “well-known television personalities and [...] their televised discourse has more impact than their written one,” but he finds “print culture in Arabic countries interesting” and contends that “books remain central to the cultural imagination, not least in the religious field.” (I bet a small army of anthropologists would beg to differ.) Strangely, however, the author does not say anything about the sociolinguistic setting in Egypt (there is not a single word on “diglossia”/“diglossic continuum”). The term *fushā* is introduced on page 71 within the phrase “*fushā turāthiyya*,” as something which “distinguishes [Yusūf al-Qaraḍāwī] from these other intellectual Islamic writers,” and is translated as “heritage Arabic.” And although the Islamic figures whose writings he analyses “of course rely on more and other techniques in their live appearances, such as voice pitch, gesturing, code-switching and so on,” (28) the reader unfamiliar with the sociolinguistic situation in Egypt is left clueless as to what those “codes” between which they switch are. Also, with particular reference to Amr Khaled’s books, we learn that his publishers “translate the manuscript [based on his lecture or a series of lectures or TV shows] into *fushā* by employing a team of linguists” (81) but again, we are not told what it is that they are translating from. Finally, on page 144, we find one sentence that describes Khaled’s “novel and staccato style” – “It can perhaps be *described best* as spoken language idiom pressed into the mould of *fushā* grammar and vocabulary” (emphasis mine). I must admit that I really don’t understand what this sentence means and what kind of a style is that. Since it presumably refers here to Khaled’s written style, we implicitly conclude that his “spoken language idiom” is (somewhat) different. Although Moll exaggerates when describing Khaled’s performance as being in colloquial Egyptian (if by that she means *exclusively* in colloquial Egyptian), Khaled’s spoken performance is heavily ‘Ammiyya-oriented and results in “mixed-discourses” of a kind studied by Mejdell (2006) and Bassiouney (2006). Any random selection of Youtube clips featuring Amr Khaled would confirm this statement.

108 It must be pointed out that these “tweets” are the same messages that are posted on Amr Khaled’s fan page on Facebook (liked by more than 3 million Facebook users by the time of writing). Therefore, they are sometimes truncated and contain a link to the fan page where the rest could be read. Also, despite a very few instances attested in my data that suggest that Amr Khaled responded to a tweeter directly *and informally* (see below and App 4-2, footnote 4), it is an open (and important) question whether his tweets/Facebook statuses are written by him personally, or by someone else. However, even if he had

the kind of religious discourse that has turned him into a star. Even when his writing takes place in settings such as those of Facebook and Twitter, which are first and foremost populated by young people (who are his primarily targeted audience) and where potential to redefine in/formality is high, Amr Khaled does not take the initiative to address his audience in a way similar to what he does when appearing on TV. As if to confirm Haeri's (2003) simplistic dichotomy between a "sacred language" and "ordinary people," he classicises his otherwise relaxedly colloquialised religious message in order to make it writeable.¹⁰⁹

I tried to find an explanation for this conspicuous conservatism vis-à-vis writing other than that it is directly indexical of Khaled's ideological stance – when one writes, one *must* write in Fuṣḥa, only Fuṣḥa, and nothing but Fuṣḥa... And I almost found it in the pattern of code-switching characteristic for mosque sermons, as formulated by

"outsourced" the act of typing and posting, as he did with the translation involved in the production of his books (see the previous note), I maintain that, at least in terms of the main content/idea the messages are his, or at least approved by him.

109 Of course, using ECA in religious discourse and alternating it with MSA and Classical Arabic of the Qur'an is not Khaled's invention. Code-switching has been employed by preachers in mosques for quite some time (El-Hassan 1978). Particularly successful in it – and loved because of it – was Sheikh Shaʿarawi who passed away in 1998 (See, for example, Haeri 2003: 32-33.) One of his sermons (Sermon 3 in her data) was analysed by Bassiouney who also indicates that his use of ECA was "part of his personal style" (2006: 21). Therefore, the reasons for the popularity of Amr Khaled extend beyond his skilfulness with words and have also a lot to do with the capitalist interests of the media producers of "a televised Islam," Khaled's ability to offer guidance on how to be a good Muslim amidst challenging conditions of the rapidly changing contemporary world, his own "modern" outfit and behaviour that contrast the traditional image of an Islamic scholar or a preacher, and his particular focus on higher social classes to whom he caters in a way that his religious message does not challenge their privileged social position ("it's okay to be rich, but you can still be a good Muslim" - although Høigilt (2011: 41) is right when pointing that Khaled is very popular even among middle- and lower-middle-class people, as well as among some middle-aged and elderly people, and not only among the youth as it is sometimes claimed). However, I am not interested here in why he is popular, but since he already is, and he speaks the way he does when preaching, my question is – why doesn't he write in a similar way? For Høigilt (2011), apparently, this question is of little importance, and so is the fact that "a team of linguists" is employed in the production of Amr Khaled's books.

Bassiouney (2006: 235):

MSA/CLA (Qur'anic verse) → ECA (explanation) → MSA (conclusion).¹¹⁰

Could it be that the strict character limits for tweets (140) and Facebook status updates (420), simply do not give Amr Khaled enough space to fully develop this transition, forcing him to stay on the main message/idea, and consequently use only Fuṣḥa? It could. But given that he writes *all* his messages in Fuṣḥa, including those in which he instructs the followers to click on a link and watch his latest video (35),¹¹¹ asks for concrete help in preparing an episode of his programme (36), or informs them about his upcoming journey (37), I can only conclude that he does not want to write in ʿAmmiyya. This conclusion must be qualified with reference to those rare instances which I was able to find, when he responds to a concrete tweeter (37-39) – shortly, in a word or two, and always in Latin script (ECA or ENG):

(35)

<http://fb.me/JyDq8ziP> شاهدوا حلقة الحسن البصري ومنتظركم في المنتدى

[Watch the episode about Hassan of Basra (Hassan al-Basri) and I am waiting you at the (Internet) forum + link]

MSA

(36)

يا شباب.. ساعدونا في إعداد البرنامج.. من كان موهوباً أو يعرف طفل أو شاب موهوب مثل عمر عثمان وزباد أشرف فليرسل لنا...

[Young people, help us prepare the programme (show). Whoever is talented or knows a talented child or young person, such as Omar Othman or Ziad Ashraf, send us (their names)]

MSA – note the absence of the accusative marking *alif*.

110 This, as Bassiouney also argues, reflects a more general pattern in monologues: ECA “for narration and giving concrete examples,” MSA – “to lend importance and an aura of seriousness to a topic.” (See also Holes 1993)

111 In situations like this, the video is usually in the admixture of ʿAmmiyya and Fuṣḥa.

(37)

أنا مسافر اليوم إلى المدينة المنورة .. زيارة رسول الله .. سأدعو لكم وأرسل سلامكم إليه
~عمرو خالد

[I am travelling to Medina today... a visit to the Prophet... I will pray for you and send him your regards – Amr Khaled]

MSA – elicits responses one which is:

@_AmrKhaled_ ed3ely plzzzzzz we ed3y I ahly kolohom we slmly 3ala rasoul
awee nfsy aro7 hinaaak aweeee bgd ,,rbna ytkbal mnk isa

[Pray for me plzzzzzz (please) and pray for my entire family and remember me to the Prophet, seriously, I want to go there soooo much... May God hear your prayers isa (in sha allah/God willing)]

He reposnds:

hader inshaa allah - **latECA**

[At your service, in sha allah]

This response in latECA should not be interpreted as accommodation to the code chosen by the tweeter to whom Khaled is replying, since in another situation of this kind, this time to a tweet in arECA, the response came in English with a tag in Latinised Arabic:

(38)

A: @_AmrKhaled_ ياريت تقووول لو ناوي تعمل برنامج لرمضان

[Please, saaaaay if you're intending to make a programme for Ramadan]

Amr Khaled: @A yes sure inshaa allah – **ENG-MSA/ECA**

Similarly, to yet another reaction to his tweet, this one in Arabic script that could equally be interpreted as either ECA or MSA, the response came in Latinised Arabic:

(39)

لا تقف أبداً في مكانك . أعمل أي شيء .. تحرك ..أمشي ورائك (sic) ..أمشي أمامك .. لكن لا
تقف في مكانك فإن لم تتحرك¹¹²

112 The tweet is incomplete, it is truncated and the link leads to the full message on the relevant Facebook

[Do not ever stay where you are. Do whatever. Move. Go back... Go forward... But do not stay at the same place. If you were not to move... (cont.: then clear the way for someone else to move – Amr Khaled)] – **MSA**

A: @_AmrKhaled_ جميل جدا يا دكتور – **arMSA/ECA**

[@_AmrKhaled_ Very nice, doctor]

Amr Khaled: @A alf shokr – **latMSA/ECA**

[@A many thanks]

These non-Fuṣḥa instances are so rare and attested only in replies, that they do not contradict the conclusion proposed here – the overwhelming majority of Khaled's written messages intended for tens of thousands of followers on Twitter, and millions on Facebook, are always delivered in arMSA.

In order to contextualise these findings about Khaled's language choices, I examined fifty randomly selected posts (topics started by him) from his Internet forum.¹¹³ I did not find a single one that he wrote in ECA or a mixture of MSA and ECA.¹¹⁴ Further research of his forum is needed to verify these preliminary observations and examine language choices of the contributors to these topics,¹¹⁵ but my findings so far suggest that, as far as writing for public consumption is concerned, Amr Khaled adheres strictly to the monolingual norm that fixes Fuṣḥa as the sole medium of written expression. A rare

page where more than 40 thousand people clicked on “like.” The rest is: فأفسح الطريق لأحد غيرك ليتحرك
~عمرو خالد

113 <http://forum.amrkhaled.net/>

114 See, for example, <http://forum.amrkhaled.net/showthread.php?t=333416>. It is a post (كلمة هامة إلى شباب) – المتندي – “an important address/note to the young people on the forum”) in which Khaled lays out seven directions, or principles to follow (توجهات) when participating in the forum. It is written in MSA, and it contains an embedded video clip from Youtube in which he elaborates on these principles in an admixture of MSA and ECA.

115 That is: Do members of the forum tend to write their comments to his posts in MSA or ECA? What is the extent to which they feel comfortable using ECA in their posts, or any other Arabic dialect for that matter? It would also be interesting to look whether Amr Khaled engages subsequently with the comments to a particular topic, *i.e.* whether he responds and if he does, is his level of formality (MSA) the same.

exception to this monolingual practice, and an expression of, so to speak, Khaled's endorsement of written ʿAmmiyya – in this case, interestingly enough, written both in Arabic and in Franco – is the title of his latest TV show that he launched on May 6, 2011:

بكره أحلى : BOKRA A7LA,¹¹⁶ and its slogan, conspicuously modelled on the revolutionary chant about the unity of the army and the people:

يد واحدة قلب واحد.¹¹⁷

As far as tweeting is concerned, the last observation to be made about Amr Khaled is that, at the time of writing this, he used Twitter predominantly to broadcast himself, not to follow what others had to say. Only two profiles were listed as followed by him, the profile of his aforementioned TV show (@BokraA7laShow), and the profile of Dr. Ragheb El-Sergany, “a medical doctor and an Islamic historian” (@raghebelsergany).¹¹⁸ It comes as no surprise, then, that Amr Khaled does not retweet.

He is by no means unique in observing the MSA-only monolingual norm when tweeting. So does, for example, Alaa Al-Aswany (علاء الاسواني), Egyptian novelist and one of the founding members of the *Kefaya* movement;¹¹⁹ the aforementioned politician Ayman

116 “A Better Tomorrow,” or “Tomorrow is Better.”

117 “One hand, one heart.”

118 As he introduces himself on his Twitter profile, “Dr. Ragheb El-Sergany is a medical doctor and an Islamic historian. He wrote more than 46 books, and he gave hundreds of lectures all over the world.

<http://www.islamstory.com>” (<https://twitter.com/#!/raghebelsergany>)

119 (كفاية - “enough”). Initially trained as a dentist in Cairo and Chicago, Alaa al-Aswany (born 1957), later became a writer and novelist. His second novel “Yacoubian Building” (عمارة يعقوبيان), published in 2002, quickly became a best-seller throughout the Arab world. It was subsequently translated in many languages, turning al-Aswany into an internationally known contemporary Egyptian author. In 2006 it was adapted into a film. Al-Aswany regularly writes columns and he has been an outspoken critic of the political situation in Egypt. On March 2, 2011, a four-hour debate unprecedented in the history of Egyptian, and probably Arab television was broadcast live on OnTV channel where Reem Maged and Yosri Fouda hosted then prime minister Ahmed Shafiq and several other guests (Naguib Sawiris, Amr Hamzawy,

Nour,¹²⁰ and a number of others who prefer to keep their tweets rather formal. For example, @ahmad_khalil who introduces himself on his page as “a husband of one, father of two and grandfather of three, from Egypt, born on January, 1, 1932,”¹²¹ when writing his announcement-like tweets (status updates) nearly exclusively uses MSA. But sometimes, in his replies to other tweeters, he might resort to ECA. As my research shows, however, Fuṣḥa-only (or almost Fuṣḥa-only) approach is but a small piece in linguistic bricolage emerging through tweeting in Egypt.

4.6.2 Bilingual tweeting as parallelism

As shown in List 1 and App 4-1, the most followed Egyptian on Twitter is Mohamed ElBaradei (محمد البرادعي). Born in 1942, he earned his education in law in Egypt, Switzerland and the United States. He worked as a diplomat and served as the Director General of the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) from 1997 until 2009. He and IAEA were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. Since 2009 he has become one of the most prominent opposition figures to challenge the authority of Mubarak by gaining support of various political movements and forces within Egyptian society. He returned to Egypt on January 27, two days after the beginning of the uprising.

Kamel Abu El-Maged, Hamdi Qandil and Alaa Al Aswany). Among those who cornered Shafiq with their critical questions, al-Aswany stood out – as the discussion was unfolding, his criticism grew to become a frontal verbal attack which, judging by the subsequent comments on social media and among the people in the street, was seen by many as rude and by many as brave and necessary. Shafiq resigned the following morning. The debate could be seen at: http://youtu.be/lpT_TKtAL6o. The playlist contains seventeen parts. Al-Aswany and Qandil joined the debate later (initially they were scheduled to be hosted by Yosri Fouda in a talk-show that was to be broadcast after Shafiq's debate with Sawiris, Hamzawy and Abu El-Maged, but a change was made so that they joined in after Hamzawy and Abu El-Maged left). Al-Aswany's historical debating starts at part 8/17.

120 On his Twitter homepage Ayman Nour is introduced as “Egyptian Politician, Leader of El-Ghad Liberal Party, Former Parliament Member (1995-2005), Presidential Candidate for 2011.”

[https://twitter.com/#!/Ayman_Nour]

121 “زوح لواحدة واب لاتنين وجد لثلاث من مصر من مواليد 1 يناير 1932”

EIBaradei is in charge of the National Association for Change,¹²² a non-party political movement formed with the aim of bringing under the same umbrella various political actors whose main goal is transition of the country toward democracy and social justice, and whose concrete demands are clustered around the need to abolish the state of emergency, create conditions for free and fair elections, give the right to Egyptians in diaspora to vote at the embassies and consulates, and lift the current restrictions on who can run for presidency.¹²³ In March 2011, it was announced that EIBaradei might run as a presidential candidate at the first post-revolutionary elections scheduled for 2012.

EIBaradei does not tweet much (see App4-1), but when he does, he very often produces what Sebba (forthcoming) labels “parallelism” – he repeats the same content twice, once in MSA, once in English. Since he has been at the centre of media attention not only in Egypt but also internationally, this parallel monolingual tweeting keeps his large group of followers up to date with his reactions and mini statements regardless of whether they know Arabic or not. It must be noted, however, that these pairs of tweets represent parallelism content-wise, even if loosely as in 44 below. The English tweet is not always the “exact” translation of its Arabic counterpart. Sometimes a rather emotional, even pathetic expression of an MSA tweet is reformulated, sometimes a tweet is stripped of elements with local reference that might be less-known or unknown to those outside Egypt. The ENG-tweets are modified, usually shortened. In addition to that, they may sometimes employ established CMC abbreviations such as 2 (to), 4 (for), w (with).¹²⁴ So, it could be said that the level of formality is sometimes different (lower) than it is when he

122 الجمعية الوطنية للتغيير

123 EIBaradei’s declaration (بيان) in which he laid out the platform of the National Association for Change in seven points is available at the association’s official website: <http://www.taghyeer.net/>.

124 E.g. 42 and 43.

tweets in Arabic. The explanation for apparent differences between MSA tweets and their ENG counterparts might be looked for in the fact that the nature of the Arabic script and orthography (the absence of short vowels and explicitly marked double consonants), as well as some syntactic features of Arabic (e.g. the lack of the copulative auxiliary verb in present-tense nominal sentences, strong inclination towards nominalisation in contemporary MSA, multifunctional character of the *'idāfa*,...) can often make Arabic more economic when it comes to tweeting. Simply put, you can often say more in 140 characters in Arabic written in Arabic script than you can say in English.¹²⁵

Just like Amr Khaled, ElBaradei does not retweet (even though he follows more people than Khaled does) and keeps his alternately bilingual timeline “clean” from other tweeters' posts. His Twitter account is his bulletin board on which to post his short statements and reactions to the current developments in the country. He does, however, post some tweets in Arabic without providing English equivalents, which is the reason why on the whole his MSA tweets outnumber those in English. These MSA-only posts mostly engage with domestic topics and have a stronger local reference. Here are some of the examples:¹²⁶

(40)

رفض التلفزيون المصري ظهوري في برنامج عمرو خالد. حملة التعتيم و التشويه مازالت
مستمرة

Planned appearance on Egyptian state television denied. Policy of censure

125 Apparently, Mandarin Chinese is even more expressive in terms of how much it can say when limited to 140 characters (See, for example, <http://bit.ly/5taxnU>). As for Arabic, a good example is given in 42: despite the resort to four conventionalised abbreviations (2, w, w, 4), the English tweet is 139 characters long and still missing the translation of an entire Arabic sentence from the 137-character-long original (لم يتواجد شرطى واحد).

126 In the case of bilingual parallels (40-44), where applicable, I indicate in italics the differences between the original and its ENG parallel, or elements that are missing from the ENG translation.

and vilification continues.

(missing: *in Amr Khaled's show* ; “policy” - *campaign*)

(41)

إعلان من الجمعية الشرعية بالصفحة الأولى بالأهرام بأن التصويت بنعم واجب شرعي!. أمر مخيف ومريب

Ad on 1st page of Al-Ahram by religious group claiming Yes vote is a "religious duty". Something sinister is going on!¹²⁷

(الجمعية الشرعية is the name of a concrete religious group)

(42)

ذهبت للتصويت .هوجمت أنا واسرتى بتنظيم من البلطجية. هشموا السيارة بالحجارة. لم يتواجد شرطى واحد.اجراء استفتاء فى انعدام الأمن امر غير مسؤول

Went 2 vote w family attacked by organized thugs. Car smashed w rocks.

Holding referendum in absence of law & order is an irresponsible act

(missing: لم يتواجد شرطى واحد: - not a single police officer around; law & order - *security*)

(43)

الحديث مع إسرائيل حول تسوية مع استمرارها منذ عقود فى التهام الأراضى الفلسطينية هو عبث لا طائل منه. لنحتفظ بما تبقى من كرامتنا

Talks with Israel on settlement while gulping (sic) Palestinian land 4 decades is an excercise (sic) in futility. Let's keep what's left of our dignity

(Here the English tweet becomes meaningless because it implies that Egypt is holding talks with Israel while (Egypt) is “gulping” Palestinian land)

(44)

قد تستطيعوا مصادرة حريتنا فى التعبير ولكن سيستحيل عليكم اخماد شعلة الحرية فى قلوبنا. الغضب يزداد

Efforts to silence our voices will only strengthen our resolve to regain our freedom. Anger is on the rise.

(Here, the MSA verb “can, be able to” is wrongly used as if it were subjunctive (might be interpreted as ECA transfer) - قد تستطيعون instead of قد تستطيعوا .

Furthermore, the entire first sentence is re-written in English, thus preserving

127 With reference to the referendum on constitutional changes held on March 19, 2011 (discussed in Chapter 2, 2.3).

only the general idea, but lacking the emotional load of its MSA counterpart. In Arabic, it literally reads: “You may be able to usurp our freedom of expression, but it will be impossible for you to extinguish the flame of freedom in our hearts.”)

untranslated, MSA-only:

(45)

لمن لا يريد أن يفهم :مصر ليست النظام و النظام ليس مصر

[To the one who does not want to understand (To those who do not want to understand): Egypt is not this regime, and this regime is not Egypt. - directly addressing Mubarak or, more generally, those in power]

(46)

رسالة الى الشباب : أتم صناع التغيير. قوتكم فى عددكم وفى شجاعتكم و فى وضوح رؤيتكم
وفى وحدة صفكم التفتوا جميعا حول الهدف الأسمى . الحق معنا

[A message to the youth: You are the creators of change. Your strength is in your number, in your courage, your clear vision and the unity of you as a group. Gather, all of you, around the highest cause. We are right.]

(47)

الطاقة البشرية اذا ما احسن استغلالها هى رصيذا و ليست عبئا. قوتنا فى عددنا

[Whenever utilised well, human potential is a stock (capital), not a burden. Our strength is in our number. - The word رصيذ is wrongly marked for accusative case.]

While some of his MSA tweets appear to be a bit awkward or exhibit incorrect usage of MSA, EIBaradei, the tweeter, could also be classified as the one who upholds the monolingual norm, albeit in parallel (MSA-ENG).¹²⁸ In an attempt to cast more light on his linguistic choice when tweeting, I will draw from my field notes to give an observation about his linguistic behaviour as a public speaker, or, more precisely, an observation

128 Again, as in the case of other public figures whose tweets are referred to in this chapter, I do not know for sure if EIBaradei tweets himself or someone else does it on his behalf, as a friend of mine suggested while himself speaking from hearsay. All the tweets from my “EIBaradei tweet data,” including the few presented here, come from his “verified” Twitter account (On verified accounts see: <http://t.co/gYyaF0a>). Therefore, I treat them as *his* tweets.

about a gradual change of his linguistic behaviour over time.

On January 30, 2011, I went to pay a visit to Abu Hamid, a 59-year-old neighbour and friend, with whom I drank many cups of tea and smoked many cigarettes on various occasions when we would be talking or watching television in his tiny shop where he sells household cleaning tools. This was my first visit since the beginning of the uprising and, expectedly enough, we talked about what was going on in Tahrir.

Abu Hamid's shop is across the street from the building in which he lives. The street is fairly narrow and lined with trees that keep it pleasantly shadowy throughout the day. Quiet at night, it wakes up in the morning to the clamour of numerous shopkeepers, barbers, their assistants and frequenters of the *'ahwa* located some thirty or forty meters away from Abu Hamid's shop. Abu Hamid spends his days in his shop. He does not go to the *'ahwa*, and at praying times he could often be seen praying while sitting in his chair even though there is a mosque adjacent to the building in which he lives. A devout Muslim that he is, Abu Hamid crosses the street to prostrate at the mosque only when his health permits him to do so. Over the last several years, his legs have been betraying him steadily, and now he hardly ever leaves the neighbourhood, unless being driven by car. The total area of his personal, lived geography of Cairo has shrunk to several square meters. The rest of the megalopolis now exists in his memory, or as a televised image, or as an occasional narrative of his interlocutor. While sharing with him my impressions from Tahrir, Abu Hamid was all ears. Then there came in Um Soliman, a lively, chubby and energetic woman from the neighbourhood, about the same age as Abu Hamid, but all in motion. She came to buy something, but then joined us in our conversation and stayed for

another half an hour. Both of them were proud and supportive of the demonstrations, but equally apprehensive about the possible outcomes. Then I mentioned ElBaradei who had previously made his appearance at Tahrir where he was not met with equal enthusiasm and warmth by everyone. While some demonstrators cheered, others wanted him to leave. As soon as I brought up his name, Um Soliman got annoyed:

mīn ilbaradī da?! mīn illi gābu wi gabū mnēn. da baʔālu snīn barra maṣr wi miš ʔārif ayy^o ḥāga ʔan maṣr wi... wi... wi... da mabyikkalimši zayyina

Who's that ElBaradei? Who brought him here and where did they bring him from? He's been away from Egypt for years and doesn't know anything about Egypt and... and... and... he doesn't speak like us.

Abu Hamid had nothing to say in ElBaradei's defence and they both continued criticising him for a while.

I had previously heard many other Egyptians articulating their lack of support for ElBaradei around the trope that he is somewhat of an alien, an outsider who had been away from the country for way to long and has become alienated and disconnected from the Egyptian reality and grievances of the majority of the population. This, however, was the first time for me to hear someone directly referring to ElBaradei's way of speaking.

A month later, in an entirely different context of a dinner-party in Zamalek, I had a chance to speak to a man and a woman, both close to ElBaradei and his team. The man was the first one to bring up the issue raised by Um Soliman: "But his insistence on Fuṣṣa when talking on TV is so annoying. I told him many times, you simply cannot talk like that to Egyptians. But he is so stubborn..." I agreed that, given how uncharismatic as a public

speaker ElBaradei actually is regardless of the code he opts for, Fuṣḥa was not going to help him much in winning sympathies of those who perceive him as an outsider. “There's only this much I can do,” said the woman. “Give me a product, a washing powder, and I'll sell it for you. But with him it's different. He has his own ways and it's not easy for him to change overnight.”

If truth be told, by the time these two conversations about ElBaradei's language preferences took place, he had already changed and started using ʿAmmiyya more and more when giving interviews and statements. Nevertheless, “the first impression” he had left when entering the political battleground was apparently still strong.¹²⁹ The comments made by my interlocutors at the party, suggest that the dilemma between the “appropriateness of Fuṣḥa” and “pragmatics of ʿAmmiyya” is a difficult one for ElBaradei, even in the context of public speech-making. It is not surprising then, that in the realm of the written Arabic word, even if that is just a tweet, Fuṣḥa has no alternative. This personal preference, however, might have a political price attached to it.

4.6.3 Anything but monolingual

Within the spectrum of writing practices and approaches associated with tweeting, we find a remarkably large number of tweeters whose linguistic repertoires are more

129 As an example of this earlier approach to public speaking, I refer to ElBaradei's address from March 2010, given in MSA – <http://youtu.be/nG8ayB1KQa8>. In contrast, in the context of nearing elections, he made a statement on the occasion of the beginning of Ramadan at the end of July 2011. That one was delivered in ECA – <http://youtu.be/u1z8q2B3aIQ>. From the sociolinguistic perspective, these two statements represent the two poles of the spectrum, and the majority of his interviews and talks have more or less regularly been given in a kind of mixture of the two which has been already extensively studied by Arabists. Nevertheless, the native speakers do not operate with fine-tuned concepts such as Educated Spoken Arabic, and for some of them, apparently, ElBaradei has presented himself as someone who addresses Egyptians in Fuṣḥa, which, as it seems, is not something looked upon very favourably.

diverse and tweeting practices much more dynamic than those just described in the previous section. Their code and script choices are contextually bounded, realised on case-by-case basis, and reflexive of the topic of the concrete tweet and effects their messages are intended to produce among the followers.

An illustration comes from twelve consecutive tweets of Wael Ghonim (وائل غنيم), a thirty-year old Google executive, Internet activist, and founder and administrator of Facebook page “We Are All Khaled Said,” an English sister-page of “كلنا خالد سعيد.” Ghonim came to Cairo from Dubai where he had been based for work on the eve of the demonstrations scheduled for January 25. Three days into the uprising he was reported missing. The authorities kept him in custody for eleven days and released him on February 7. That same evening, Mona el-Shazly hosted him in her show “10pm” on DreamTV channel. His emotional, tearful interview is considered to have fuelled the ongoing unrest.¹³⁰ He became internationally famous overnight. As shown above, he is the second most followed Egyptian on Twitter. The following table casts some light on him as a tweeter and reveals a pattern distinctly different from that of the first-ranked ElBaradei:

	<i>tweet</i>	<i>translation</i>	<i>commentary</i>
48	Youtube in Arabia: 100m video playbacks per day, 1hr of content uploaded every minute. #Egypt: 1.2m videos uploaded in 2011		ENG – a post of general interest related to the presence of Egypt and the Arab world on Youtube – something the world should know about

130Watch: <http://youtu.be/SjimpQPQDuU>

	<i>tweet</i>	<i>translation</i>	<i>commentary</i>
49	هناك دول بها قرارات ثورية بدون ثورة وهناك دول بها ثورة بدون قرارات ثورية ~ سارة السيد	There are states that make revolutionary decisions without a revolution, and states having a revolution without making revolutionary decisions – Sara el-Sayyed	MSA – (retweet) quotation; ¹³¹ a generalisation with a strong reference to what is going on in Egypt
50	مذكرة المستشار هشام البسطويسى لوضع الجيش: تكريس للدكتاتورية وغياب الشفافية واقتداء بنموذج تركي رفضه حتى الأتراك أنفسهم bit.ly/kcGbqh	Judge Hisham el-Bastawisi in his memo on the status of the army: inauguration of dictatorship, lack of transparency and imitation a Turkish model is something Turks themselves have abandoned.	MSA – his own, media-style summary of some points of the memo sent to SCAF by a presidential candidate judge Hisham el-Bastawisi – strong local reference
51	لا يأس مع التحرير ولا تحرير مع اليأس - محمود سامي #July8	No despair about Liberation, and no liberation with despair – Mahmoud Samy	MSA – (retweet) quotation; local reference and in a way untranslatable fully due to the play on words (<i>tahrīr</i> : liberation, Tahrir Square)
52	هو ليه الناس على تويتر اللي دائما متعصبة ويتشتم في أي حد وأي حاجة مضايقاتهم لما يتشوفهم في الحقيقة بيكونوا ناس هادية ومحترمة وعادية جدا؟	How come that those who are always nervous on Twitter and insult everyone and everything that annoys them, when I meet them in real life, always turn out to be very calm, respectable, ordinary people?	ECA – personal comment about “a kind of people on Twitter”
53	A Reminder: The power of people is stronger than the people in power #July8		ENG – a general comment, quoting himself (this tweet was first sent on February 28, 2011 and retweeted by many)
54	عدم محاكمة رموز النظام السابق بتهمة الفساد السياسي يؤدي إلى زعزعة الاستقرار وإبطاء عجلة الانتاج July8#	The fact that the symbols of the former regime are not being tried on charges of political corruption is shaking stability and slowing down the “wheel of production.”	MSA – a comment that engages directly with the official SCAF/government discourse about the effects of the prolonged demonstrations on the so-called “wheel of production.” ¹³² - local reference

131The tweet could also be interpreted as belonging to higher registers of ECA; MSA-cues are هناك and بدون, instead of more colloquial فيه and من غير respectively.

132In March 2011, a lot of controversy was caused by the interim government’s decision to pass the infamous

	<i>tweet</i>	<i>translation</i>	<i>commentary</i>
55	أتمنى الثورة تنجح في إنها تخلي نجم الجيل يبقى حمزة نمره bit.ly/qQG9ZB	I wish the revolution to succeed so that it turns Hamza Namira into the star of the generation [link]	ECA – a comment regarding the local cultural (pop-music) scene – local reference
56 (=25)	The challenge facing us now in Egypt is the gap between the "Great isn't good enough" generation & "ليس بالإمكان أفضل مما كان" generation.	See the discussion of 25 above	
57	ماصدقنا خلصنا من الماسونيك طلعلنا قصة السوبرسونيك #cairoexplosion	No sooner had we got rid of the masonic than there came the supersonic.	ECA – a facetious comment regarding the previous tweet (below) – local reference
58	#Egypt officials confirmed that #cairoexplosion is just a sonic boom from an overflying aircraft. We're safe!		ENG – a piece of information (with an added comment), clarification about the cause of the loud sound of the explosion heard earlier that day in Cairo. - local reference, but it could be of interest to foreigners living in Cairo, or the world media
59	عدد المدرسين في مصر العاملين في مدارس الحكومة يتجاوز 1,100,000 مدرس .. إصلاح مصر يبدأ من تأهيلهم ورفع كفاءتهم ورفع الأجور الي يحصلوا عليها	The number of teachers working in public (government) schools in Egypt is more than 1,100,000. The reform of Egypt should start by raising their qualifications and competencies, and increasing their salaries (<i>lit.</i> salaries they receive)	ECA←MCA – an opinion on the state of education in Egypt – local reference

“anti-protest law,” arguing that demonstrations disrupt productivity – *ʿagalat al'intāg* was the buzzword of the day. (See, for example, Shehab 2011)

	<i>tweet</i>	<i>translation</i>	<i>commentary</i>
60	وانه ليحز في نفسي أن أرى من أبناء قومي من مثل هذا الشاب. الإعلام المصري مش عايز حملة تطهير ده عايز حملة تطعيم ضد الغباء http://bit.ly/ebOFg0	It hurts my soul to see that a young man like this belongs to the sons of my people. The Egyptian media doesn't need a cleansing campaign, it needs an anti-stupidity vaccination campaign. http://bit.ly/ebOFg0	ECA←MCA – local reference: a comment on a TV interview featuring a lawyer critical of the protesters. In order to emphasise his own disagreement with the interviewee and criticism of the official media, Ghonim writes a sentence in MSA, then qualifies it with a sentence in ECA.

Obviously aware of his large following, Wael Ghonim is at home when manipulating a variety of linguistic resources while tweeting in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, he does not seem to use Latinised Arabic. He alternates between English and Arabic, albeit not in parallel. When writing in Arabic, he writes in Arabic script, but he is much more relaxed than tweeters who adhere to the monolingual norm. He is equally comfortable with Fuṣḥa, ʿAmmiyya and the mixture of the two.

Ghonim's approach to tweeting could be seen as representative of practices that are less constrained by ideology and are more sensitive to pragmatics. This should not be taken to mean that these practices are ideology-free, or exclusively governed by pragmatic reasons. Rather, it means that they are indexical of ideological stances that do not fix the act of writing to a particular code (presumably MSA), but allow it to become an exercise in reflexivity and performance. Ghonim's tweeting is one example of such practices. Though not liked by everyone in Egypt, and, at times, sharply criticised by fellow activists for some of his statements and opinions,¹³³ he is by far the single biggest revolutionary celebrity, both in Egypt and worldwide. At the time of writing this, it remains

¹³³ See, for example, <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/05/18/egypt-i-unfollowed-ghonim-because/>

to be seen whether he will assume a more prominent role in the political life of the country. In the meantime, there is at least one Egyptian politician, or, more precisely, tycoon-turned-politician who is active on Twitter in a way that is anything but monolingual.

Naguib Sawiris (نجيب ساويرس - born in 1954), the former executive chairman of Wind Telecom and Orascom Telecom, turned to politics in May 2011, when he founded the liberal “Free Egyptians Party” (حزب المصريين الأحرار). Recent research among Egyptian Facebook users showed that 71% of them “would rather vote for a candidate that engages with citizens through social media tools.”¹³⁴ As if with a desire to attract them all, Sawiris tweets, retweets and replies to his numerous followers with remarkable enthusiasm.¹³⁵ A sample of fifty consecutive tweets from his profile is given in the Appendix 4-3. Just like Ghonim, Sawiris also uses all three codes MSA, ECA and ENG, but his tweeting in Arabic is patterned in such a way that MSA tweets are written in Arabic script, whereas ECA is nearly exclusively written in Latin script. It must be kept in mind that Sawiris could be described as a promoter of ‘Ammiyya. His OTV (aimed primarily at the youth audiences) was the first TV channel ever to broadcast a form of news bulletin in Egyptian Arabic, a move which at that time caused a lot of criticism (Doss 2010). OTV has disappeared in the meantime, and was replaced by “a more serious” OnTV which broadcasts news in Fuṣṣḥa. Nevertheless, as even the names of some shows illustrate (e.g. *baladna bil-maṣrī*, “Our country in Egyptian”), Egyptian Arabic is the variety that dominates on OnTV.

134See Arab Social Media Report 2011: 7-8.

135Interestingly, however, in mid-August 2011, his “official Facebook page” was “liked” by only 14,000 Facebook users, while at the same time his tweets were “followed” by nearly 100,000 Twitter users. This different wording of basically the same activity might be significant (to follow an “official page” or “a group” on Facebook, one has to “like” it, whereas to follow someone on Twitter, one simply follows them). But this discrepancy (that becomes even bigger when we take into consideration the fact that the number of Egyptian Facebook users is far bigger than the number of Twitter users), might also be indicative of yet another different usage pattern between these two platforms – Twitter is more political than Facebook.

As an additional example of how significant Twitter has become, it is worth mentioning that at the time when the presented sample was taken, Sawiris, a Coptic Christian, was in the eye of the storm for having tweeted a cartoon that many Muslims found insulting.¹³⁶ What follows, however, is an example of another kind of criticism directed to Sawiris by a fellow tweeter. Having posted a thought in English, he is reproached in ʿAmmiyya for his language choice:¹³⁷

(61)

Sawiris: Keep looking to the past while others are cooking your future on their own recipe!

A: يا عم نجيب هو انت جهازك مفهوش عربي ولا ايه الحكاية .. ولا انت بتكتب من بره مصر ما تفهمنى بجد اتخنقت كلمونا عربي يا جدعان

[Uncle Naguib, your phone doesn't have Arabic or what's the catch? Or you're writing from outside Egypt, come on, explain me, I'm suffocating, talk (pl.) to us in Arabic, folks]

Sawiris translates into MSA:

فلتظلوا مشغولين بالماضى بينما يقوم آخرون بطبخ المستقبل بوصفتهم الخاصة

A responds in MSA (but note his use of the form مفكرين instead مفكرون:

هل وضع لنا مفكرون وفلاسفة الثورة خطة مستقبلية ورفضناها.. المشكلة ليست فى اشغالنا نحن بالماضى المشكلة فى اشغالكم اتمم ايضاً

[Did the intellectuals and philosophers of the revolution lay out some plan about the future and we refused it... The problem is not that we are preoccupied with the past, the problem is that you (pl.) are preoccupied as well]

Sawiris: الانتخابات والدستور

[Elections and Constitution]

It is a bit of an irony that of all his numerous tweets in English it was this one in

136The cartoon (with the accompanying comment "Micky (*sic*) and Minnie after...") featured Mickey and Minnie as "Muslim fundamentalists." Wearing the kufiya (كوفية), an Arab male headscarf, Mickey is sporting a thick, long beard; Minnie is wearing the niqab. See also the first footnote in App 4-3.

137See also App 4-3, exchange 37. Just like in the example presented here, Sawiris does not engage with the question. Here, he simply translates his previous tweet after which a brief exchange in MSA takes place between him and the tweeter who criticised him for writing in English. In App 4-3: 37, he dismissively refuses to answer.

particular that provoked a fellow tweeter to react against his resort to English. The tweet contains a clever word play and interesting internal rhyme and contrast “*looking* to the past [...] *cooking* your future,” which then get completely lost in the Arabic translation. Nevertheless, this exchange nicely illustrates the fact that even though Twitter (and, more generally, the Internet) might be a space of sociolinguistic freedom, a place where users may choose a variety according to their personal preferences, this still does not mean that these choices are not being carefully observed and contested by others. Furthermore, users might be fully aware that they are being monitored for their linguistic output. Unlike Sawiris, who does not seem to be willing to discuss his language choices, his employee Yosri Fouda, a journalist at OnTV, addressed this issue in a couple of his tweets:

(62)

Sorry I'm typing in E. I'm in London w no access to A keyboard. Ya zalmenni :). Some tolerance & we'll all b happy
(reacting to several attacks for “typing in E(nglish);” “Ya zalmenni :)” – “[Hey,] you who have wronged me / treated me unjustly”)

(63)

Mosh hakhlas ana. Now wa7da karhani 3shan bakteb francoArab w yigi 150 karhenni 3shan el zamalek. Bafakkar ab2a feloul arya7
[Is it not enough about me? (Haven't I suffered enough?) Now (ENG) one (fem.) hates me for writing francoArab and about 150 hate me because of Zamalek. I'm thinking of becoming feloul, it's more pleasant]

Fouda's apologies serve as a reminder that the tweet does not always reflect the tweeter's choice but is, at times, a technologically imposed outcome. In May 2011, I noted an exchange between one of the popular tweeters from my list and her critic to whom she explained that the reason why she predominately tweeted in English was that her Blackberry was bought in London and was not Arabic-enabled. In truth, she had

occasionally tweeted in Arabic before, but always in Franco. A month or so after this exchange, she started posting tweets in Egyptian Arabic written in Arabic script. In yet another case, I noticed that a prolific tweeter used to send a series of tweets during the same day according to an interesting pattern – a block of tweets in Latin script (both latECA and ENG) would be followed by a block of tweets in ECA and ENG whereby those in ECA would be written in Arabic script. Moreover, the latter block would often be sent in the evening or at night. I then examined a corpus of more than 150 of his tweets, by looking at metadata provided by Twitter when each tweet is clicked on and singled out in the right-hand column next to the timeline.¹³⁸ It turned out that all his arECA tweets were sent “via web” (presumably, the user's home computer); all the latECA tweets were uploaded “via Twitter for BlackBerry®.” ENG tweets were distributed among the two options: those in the block with latECA via his smartphone, and those in the block with arECA via web. In this case, the user's choices were shown to be technologically governed. While tweeting “on the move” from his mobile phone during the day, the user apparently did not have any other option but to use Latin script when he wanted to say something in Arabic. It is impossible to predict whether the tweeter would eventually abandon Latinised Arabic if he had access to an Arabic keyboard throughout the day (maybe he even did, but found typing in Latin script to be faster, as many young Egyptians, unaccustomed to typing in Arabic report¹³⁹), but what is important to keep in mind is that there is a hierarchy of factors that may partake in the creation of a single micro-blog, ranging from technological to ideological ones.

138 This is also what I used to contextualise tweets, since a tweet highlighted in this way is shown together with tweets (if any) that are immediately related to it (i.e. replies to it, or those to which the tweet in question was a reply).

139 Aboelezz (2009) also reports on similar statements to this effect given by some of her informants.

4.6.4 Occasional Arabic – native language as a marked variety

While Yosri Fouda had to apologise to his followers for being forced to use English and Franco when travelling in England, there are Egyptian users who tweet in Arabic so seldom that their approach suggests that they have turned their native tongue into a highly marked resource reserved for special purposes.

Let us look at one particularly interesting example. The subject is a young Egyptian professional, an avid tweeter who had recently moved to India for work. From there, he continued tweeting to keep his followers abreast of his latest whereabouts and first impressions while settling in. We have already “met” him through his tweets in the examples 13, 17, 20 and 30.¹⁴⁰ Contrary to what these four examples might suggest, he tweets predominantly in English. In the Appendix 4-4, I provide an excerpt from his tweets – twenty-five selected from what he had tweeted in a bit less than three days...

He is one of those young Egyptians for whom tweeting has nothing to do with politics or any kind of social activism and who use Twitter to “broadcast their lives.”¹⁴¹

140 These are:

(13) Yenfa3 adfa3 lel sha3'ala (law gebt wa7da y3ni) bel credit card? So2al mohem.

(17) لقد قرينا من الإفلاس، الكرديت كارد بيشغل فالمحلات و لكنه لا يسحب فلوس من الإيه-تي-إم، و مصيبتاه (17)

(20) Güte nacht boys and girls of the world. Gute doesn't actually come with the ü on it. But it looks more German. I'll go to bed now.

(30) A: I don't know u but I have a question, what are u doing in India mate ? :)

B: I'm working, seeing the world, running away from politics, pick the one you feel more comfortable with.

A: call center offshore Wel Klam da ? (“and things like that”)

B: LOL, no, that's for Indians. I work in a marketing and advertising agency.

141 See, for example, (30) “I'm working, seeing the world, running away from politics, pick the one you feel more comfortable with,” or (Ap-4-4/1) “I think what I like most about Indians so far is that they don't talk politics all day long. Or maybe it's just the fact I don't speak Hindi.” however, this is not only evident from the user's tweets, but also from the list of tweeters whom he followed. When I first encountered his homepage and did the automatic comparison of our “followees” in common, the interface informed me:

His tweets reveal that not only is he proficient, but also socialised into two languages, Egyptian Arabic and English. Among the two, English is obviously the one which (*sensu* Stroud & Wee 2007) is the “direct object” of his “sociolinguistic consumption.”¹⁴² Among his numerous English tweets to the (English-knowing) “world,” Egyptian Arabic is reserved to give some sort of linguistic intimacy to tweets that are so “Egyptian,” that only Egyptians (and perhaps other Arabs) should understand them. He is obviously not limiting himself only to Egyptians and aims to attract followers who do not necessarily know (Egyptian) Arabic, but definitely know English. Among slightly more than one thousand of his followers, there are some foreigners, but the majority seem to be of Arab origin.¹⁴³ His use of the two varieties follows the pattern that says: English is for inclusion, Arabic is for exclusion.

Not only does he use English with near-native proficiency, but his use of it reveals that while mastering it, this young man had actively sought to acquire not just the language as a communicative tool, but with it also a specific stylistic, discursive and cultural package he associates with that language.¹⁴⁴ His sporadic tweets in Egyptian

“You and @--so-and-so-- don't follow anyone in common.” Evidently, the user had little or no interest whatsoever in what many activists, politicians, intellectuals and other public and not -so-public figures had to tweet about the current situation in Egypt.

142 Simply put, the concept of sociolinguistic consumption, introduced by Stroud & Wee (2007), starts from the premise that contemporary society is increasingly defined by consumption (“consumer society”) whereby different “objects” – languages other than one's native included – are consumed or sought after as identity-markers, markers of class and/or enhancers of upward social mobility. I return to this concept in the final chapter.

143 It is not always possible to establish the origin of a tweeter given that the “headline” next to each name is short and users differ in how much information about themselves, if any, they disclose in that headline.

144 It might be noted in passing that this concrete user had obviously focused a lot of his West-oriented linguo-cultural consumerism towards discourses that in that West, which he had discursively and culturally reached, would often be labelled as racist and sexist. But he is not an unaware late-comer to a wrongly

Arabic almost come as a surprise within an incessant flow of English tweets that read as if written by an American. Among the Arabic ones, those written in Latin script (such as 64 below) outnumber those rendered with the Arabic letters. Some of the former suggest that the user is distanced from Fuṣṣḥa given his tendency to “deviate” from more conventional, Fuṣṣḥa-based norms of writing ʿAmmiyya. In the example 65, we see him following the phonetic, rather than etymological approach when rendering the pronominal suffix (3.m.sg.); hence both times <ʔ> instead of the more usual <a/o>. ¹⁴⁵ Of course, this type of graphemic substitution is not unknown in vernacular orthographies of ECA and by itself cannot be indicative enough. However, once put in a broader context which emerges upon following this user over a period of two months, it does strongly suggest that in hierarchical ordering of all linguistic varieties that are available to him, Fuṣṣḥa is undoubtedly ranked last (if ranked at all) and removed from the first-ranked English and lower-ranked native ʿAmmiyya (and maybe even another foreign language) ¹⁴⁶ by a high degree of separation:

(64)

Feinik yamma tigi teshoofi ebnik 7aymoot mel goo3, 7a2olaha te FedEx 7allet ferakh bel khodar.

[Where are you mummy, come see your boy, he's gonna starve to death, I'll tell her to fedex me a pot of chicken with vegetables.]

N.B. – A trademark name of an express shipping service company that has been lexicalised as a verb (and a noun) in English, thus usually appearing in

imagined socio-cultural configuration; rather, he is a self-aware, fully fledged challenger of counter-discourses that label his as “racist” and “sexist.” He defends his position based on an argument which the West is supposed to cherish - “freedom of opinion.” In one of his tweets, he “apologises” – “I don't have that thing the rest of you have in your brains, the one tells me (*sic*) I'm too rude, blunt or honest. I should get one of those.”

145 Depending on the morphonological context, this suffix may be realised as:

(1) /u/ – *īdu* - “his hand”

(2) lengthening of V+/l/ (or /h/) – *rama* (he threw) + IT/HIM = *ramā(h)* - “he threw it/him”

(3) /hū/ - *iddahūli* - “he gave it/him to me”

146 Perhaps German? - See ex. 20.

lowercase in print, is here the second element (stem) of word-internal code-mixing with ECA prefix (ti-*fedex* – 3.f.sg.; p-stem). In writing, however, as if to draw attention to this mixing, the tweeter maintained the graphic identity of the trademark (FedEx) and, exceptionally even within this tweet, separated it from the associated prefix (cf. “*tigi teshoofi*,” “*Zaymoot*,” “*Za2olaha*”)¹⁴⁷

(65)

arECA+arENG-latENG

تاكسي بيغولي عوز ٥٠٠ روي في مشوار آخرو يعمل ١٥٠، قمت شخرتلو قعد يضحك، ركنبي
ببلاش؛ أجيشن ستايل

[A cab driver tells me he wants (or: “I want”) 500 rupees for a ride that is 150 max, I started snorting at him, he kept on laughing, and gave me a free ride. Egyptian style.]

- elicits two responses:

1 - *Gamda di! I'll try it in France, I just need to learn how to ashkhor *writes it down**

[That's cool! I'll try it in France, I just need to learn how to snort *write it down*]

2 - *only in Egypt* – to which he responds: *Hahaha, its not in Egypt. I'm in India!* - and she closes it: *loool oh okky*

4.6.5 “Aljamiado” English? – encoding linguistic and cultural hybridisation

In the last example, we saw a bilingual and bicultural, “deterritorialised” Egyptian who found himself in a third culture, telling his mini anecdote about an Indian taxi driver in Egyptian Arabic, then tagging it with a phrase in English (“Egyptian style”) written in Arabic script (“أجيشن ستايل”). As mentioned in Chapter 1, using the Arabic alphabet to transcribe English is nothing new. For example, through a multitude of transcribed names of various businesses, it has long become one of the defining features of linguistic cityscapes of

147 Egyptian Arabic is otherwise very flexible when it comes to borrowing foreign (first and foremost, English) vocabulary items. When it comes to verbs, in contemporary usage at least, it is no longer important to “Arabise” the borrowed verb so as to re-analyse it as belonging to a three- or four-consonantal root (even a fictive one). Examples of neologisms abound in the Twitter data. In one of her tweets, an Egyptian studying in the US, complains about her workload and says: “بفكر أترنسفر من بركلي” /*bafakkar a-transfer min berkli*/ - “I’m thinking of transferring from Berkeley.”

many Egyptian cities. What my Twitter data contain, however, are the examples that are not limited to a handful of small occurrences, words or short phrases, such as in 65 above, or 66 below, which might be understood as representing situations when a tweeter, for one reason or another, wishes to engage in code-switching without necessarily being motivated to switch scripts:¹⁴⁸

(66) *an exchange*

[Reacting to a tweet which user A posted in arECA, B shifts code and asks him in English]:

B: "@A are u worried about today's religious inclination?"

[A continues in English, but just to say one word, and then switches back to arECA:]

@B أنا مستمتع آخر حاجة @B - *Never*. I'm enjoying it big time.

What tweeters in 65 and 66 employ are instances of yet another, even if rarely used, resource – **arENG** – *Arabised English*. There are three interrelated, indeed ordered, points about arENG that emerged upon examining my data. First, as already mentioned, its use extends beyond quick rendering of an English word or phrase, and can occasionally be employed as a fully functional communicative device in its own right. Second, such use (for writing entire messages in it) is predominantly encountered among users whose tweeting practices, as manifest in larger corpora, point in the direction of identification practices and sociolinguistic consumption patterns very similar to those of the Egyptian expatriate in India. In other words, those who are most likely to put Arabised English to use in order to communicate with each other, are those who need it least: young, socially privileged Egyptians, educated in private institutions who mostly tweet in highly idiomatic English. Third, when these tweeters whose English tweets immediately invoke the image of a dressed-up AUCian speaking “accentless English,”¹⁴⁹ reach out for

148 These would also include, for a example, a very common tag – ريتويت بليز – added to messages posted in Arabic, “retweet please,” often abbreviated to “RT pls.”

149 By this metaphorically used non-linguistic attribute, I mean carefully aimed-at and usually successfully produced variant of “American English.”

arENG, they *often* (albeit not always!) seem to do it not to represent “English” (as in “correct English”), but to represent “Egyptian English,” a more or less stereotypical representation of how English is (perceived to be) spoken by the majority of their compatriots who have not been fortunate enough to be socialised in English from the kindergarten-level, but have instead learned it a bit, or “picked it up” along the way. In other words, whereas latECA in their Arabic tweets could be interchangeably used with arECA as “good Arabic,” arENG might very often stand for “broken English.”

The following exchange (67-68) elucidates this point. It opens with a very hybridised tweet (67) posted by a girl who usually tweets in English (which, in the light of the newly introduced element, should be now abbreviated to *latENG*), and occasionally in Egyptian Arabic. Her Arabic tweets are distributed between latECA and arECA, with evident preference being given to the former. What follows is one of those rare tweets in which she employed Arabic script, but this time, to produce something that not only combines, or juxtaposes, but indeed blends: (a) Egyptian Arabic, (b) at-best-questionable-if-not-incorrect (Egyptian) Arabic, (c) Modern Standard Arabic, and (d) Arabised English.

Just like the tweet by Nawara Negm which I used at the beginning of this chapter and discussed in more detail above, this one is also about tweeting. It is a “get-ready-and-go” call to the user's tweeps to impress her with their tweets. Quite unlike Nawara's, though, and despite its mixed, hybrid character, this tweet is fairly easy to understand:

(67)

واحد، اسنين، سلاسه، أعطوني أحلى تايم لاين بليزز...

[One, two, three, give me the best timeline please (as in “plizzz”)]

Or, looked at more closely:

بليزر	لاين	تايم	أحلى	أعطوني	سلاسه	اسنين	واحد
blīzz/plīzz	layn	taym	'aḥla/'aḥlā	'aʕṭūnī	salāsa	isnēn	wāḥid
	arENG		ECA/MCA	MSA	?/*ECA	?/*ECA	ECA/MCA
please (plizz/bliz)	timeline		the best	give me	three	two	one

The nucleus of the tweet is the imperative of the MSA verb “to give” (‘aʕṭā – yuʕṭī) – ‘aʕṭūnī (“give me”). This MSA element might be interpreted as used for emphasis, but it could not be said that it “elevated” the style of the tweet or made it “sound” more formal. On the contrary, the tweet is explicitly informal. From a syntactical point of view, the tweet is “correct,” yet something about it immediately strikes the reader as odd.

What is particularly striking, is the spelling of the words for numbers “two” and “three” in the counting section immediately preceding the verb (اسنين-سلاسه). This spelling deviates from two orthographic norms: the codified MSA (إثنين-ثلاثة) and conventional ECA (اتنين-تلاته). In both cases, the Arabic letter ث is consistently substituted by س. In MSA, ث represents the voiceless interdental fricative /t/. In Egyptian Arabic, this sound is realised as either voiceless dental plosive /t/, or voiceless dental fricative /s/. The distribution is not random; /s/ is more recent and occurs mainly in borrowings from MSA, although it might be rendered in some ECA words when the older, stable, but more dialectal variable /t/ is to be avoided due to the speaker's desire to de-dialectalise his speech and bring it closer to MSA. Such alternations, however, are not free from constraints. As Holes argued in his discussion pertinent to my analysis here (2004: 71-73 *passim*), /t/ is the intrinsic part of the “lexical identity” of many dialectal words and cannot be substituted by /s/ at will.

Both relevant roots do have derived forms that contain /s/;¹⁵⁰ It is possible to consider these two forms as resulting from the tweeter's desire to transcribe some more formally sounding, aimed-at-but-not-quite-MSA realisation, as if she wanted to mock the speech patterns of someone who tries to pronounce proper Fuṣḥa but fails. However, we need then to take into account that (1) in their current form these forms are both quite detached from Fuṣḥa (in fact, it could be argued that like this they deviate from Fuṣḥa even more than they would have if they had been rendered with ﺕ); and (2) had it been retained, the standard MSA spelling would still have left room for two possible pronunciations – one according to the Fuṣḥa norm /t/, and another, if it were possible at all, according to some “elevated” ʿAmmiyya /s/. Furthermore, the inflection of the number “two” (-*īn*), instead of MSA (-*ān*), already suggests ECA reading, which precludes /s/ and requires /t/.

In sum, *isnēn* and *salāsa* – in this case – are neither Fuṣḥa nor ʿAmmiyya, and I suggest that here the tweeter's primary motivation was not to intervene in the realm of Arabic usage, but in that of English. By producing these two forms, she is actually alluding to a stereotypical feature of Egyptian English – dental realisation /s/ of the English voiceless, interdental fricative /θ/. The Arabic letter ﺕ is thus turned into a locus of this highly performative tweet because it represents an MSA sound that corresponds to an English sound which many Egyptians mispronounce. The sequence of this mediated indexing could be linearised as follows:

150 E.g. *sunāʿi* (dual, bipartite; duo, duet), *sanawī* (secondary/school/), even *sāniyan* (secondly – a borrowing from MSA, lexicalised adverbial accusative; BUT adverbial “again” in ECA is always *tāni*, not **sāni* - See Holes 2004: 73); or *sulus* (a calligraphic style), *sulāsi* (triple), *salūs* (triad, trio) – All examples from Hinds & Badawi 1986.

<ث> stands for MSA /t/ (absent from ECA, and often substituted by /s/ in “Egyptian MSA”) - /t/ corresponds to ENG /θ/ - which is in Egyptian ENG realised as /s/.

Far-fetched though it may seem at first, this proposed interpretation is not derived solely from this tweet taken in isolation, but from the entire context of the exchange which it triggered (68). The tweet could be described as containing code-switch between already mixed Arabic and Arabised English, in that arENG closes the sentence (“تايم لاين بليزر”). Nevertheless, one of the followers reacts to this tweet as if it had been written entirely in arENG, and, significantly enough, says: “Your English is getting better by time keep it up,” but she writes it in arENG:

(68)¹⁵¹

B: يور انكليش از جتينك بيتر باي تيم .. كيب ات أب
/ywr inklyš iz gtynk bytr bāy tym kyb it ab/

A: سانكس سانكس, أي تراي
/sānks sānks ay trāy/
[Thanks thanks I try]

B: :D .. لول .. ذات واز هيلاريوس
/lwl dāt wāz hylāryws/
[Lol... that was hilarious :D]

Upon examining their timelines in more detail, I found that both A and B occasionally resort to arENG, always in performative tweets of the kind illustrated above, and always in a similarly facetious and ludicrous manner. Here, A's mixed tweet seemed

151 Examples are followed by transliteration of the Arabic letters, and then rendered according to standard English orthography.

to have acted as a trigger, prompting B to engage in their occasional language play. In her response to A's post, B uses arENG only; and she mixes <ج> and <ك> to represent what in standard English spelling would be represented by one letter <g> (“inklyš,” “gtynk”). A continues and spells her arENG tweet in such a way that it undoubtedly signals that she aims at presenting “Egyptian English” pronunciation (“sanks”). B closes the exchange, but again, her tweet is less ostensibly Egyptian English than that of A. In fact, by employing both <ذ> and <ز> in the sequence ذات وار she situated her arENG in the realm of the “correct” English – “that was.”

Indeed, not every instance of arENG could be interpreted as a representation of stereotypical Egyptian Arabic pronunciation. The tweeter may sometimes decide to employ Arabic transcription simply to convey English without resorting to code switching:

(69)

A: Since I reached 600 followers, I'd like to thank them for believing in me. I promise you this: Eventually, you will regret it. - **latENG**

A@ :B
 يو ار تو فني... يو شود كونسيذر بينج ايه كوميدين اس ايه نايث جوب... سيريسلي -
arENG

/yw ar tw fny... yw šwd kwnsydr byng ēh kwmydyn as ēh nayt jwb... syrysly/

[B: @A You are too funny... you should consider being a comedian as a night job.. seriously]

B@ :A
 تانك يو.

/tʌnk yw/

[Thank you]

It must be stressed that in the written production of arENG only certain graphemes have the power to mark such English as Egyptian. For example, ب and ف are neutral because they will inevitably have to be used to represent both /b/ and /p/ in the case of ب, and /f/ and /v/ in the case of ف.¹⁵² So, even though voicing of the English /p/ is another

¹⁵² In its basic form, the Arabic alphabet does not have graphemes for /p/ and /v/. The use of additional

common feature of the Egyptian Arabic (e.g. /bebsi/ for Pepsi; /bitza/ for pizza), this feature cannot be adequately presented with the graphemic inventory of MSA. However, the graphemic pairs <ز : ذ> (for MSA /d/ and /z/ respectively) and <س : ث> (for MSA /t/ and /s/) are potentially marked since both MSA and English have interdental fricatives which do not exist in Egyptian Arabic and tend to be substituted by dental fricatives in English as a foreign language.

It is noteworthy that the use of arENG is not necessarily peculiar to tweeting. The example 70 does not come from my Twitter data; it is an excerpt from a short story of a blogeresse in which she uses arECA to quote her interlocutor and embeds the transcribed quotation within her MSA-narrative. Interestingly enough, the interlocutor is a woman who had been previously described as British. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that the blogeresse wanted to mock her interlocutor's English. Nevertheless, she spelled "with" as <ويز> /wiz/ giving an example of what is most likely spontaneously produced Egyptian English:

(70)

بعد ان إنتهت الليلة و هممت على الإنصراف إقتربت مني تعتذر عن انها لم تقبل دعوتي و قالت لي بالانجليزية "يوأر جورجوز يو ميد مي هيد سين ويز يور دانس" و إعترفت لي انها خافت مني في الفراش خافت أن تفشل معي او ربما لن يحدث كيميا بيننا في الفراش , أفهم هذا المبرر أحيانا لكن اري أن الامر كله بايدينا نتحكم فيه طالما حدث إنجذابا مبدئيا وأحاديث تدخلت فيها العيون و [...]

¹⁵³(March 11, 2010 – يوميات امرأة مثلية –)

After the evening was over and I was about to leave, she came close to me apologising for not accepting my invitation. She said in English: "You are gorgeous, you made my head spin with (wiz) your dance." She confessed she was afraid of me in bed; she was afraid that she would fail with me, or that there might not be chemistry between us. I sometimes understand that

letters پ and ف to represent these consonants respectively is not widespread.

153 http://emraamethlya.blogspot.com/2010_03_01_archive.html

excuse, but I believe that the whole matter is in our hands, that we have control over it as long as there was initial attraction, eye contact, [...]

(Her Old City – Diary of a Lesbian – March 11, 2010)

While arENG can be employed either neutrally (69, 70) to encode “plain English”, or affectively and performatively (69) to encode “Egyptian English”, allusion to the latter in tweets does not necessarily have to be achieved through arENG; latENG might serve this purpose just as well:

(71)¹⁵⁴

sank uuu ya gameel. Feinak?

[Thank you, my dear. Where have you been?]

Instances of “Egyptian English,” whether it is written in arENG or latENG are, again, instances of “crossing” (Rampton 1995). However, unlike in the case of using the Saʿidi “لج” as a Facebook profile picture, discussed in Chapter 2 (2.3), the use of Egyptian English by those who otherwise have a high proficiency in English is not a strategy of inclusion. Rather, it is an act of distancing oneself from those whose linguistic habits and practices one (thinks one) knows, but can then mock in order to reaffirm one’s position as someone who has a full command of a foreign language to the point of being able to play with it and intervene upon it in ways that are unknown even to the native speakers of that language.

Therefore, some Egyptians’ use of arENG in tweets and other forms of writing should be seen as a locally meaningful social and cultural practice and a manifestation of situated reinterpretation of “global English.” The following table is based on the attested

154 Written by a user who often posts in idiomatic English and keeps an English-language blog.

examples presented so far and it gives an answer to a question “How to write 'thank you' in English, in Egypt?”

How to write “Thank you / Thanks” in English, in Egypt?		
	<i>Latin script</i>	<i>Arabic script</i>
<i>English</i>	Thank you	ثانك يو
<i>Egyptian English</i>	Sanks	سانكس

4.7 Twitter as a sociolinguist's observatory

Despite its length, this chapter is only a preliminary investigation of tweeting in Egypt. To a sociolinguist or anthropologist, Twitter offers much more than could have possibly been presented and discussed here. It gives an opportunity to observe a number of issues related to language-in-use, language contact and change; issues that are not only pertinent to writing practices, but also cast light upon the dynamic character of sociolinguistic situation in Egypt in general. What is important is that the relevant data do not have to be “elicited,” but “collected” without worrying about the “observer's paradox.” Since tweeting is so firmly interwoven with speech and orality, it is a fantastic source of data on contemporary usage and variation, especially when it comes to borrowing and incorporating new vocabulary into Egyptian Arabic. To give but one example, I quote an exchange that took place during the sit-in in Tahrir in July 2011. Tired of the piece of cardboard he had been using as bed, a tweeter is enquiring about “sleeping bag” – where and for how much he can get one. He uses the English word which he writes in Arabic script but in quotation marks, thus clearly marking his code-switch and the non-Arabic origin of the phrase. Interestingly, his tweet does not contain information about his perception of which grammatical gender this borrowing should take in Arabic; but many of

the responses he received – do. While it could only be speculated which concrete Arabic words the respondents had in mind as underlying translation equivalents for “sleeping bag,” for some of them it is masculine while for the others it is feminine:

(72)

أنا تعبت من الكرتونة ال بارقد عليها في الميدان .. هو ال "سليينج باج" ولا مؤاخذة، بكام
ومنين؟

[I got tired of the cardboard (box) I'm lying on in the Square. Sleeping bag, if I may,
how much and where?]

sleeping bag ??!!! ...a sho3'l el felol dh :D ?

[sleeping bag??!!!... what kind of a felol business is that?]

لو هطول لغاية رمضان اجيبك واحدة و اجيب بتاعتي و اجي جنبك

[If it's going to last until Ramadan, I'll bring you one (f.), and I'll bring my own (f.) and
come lie next to you]

انا عندي واحد مش بستخدمه. لما هاجي هديهولك إن شاء الله

[I have one (m.) which (m.) I'm not using. When I come, I'll give it (m.) to you, God
willing]

سبورتس مول ش شهاب اولة من ناحية وادي النيل

[Sports Mall, Shehab St., first (coming) from (the direction of) Wadi Nil]

around 100 LE where do u live?

كارفور بس بعيد بقى

[Carrefour (hypermarket) but it's far away]

من كارفور .. و سعره حسب الجودة

[From Carrefour... and its (m.) price is according to the quality]

هتلاقها في كرفور

[You'll find it (m.) at Carrefour]

It is important to keep in mind that the Tweeter is not the only written context in which language variation, change in progress and language contact are to be found. In order to illustrate that point, I will provide two quotations from books:

- إنتَ بقى إيه ال status بتاعك يا "وليد"؟... "وليد" مش كده برضه؟

- "وليد" أبوة..... status إيه مش فاهم؟

- ال status بتاعك على ال Facebook؟

أجاب في منتهى الجدية:

Facebook إيه؟

- Hey, you, what's your status, Walid?... Walid, right, a?

- Walid, yes... What is status, I don't get it?

- Your status on Facebook?

He answered dead serious:

What is Facebook?

The above is the excerpt from the book *Rats Stick Together* by Sameh Shaheen, who usually publishes his stories on his Facebook page, so that his friends can comment on them before he publishes them in his short stories collections. The title of the book in Arabic is الجيران لبعضيها, itself a language play on the Egyptian proverb الجيران لبعضيها (Neighbours stick together, help each other). Let us now look at a passage from *A Tear Book*¹⁵⁵ by Ahmad al-Sabbagh, whose full title on the cover reads:

كتاب مُسَيَّل للدموع

Ketab Mosyel Leldemo3 – 25 January 2011

منذ بداية الاحتجاجات في تونس كان الشباب المصري والعربي قد بدأ في وضع صورة العلم التونسي كصورة Profile على ال Facebook. وكانت ال Status تشير بوضوح للتضامن الكلي للشباب المصري والعربي مع أشقائه في تونس. وكان المصريون يتابعون لحظة بلحظة أخبار الثورة التونسية. ويتفاعلون معها (كأنها ثورتهم وأكثر) إلى أن تحولت مشاعر التعاطف إلى مشاعر ثورية فجرت منها ينابيع الثورة.

(Al-Sabbagh 2011: 49)

Ever since the protests began in Tunisia, the Egyptian and Arab youth started putting the Tunisian flag as a profile picture on Facebook. The status would clearly signal full solidarity of the Egyptian and Arab youth with their brethren in Tunisia. The Egyptians were following the news of

155A play on - "tear gas."

the Tunisian revolution minute by minute, and were interacting with it (as if it had been their own revolution, and more) until the feelings of compassion turned into revolutionary sentiments from which there poured forth the springs of the revolution.

I chose these two excerpts because they both contain the word “status.” And, just like in the case of the “sleeping bag” in my Twitter data, “status” /istatis/ is yet another new word where there is a co-occurrence of both forms, masculine and feminine. For Shaheen, it is masculine, for Al-Sabbagh it is feminine.

ال status بتاعك vs وكانت ال Status تشير

I had heard and learnt this word as masculine, so when I saw it embedded between two feminine verbal forms, I started speculating that Al-Sabbagh might have aimed at plural (interpretable judging by the context) but was not sure what the right form would be. With many borrowings and loanwords from English, there is usually co-occurrence of plural forms, one according to Arabic rules - -āt/-hāt, and another taken from English. Since in the meantime Ahmad Al-Sabbagh and I got to know each other and became friends (not only on Facebook, but there as well) I asked him about it and he told me that when people speak Egyptian Arabic and use the word *istatis*, the word is feminine – *iḥna binʔūl isstatis bitaʕti*. I asked some other friends and, by large majority, they all give this word masculine treatment, just like Shaheen does. It is interesting to note that both authors, independently from each other, write this word in English within lines written in Arabic. Working on Russian-American bilingual and biscriptal data in personal ads and signage, Angermeyer (2005) suggested that script choice signals whether the word is perceived as borrowed or foreign. In this case, both authors seem to perceive it as foreign, and mark it as such. Another of my Facebook friends, however, an awarded writer in his early thirties, has apparently accepted this word. In one of his statuses, he writes a

rhetorical question and immediately answers to it. He starts the question in Fuṣḥa, incorporates the word “statuses” with the Arabic plural marker and in Arabic script. From there on, he continues his answer in ʿAmmiyya, thus alternating between the two forms of the verb “to go:”

يا ترى أين ستذهب كل تلك الاستاتسات؟ أكيد هيروحوا الكارلتن الليلة دي برضه
“I wonder where will all these statuses go? I'm sure they'll also go to Carlton tonight”

According to Angermeyer (2005), this would be a clear case that the borrowing has been fully adapted and adopted since a very important criterion in his data seems to be the morphological one – once the word enters the morphology of the host language, it becomes much easier to enter the host script as well. I wonder, however, whether in the above case, given the obvious pun, such an interpretation would be fully applicable. In my last *status*-example, I return to Shaheen and his story “What is status?” to quote a part of a narrative that is written in Fuṣḥa, with a lot of foreign words inserted in Latin script. I give only one example that goes against Angermeyer's expectation.¹⁵⁶ Shaheen, in this case, morphologically treats the word as if it had become a borrowing, but retains its Latin script. Given the satirical tone of the entire short story, this script shifting in his case is obviously a stylistic choice. This is quite clear in this segment where not only does the author narrate in Fuṣḥa, but he does so in a conspicuously elevated style:

وأنه بقراءة بعض من هذه ال statusat فمن المؤكد أن الوحي سينزل عليه ويجد ما يبحث عنه.

and that by reading some of these statuses, revelation will certainly come down upon him, so that he finds what he is looking for.

156It should be pointed out that these two sets of data, Angermeyer's and mine are not fully comparable, because his writers are Americans of Russian origin. Two languages and two scripts are in a different kind of interaction in his case.

In Facebook terminology, “status” is a message that people write/update on their “wall.” Among young Egyptians whom I know, this word is usually pronounced /wōl/, and again, some perceive it as masculine, some as feminine. I suspect that in the case of this word, this dublet might be due to the fact that “wall” is feminine in ʿAmmiyya, *ḥēṭa*, whereas in Fuṣṣḥa, which is also the Arabic of the Facebook's Arabic interface, it is masculine – *ḥā'īṭ*. It would be interesting to explore possible correlation between Egyptian Facebook users' speech habits and lexical choices in cases of these neologisms and the language interface through which they access Facebook.

“Wall” is also where user's friends can post stuff or comment on the user's status. Comments might trigger other comments and sometimes a lot of people get involved. The results in these situations are *sequentially multi-authored textual composites* (SMATC), mentioned above in the context of the discussion of composite tweets, which are, of course, a very small – and short – sub-category of SMATC. Sequentially multi-authored textual composites are all those texts that are generated when comments are enabled on web sites. These also include web forums, Youtube, electronic editions of newspapers where readers may post their comments, etc. They are interesting because the initiator has no control whatsoever of how the text will develop. Of course, a Facebook user, or a website moderator might always decide to delete an inappropriate comment, but he or she cannot edit it, or place something else in its stead. Another feature of SMATC is that they are a potential site of language contact and multilingual exchange. In the following example, X starts in ʿAmmiyya:

انا نمت وصحيت ولقيت نفسي في السعوديه
ده حلم ولا علم؟

The comments follow:

A: كابوس

B: ... مضبوط يا

C: Yallabina ya X i still prefer your egyptian islamists than our neo-nazi europeans ...
am i right ? no idea

X: C les deux se valent... Les deux st les calamités d'un type de modernité et du
nationalisme primaire!

D: It's a nightmare if it's real. I am in the US these days. Keep us posted with the real
picture and be safe. xx

X: You would not want too... Too dramatic and sensational.. Euh I believe that this is
a biiiiiig show!

E:

يا X مش قالوا ان الديمقراطية ان كل واحد يتهب قصدي يطلع يقول رايه ؟ خلينا نسمع بقى ... ويا رب ده
يصحى النائمين و يشفى المجانين!

X: E enti 2etghayarti 2awi eih gor3et el "Tolerance will wisdom" eli nezlet 3aleiki...
Need to learn from u!

F: couchmare!!!

E: Mesh 3arfa wallahi ya X ommal tesabari Nafsek Ezay ala elhamm dah ...kol youm
azfat we lhamd Allah !w kol youm asha w aoul elnahrda ba2a el BRIGHTER day f
yetla3 kobia ... Rag3a emta seyadatek ?!

Interestingly, at the beginning of the exchange, X posts in ⁶Ammiyya, after two comments in Arabic (A, B), C addresses X in English, but X, obviously aware of the fact that she and C share yet another language, replies in French. In the later exchange between E and X, E writes in Arabic script, X, who had previously posted in Arabic script, replies in Franco, E accommodates. Not only is this short exchange a nice example of a sequentially multi-authored textual composite and its potentially multilingual character, but is also illustrative of the concept of *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook 2010) proposed

to capture “creative linguistic practices across borders of culture, history and politics, [metrolingualism as] a product of modern and often urban interaction, describing the ways in which people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language” (240). Of course, the great majority of Egyptians are not “metrolingual” in the sense that they have large linguistic resources to play with, but when they find themselves in many contemporary contexts of writing and reading (such as Twitter, Facebook, advertising, and even some books), many Egyptians are likely to be exposed to metrolingualism even if they cannot actively participate in multilingual practices.

4.8 From diglossia to translingualism: concluding remarks

The examples presented here are but a tiny fraction of huge textual material that is incessantly being created by Egyptians who use Twitter. It is a snapshot of a complex variety of writing practices that are characterised by high degree of fluidity and variation. Ranging from conventional to eccentric and hybrid, these writings cast light on a range of communicative phenomena that coexist in contemporary Egyptian society. The fact that they coexist does not mean that they are “shared,” or “equally distributed.” On the contrary, the tweet is much more than a textual message formally constrained by the character limit (which is undoubtedly its main defining feature); it may carry a lot of information about its writer's class, ideological positions, identification practices and patterns of sociolinguistic consumption. Twitter thus becomes a microcosm, not of contemporary Egyptian society as a whole, but of a range of written communicative practices that partake in cultural processes of constant re-creation and re-negotiation of what it means to be Egyptian.

Some Egyptian tweeters use only Arabic, and are perfectly comfortable with the outcome of that linguistic choice – to be followed by Egyptians and, potentially, other Arabs. Others decide to opt for English to address other Egyptians with similar preferences and/or English-knowing tweeters who do not know Arabic at all. Some tweet “for change,” some tweet for fun. For some, tweeting is an important political activity and a way of tackling some of the burning issues within Egyptian society, for others it is a pastime and exercise in performative discursive engagement with foreign cultures or cultural flows and formations that are emerging in the processes of globalisation. While tweeting, some Egyptians stick to the monolingual norm one expects to find in the highly regulated orthographic regimes; others explore potentials of sociolinguistic freedom offered by computer-mediated discourses to produce texts that are mixed and hybrid, at times even cryptic. All these various language choices and little textual artefacts coexist just a click away from each other. Even though that click might potentially bring them together in someone's timeline, it can sometimes keep them apart forever. Who follows whom and why; and, more importantly, who interacts with whom and how, are some of the questions which need further investigation. Linguistically oriented and sociologically informed research into the patterns of following and interconnectedness among Egyptian tweeters would add new layers to our understanding of the relationship between class and language choices. An interesting issue to assess is whether, and in what way, this relationship reproduces or challenges the existing, “offline” social arrangements and inequalities once the communication among spatially and socially dispersed Egyptians takes place “online.”

For the time being, it seems that even though all these people whose tweets I looked at while working on this chapter, could be labelled as “Egyptian” Twitter users based on their citizenship, native tongue and (very often) location, their tweeting, simultaneous but inevitably heteroglossic, illustrates the complexity, richness and diversity contained in that label. Not all of them follow each other, of course, and some of them could be brought to stand next to each other and “represent” the stratified and multifaceted character of “Egyptianness” only in a research exercise such as this one. Metaphorically speaking, just like in the “real-world” Egypt of today, some people are in Tahrir, some are in their gated communities, and the silent majority of others is anywhere in-between.

In this chapter, I tried to do several things. I will recapitulate them here, not necessarily in the same order as they appeared in my narrative. First, I wanted to highlight some of the important aspects that make Twitter worthy of a sociolinguist's attention. Second, my aim was to emphasise the importance of an integrated view of linguistic practice, as much as possible and whenever possible. In fact, from the very introduction, this has been a recurrent theme in my argument. To understand linguistic choices of a particular tweeter (or, more generally, a writer), as well as his or her concrete written products, the researcher, I argue, should seek to contextualise the language output under scrutiny with reference to other, both writing and speaking practices exercised by that speaker/writer in various contexts of his or her linguistic activity. Third, I presented some facts about the spread and use of Twitter among Egyptian Internet users and discussed certain technological, social, cultural and economic factors that seem relevant when assessing the “impact,” “popularity,” “growth” and “penetration” of this social networking

and communication technology in contemporary Egypt. Fourth, I described tweeting in terms of what it is and how it works, and suggested a potentially useful classification of tweets according to who and how generated them (single-authored tweets, simple retweets/forwards, composite tweets). This distinction is significant inasmuch as it identifies the kind of tweets (composite tweets) in which otherwise rarely employed intra-tweet script shifting is more likely to occur.

From there, I proceeded to present some of the concrete linguistic manifestations of tweeting that had emerged as significant and discernible after I followed and observed what goes on in the Egyptian Twitterverse over an extended period of time. It is important to stress that my lengthy discussion of tweeting-related linguistic devices and language choices is by no means exhaustive and final. It was not meant to provide an all-inclusive classification or typology with a special slot for every possible tweet that has ever been, or will ever be, written by an Egyptian. My attempt to sociolinguistically map the Egyptian Twitterverse was not intended to be as precise as to give a detailed, quantitative topographic representation of its relief down to every single hill, rock, path, dell or a stream. Rather, it sketches out the main contours of summits of high topographic prominence, major valleys, fault lines and large rivers. In my main discussion, however, I did engage in close reading of seventy-something tweets and this kind of reading *of* (and reading *into*) concrete tweets could go on forever. Regardless of how detail-oriented my approach tends to be when analysing the presented examples, on a theoretical, methodological and epistemological level it nevertheless disassociates itself from the approaches which are confined to the notions of *structures* and *systems* that function according to a finite number of identifiable *rules*. Instead, I attempted to offer a

linguistically informed ethnographic account of tweeting as a social local practice, and practices are, in my opinion, better described in terms of trends and tendencies than strict, governing rules. Language users are always far more creative, surprising and unpredictable in their linguistic performance than any attempt at giving a final classification (and ultimately, disciplining) of linguistic behaviour can hope to be able to cope with.

With every tweet posted on the Internet, there arises a possibility that there would appear yet another intriguing instance of language in action. What is more important, though, is that every tweet is a potential site of language contact and mixing. I identified and discussed the main resources that tweeters may draw on when producing discourses, whether mixed or non-mixed. These resources are not confined to tweeting; they extend into various other domains of writing that are taken into consideration throughout this thesis. For the time being, it is important to realise that what has come to constitute “resources for writing” in contemporary Egypt is far more complex than could be accounted for by relying exclusively on doubly articulated dichotomy of Ferguson's *diglossia* (*Fuṣḥa* : *ʿAmmiyya* ~ *writing* : *speaking*). As demonstrated in this chapter, the complex language ecology of Egypt today requires us to take into account possible combinations of three codes and two scripts if we are to identify the basic set of linguistic resources that those who write (might) have at their disposal. Theoretically speaking, six combinations emerge at the intersection of the available codes and scripts, but due to a strong culturally and historically constructed fixedness between *Fuṣḥa* and the Arabic script, the use of Latinised *Fuṣḥa* is inhibited and marginal. As such, it will remain the property of those who have been using it heavily for a long time now in order to make visible and audible what the Arabic script might leave concealed. These are, of course,

various scholars (among whom we, the Arabists, are leading the way) who write about the Arabic language and/or the Arab world in languages other than Arabic. As far as contemporary Egypt is concerned, however, the linguistic stock for tweeting – and more generally, writing – as observable in practice, has been identified to contain five main elements:

	Arabic script	Latin script
Fuṣḥa	arMSA	latMSA (?)
ʿAmmiyya	arECA	latECA
<i>English</i>	arENG	latENG

Obviously, not all these linguistic resources are of equal importance, and Arabised English is definitely at a far, marginal end of the spectrum. These combinations are then available for further mutual combinations within the same text.

With respect to latMSA in tweets, it should be noted that it might appear within formulaic expressions and greetings, but since these are fully integrated into Egyptian Arabic, they could not be considered as instances of deliberate writing of Fuṣḥa in Latin script. At the same, the possibility that a tweeter, while typing Latin letters, might decide to insert something in Fuṣḥa should not be excluded either. So far, I have encountered one instance where the user makes a shift to what could be treated as latMSA. It is a contribution to an exchange about what protesters want as opposed to what the military and interim government want. Two tweeters had previously responded to his comment, and in his reply he addresses them both. In the first part of his tweet he resorts to latMSA (bold), playing around the MSA verb “to want, wish, desire” (‘arāda – yurīdu) to comment on a situation in which everybody wants something (different). Apparently, he is

conjugating the verb as if in a language class, but misses the target a bit (underlined). He concludes his tweet in arECA (italics) thus producing yet another instance of mixed Arabic:

(73)

A: @B @C Ana arood, entah **toreed**, allah **yoreed**, welmagles yef3al ma **yoreed**. *Mafeesh mashakel*.

[@B @C I want (?), you **want**, Allah **wants**, and the Council¹⁵⁷ does what **it wants**. *No problem.*]

Earlier in the chapter, I described tweeting as “what people do when they use Twitter.” It is now time to substitute such a loose description with an attempt at a more detailed and theoretically informed definition.

From a sociolinguistic point of view, tweeting could be defined as one of the contemporary, technologically mediated, written communicative practices that emerge at the intersection of:

- socially motivated and culturally embedded use of technology;
- linguistic activity, understood as preformatted and, length-wise, constrained, yet creative and strategic manipulation of the available and (at least to some segments of a group or society) meaningful linguistic resources; and, last but not least,
- language ideologies and patterns of sociolinguistic consumption which embody historically constructed, yet constantly negotiated power relations and hegemonic social arrangements.

157 SCAF – Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

This proposed definition, based on the notion of *communicative practice* understood as tripartite simultaneity of linguistic activity, formal structure and ideology (Hanks 1995), is heavily influenced by the concept of *transidiomatic practice* which Jacquemet introduced to designate

the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant.

Transidiomatic practices are the results of the co-presence of multilingual talk (exercised by de/reterritorialized speakers) and electronic media, in contexts heavily structured by social indexicalities and semiotic codes. Anyone present in transnational environments, whose talk is mediated by deterritorialized technologies, and who interacts with both present and distant people, will find herself producing transidiomatic practices.

(2005: 264-265)

It is by now clear that my understanding of much of what has been going on lately in Egypt in terms of “language as local practice” (Pennycook 2010) has been informed by concepts developed within recent scholarship on multilingualism and “global English.” These concepts and insights have been largely missing from most research within the field of Arabic sociolinguistics. I believe that the field would benefit a lot if engaged more actively with approaches that are more sensitive to significant changes and reconfigurations within language ecologies and linguascapes in the Arab world. While there is no doubt that the relationship between Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya is culturally still the most significant denominator of the sociolinguistic situation in Egypt, it can no longer be taken as the sole focus of academic endeavours that seek to present how Egyptians actually speak and write.

In the case of tweeting, I propose that the totality of highly idiosyncratic linguistic practices associated with it should be described as “transidiomatic” (Jacquemet 2005), or “translingual” (Pennycook 2008). Furthermore, this “translingualism” is not peculiar to tweeting only, but is characteristic of an increasing number of other writing practices and their textual products. This primarily holds true if we take a look at a social networking platform that has apparently been keeping more Egyptians engaged with the acts of reading and writing than any daily newspaper – Facebook. What I tried to do here at length, was to answer to Pennycook's call and get closer to

an understanding of the relationships among language resources as used by certain communities (the linguistic resources users draw on), local language practices (the use of these language resources in specific contexts), and language users' relationship to these varieties (the social, economic and cultural positioning of the speakers).

(Pennycook 2008: 30.4)

To conclude, I presented and discussed the main resources, ways of employing them and different linguistic choices associated with tweeting among Egyptians who use Twitter. But to tweet like an Egyptian, one does not have to have all the resources at one's disposal, neither does one have to resort to all of what one has, let alone be equally sympathetic towards all the possibilities. Some are enough.

It was reported recently (<http://bit.ly/ruJb5Q>) that

Dr. Osama al-Abd, President of Al-Azhar University, has issued a resolution compelling the professors at the University to talk in Fuṣṣḥa during the lectures, and not to talk in ʿAmmiyya, making it clear that this

is tantamount to a red line which no one can cross, in order to protect its students for the cultural haphazardness.¹⁵⁸

In this case, ʿAmmiyya is interpreted as under the attack of globalisation, and therefore it will be forbidden on the grounds of the oldest institution of learning in Egypt. In the meantime, young Egyptians – undoubtedly including even some of al-Azhar students – will continue to encode their identity positions, cosmopolitanisms and aspirations in myriads of ways. The analysis of the Tweeter data shows that Fuṣḥa, ʿAmmiyya and English all have their place in the repository of varieties and features for users to potentially draw on. Of course, while some of them are linguistically playing around to the fullest, others' means are more limited.

My expectation is that language conservativists will continue to complain and forbid, but the process described in this thesis is unstoppable and irreversible. Egypt is at the crossroads. From the political point of view, this is a moment when socio-cultural conditions are yet to be created for a plurality of voices and visions to be expressed without mutual friction and collision.

Language issues are not on the agenda these days. But they will be one day. And they should. When that day comes, language planners and policy makers should have a clear idea about how Egyptians write, rather than how they should write. I don't know if Vodafone is right when implicitly suggesting that the illiterate should be taught to write in

158 أصدر الدكتور أسامة العبد، رئيس جامعة الأزهر، قراراً بإلزام أساتذة الجامعة بالتحدث باللغة العربية الفصحى خلال المحاضرات، وعدم الحديث باللغة العامية، موضحاً أن ذلك بمثابة خط أحمر لا يمكن تجاوزه بالنسبة لكل المسؤولين بالجامعة؛ لحماية طلابها من العشوائية الثقافية التي تصدرها لنا العولمة.

ʿAmmiyya, but I know that to many people in Egypt this might sound blasphemous. Therefore, I am not suggesting here that Fuṣṣḥa should be discarded. Far from it. However, now that so many books are being written in ʿAmmiyya, books that people love to read, maybe it is time to reflect upon the possibility that a key to mastery of Fuṣṣḥa might actually be in the hands of her closest relative.

As I hope to have shown so far, it's not all about Fuṣṣḥa and ʿAmmiyya. Language planners and policy makers will have a lot of it to assess, including the market value of the national language. Languages are indeed commodities, and they are on the market. People want them or they don't. Languages do not die, people might stop using them.¹⁵⁹ On the Egyptian linguistic market, English is highly valued. Since there is no reason to expect that it will lose that value any time soon, maybe it should be made a bit more accessible to all those who seek to learn it. Also, if Fuṣṣḥa is perceived to be "in danger," then some serious work has to be done in order to re-create its contexts of use in such a way that people would be motivated to learn it. The political economy of Fuṣṣḥa cannot be strengthened by simply attacking the emancipation of ʿAmmiyya. After all, a country whose glorious history has been deciphered thanks to the bilingual and triscriptual Rosetta Stone should cherish the emergence of its linguistic diversity and richness.

159 See Mufwene 2002.

APPENDICES

Appendix

3-1

Wikipedia Masry Controversy – resources

The primary site of the debate about Wikipedia Masry is, naturally, Wikipedia Masry itself. Nearly every Wikipedia page (be it an article, a user's profile, or, for example, a help-page) has its discussion section (WM: المناقشه), so does it WM main page, الصفحه الرئيسيه. See also WM: صالون المناقشه.

On January 24, 2009, the Egyptian newspaper *al-Shorouk* featured an article about Wikipedia Masry [<http://www.shorouknews.com/contentdata.aspx?id=508>]

An insight into the debate spurred on by this project in the Egyptian and Arab blogosphere could be gained through an overview offered by Global Voices [<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2008/12/07/egypt-egyptian-dialect-wikipedia/>].

On Facebook, there existed several WM-related pages and groups:

- (fan page) <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wikipedia-Masry/32824743610?ref=search&sid=36812494.2570127035..1>
- (support group) <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=37256146758&ref=search&sid=36812494.2570127035..1>
- ("The Anti Wikipedia Masry Movement") <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=52654683425>
- ("Anti Wikipedia Masry") <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=44371851245&ref=search&sid=36812494.2570127035..1>
- ("No to Wikipedia Masry") <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=54335774858&ref=search&sid=36812494.2570127035..1>
- ("Campaign to destroy Wikipedia Masri") <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=75335596943&ref=search&sid=36812494.4214208992..1>

An engaged, anti-WM Youtube clip "انقراض اللغه العربيه الفصحى" ("The extinction of

fuṣḥa”) could be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmbZkUCjYbw>.

It would be nearly impossible to provide all the web-references about this debate. Here, I provide just a small sample of relevant links:

- <http://zamakan.gharbeia.org/2008/12/13/213520>
- <http://egyptianchronicles.blogspot.com/2008/12/egyptian-dialcet-wikipedia.html>
- <http://justanotherthinker.wordpress.com/2009/02/18/the-anti-wikipedia-masry-movement/>
- <http://5abar5air.wordpress.com/2009/01/11/wikipedia-masri/>
- <http://article.gmane.org/gmane.org.wikimedia.foundation/33419>
- <http://dvd4arab.maktoob.com/archive/index.php/t-1577708.html>
- <http://www.hazemkhaled.com/blog/%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7/wikipedia-egypt-arz>
- <http://www.teedoz.com/2009/%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%9F/>
- <http://gaberism.net/2008/12/12/%D9%88%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A/>

N.B. - all links were checked and active in December 2010. The strange strings (such as “D8%AF%D9...”) are the result of copying and pasting of links that combine both the Latin and Arabic scripts, but are otherwise correct.

Appendix

3-2

Screenshots of WA & WM sign-in pages

(on 26 April 2010 – WA has changed in the meantime)

Wikipedia Arabiyya

Wikipedia Masry

Appendix

4-1

Popular Egyptian Tweeters

The table presented here lists *some* of the popular Egyptian tweeters according to the number of their followers. It does not claim to represent the top-25 users; some popular users might have been overlooked, but is nevertheless fairly accurate in presenting a group of those who have a large following and who had, up until July 15, 2011, generated nearly half a million tweets. The starting point for its compilation came from the data obtained through *twittercounter.com*. Some popular tweeters, however, did not appear in the retrieved list. Therefore, I amended it by adding several users whom I had come to know of as popular simply by following and researching Twitter over an extended period of time. In order to compile a list of individual users, I excluded the institutional Twitter accounts, such as @AlMasryAlYoum_A, @RassdNews, @VodafoneEgypt, @bbcarabic, etc. I also excluded one or two foreigners (correspondents or journalists who write about Egypt and the Arab world) and a very few accounts of some individuals that appear in the twittercounter-list but are neither Egyptian, nor seem to have any connection to Egypt.¹

¹ For example, @MarkDimension (63,667 followers at the time of writing). It is unclear to me how a user like this one appears in the search-results list of those who tweet “in Cairo” – his tweets are not Egypt-related, he does not follow any of the top Egyptian users (he followed 64,758 users at the time of writing), and none of them follow him.

The first column lists the names as they appear on the users' profiles. These are followed by the username and "bio" (column 2). The third, fourth and fifth columns contain: the total number of each user's tweets (3), number of people the user is following (4) and, finally and most importantly, the total number of his or her followers (5). There were some minor discrepancies between the figures obtained through *twittercounter.com* and the actual figures that appear on the users' profiles. Once the list was compiled based on the preliminary data, each profile was checked for the actual figures provided by Twitter. The list was last updated on July 11, 2011. Since Twitter is changing rapidly and dynamically, the figures presented here should not be taken as representation of a stable situation, but rather as a tentative indicator of some important trends and flows within the Egyptian Twittersverse in mid-2011:

	<i>name & profile</i>	<i>username & profile text</i>	<i>tweets</i>	<i>following</i>	<i>followers</i>
1	Mohamed ElBaradei	@ElBaradei Cairo, Egypt http://www.iaea.org/About/dg/elbaradei/biography.html http://www.taghyeer.net	441	34	191,983
2	Wael Ghonim	@Ghonim Cairo, Egypt / Dubai, UAE Constantly Changing, Serious Joker, Internet Addict, Human, Egyptian who loves challenging status quo.	5,282	562	170,331
3	Naguib Sawiris	@NaguibSawiris A Founding Member of Al Masryeen Al Ahrar political party «Together, we build the future to restore the glories of Egypt» http://www.almasryeenalahrrar.org	869	43	74,427
4	Amr Khaled	@_AmrKhaled_ http://www.amrkhaled.net/	1,262	2	68,828
5	Amr Waked	@amrwaked Cairo ممثل ومخرج وموسيقي Actor, Producer, Director. and Musician http://www.facebook.com/Amr.Waked http://zadcomm.com	2,190	61	68,505

	<i>name & profile</i>	<i>username & profile text</i>	<i>tweets</i>	<i>following</i>	<i>followers</i>
6	Yosri Fouda	@YosriFouda Cairo, Egypt -Editor/Presenter, Last Word, ONTV. -Former Chief Investigative Correspondent and Executive Producer, Al Jazeera. - Co-author, Masterminds of Terror.	1,271	216	66,156
7	Mona Eltahawy	@monaeltahawy The World Columnist and public speaker on Arab and Muslim issues www.monaeltahawy.com http://www.monaeltahawy.com/blog	56,214	446	57,396
8	Khaled Abol Naga	@kalnaga Cairo, Egypt خالد أبو النجا Actor/Filmmaker, Proud Egyptian ;) http://blog.nagatime.com/	2,445	1,456	53,570
9	Ayman Nour	@Ayman_Nour Egypt مصر الحرة Egyptian Politician, Leader of El- Ghad Liberal Party, Former Parliament Member (1995-2005), Presidential Candidate for 2011. http://www.facebook.com/dr.Aymannour	2,652	1,887	51,053
10	Amr Salama	@amrsalama Egypt A film maker and a blogger مخرج سينمائي، كاتب و مدون http://www.amrsalama.com	3,118	550	47,748
11	Nawara Negm	@nawaranegm	14,729	401	47,273
12	Mahmoud Salem	@Sandmonkey Egypt Micro-celebrity, Blogger, activist, New Media douchebag, Pain in the ass! E- mail me: Sandmonkey@gmail.com http://www.sandmonkey.org	29,007	896	43,914
13	Wael Abbas	@waelabbas Cairo, Egypt Award Winning Journalist and Blogger P.S.: you have to be 18+ to follow! http://misrdigital.blogspot.com	62,379	314	43,359
14	Alaa Abd El Fattah	@alaa Tahrir I painted the air with doko http://www.manalaa.net	88,482	656	36,657

	<i>name & profile</i>	<i>username & profile text</i>	<i>tweets</i>	<i>following</i>	<i>followers</i>
15	Hossam عمو حسام	@3arabawy Cairo, Egypt In a dictatorship, independent journalism by default becomes a form of activism, and the spread of information is essentially an act of agitation. http://www.arabawy.org/blog/	54,220	459	33,554
16	Ramy Raouf	@RamyRaouf Cairo, Egypt Human Rights Defender Online Media Digital Activism Digital Security Editor of Egyptian Blog for Human Rights http://ebfhr.blogspot.com	10,933	129	32,056
17	Ahmad El Esseily	@ahmadesseily Cairo Only dead fish go with the flow; I'm not dead yet, and I'm not fish either.. http://www.facebook.com/elsesaily?ref=ts	3,549	268	27,930
18	Hend Sabry	@HendSabry Egypt Tunisian Actress, Lawyer and UN World Food Programme Ambassador.. http://www.hendsabry.com	818	162	27,276
19	Amr Diab	@amrdiab Egypt Amr Diab, Best Selling Middle Eastern Artist http://www.amrdiab.net	2,486	1	27,109
20	Asmaa Mahfouz	@AsmaaMahfouz انسانة عادية ويمكن اقل من العادية بحلم تكون مصر اقوى بلد في الدنيا في كل المجالات اللي يتخفق مني بعمله ان فولو ويربح نفسه http://wolf-inside.blogspot.com	4,720	274	26,339
21	arabist	@arabist Cairo The site on Arab politics and culture. Tweets with links are not necessarily endorsements - I often tweet stuff I hate. http://arabist.net/	10,996	538	22,960
22	Zeinobia	@Zeinobia Egypt Egyptian blogger http://egyptianchronicles.blogspot.com	69,179	3,740	22,029
23	salma said	@salmasaid Cairo,Egypt I'm nobody's little weasel http://atralnada.wordpress.com	7,392	229	21,286

<i>name & profile</i>		<i>username & profile text</i>	<i>tweets</i>	<i>following</i>	<i>followers</i>
24	gamaleid	@gamaleid Cairo Lawyer and Executive Director The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information الشبكة العربية لمعلومات حقوق الإنسان حقوقي مصري، داعم لحرية التعبير http://www.anhri.net/	10,913	1,602	20,449
25	Gigi Ibrahim جيسج	@Gsquare86 Cairo, Egypt Socialist Activist http://theangryegyptian.wordpress.co m/	19,973	460	20,352
<i>TOTAL</i>			465520		

Appendix

4-2

Language choices of a group of Egyptian Twitter users

The table presented here is an attempt at visualising distribution of linguistic choices of a group of Egyptian tweeters selected from the table given in App 4-1. For each tweeter, 50 of his or her tweets were collected at three points in time in 2011 (15+15+20, collected in March, May and July respectively). Very short tweets, formulaic expressions, greetings and exchanges such as “yes,” “no,” “sure,” “thank God” etc. were not counted. They were then examined and classified according to language output. I do not present a statistical breakdown because it may be misleading for several reasons.

First, the great majority of the analysed tweets pertain to the period after the uprising of January 25,¹ and reflect tweeters' concerns that are primarily focused on Egypt. There are indications that several tweeters who had tweeted only or predominantly in English before the revolution, significantly increased their use of Arabic in the period covered by my counting. However, no data can substantiate these speculations which are solely based on my observations.

Second, while 50 tweets per tweeter might be considered a representative sample in the case of someone who (by the time of my last sampling) had tweeted around 400

¹ Not all, since in the case of a few tweeters who do not tweet a lot, collecting 50 tweets meant including some from the period before the revolution.

tweets in total, this number is completely insignificant in the case of those who had generated tens of thousands of tweets. Namely, 15 or 20 tweets (as per sampling) is what some of the examined users might tweet in less than a day. Therefore, in order to be more reliable, statistical evidence would have to be based on samples individually catered for each user so that they are proportional to his or her total number of tweets.

Finally, and for me most importantly, tweeting is highly context-dependant. The main events of the day are reported, commented on and discussed on Twitter. A Friday of big demonstrations in Tahrir will not only set the overall topic for the majority of tweets and generate more tweets per day than a less eventful Tuesday or Wednesday, but will also increase the number of English tweets sent out to inform the world about what is going on. Similarly, a football match between Ahly and Zamalek creates a situation in which *ʿammiyya* overpowers *fuṣḥa* as a used linguistic resource much more than it might be the case on the first day of Ramadan. Given all that, a researcher might find himself facing an absurd task of deciding which days should be counted as “representative.”

Statistical approaches are undoubtedly useful and informative, but since they present facts of social life as numbers, they tend to freeze and fix the fluidity and evasiveness of social reality. In order to present the distribution of linguistic varieties, choices, and eventually outcomes of these choices in a much more precise way than the following table aspires to do, a finely graded, multidimensional approach must be devised so as to include a variety of parameters, large samples of data and a balanced combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses. At this phase, such an approach to Twitter was beyond the scope of my inquiry.

Instead of authority of numbers, I therefore opted for the relativity of bigger and smaller circles and different shades of grey. My main aim was to document the resources (and their *relative* prominence) these fifteen tweeters used in the analysed tweets (and will presumably continue to use even if in proportions different than suggested by the sizes of these circles). Had I known how to, I would have visualised these choices as pulsating bubbles of various sizes. Like this, they are vague and as imprecise as percentages would be, but hopefully less assertive in an attempt to present themselves as accurate.

The bigger the circle and the darker is the shade, the higher is the occurrence of the marked variety. Based on these results, tentative generalisations of each tweeter's preferred choices are given under their names:

	user	MSA	arECA	latECA	ENG	mix	either ² MSA/EC A
1.	@EIBaradei MSA, ENG	○			○		
2.	@Ghonim arECA, ENG	○	○		○ ³	○ (MSA/arECA)	○

2 This category refers to rare instances that could be equally interpreted as MSA or ECA. I do not have enough data at this point to draw any conclusions about how deliberate these messages might be. So, this category should not be taken as representing a particular “strategy.” At the same, it is important to recognise that such linguistic output does occur.

3 In fact, Ghonim tweets in English fairly often. On a larger sample, the number of his English tweets is proportionately higher than this sample might suggest.

	user	MSA	arECA	latECA	ENG	mix	either MSA/EC A
3.	@_AmrKhaled_ MSA	○		○ ⁴	○ ⁵ (Eng, Fr)		
4.	@amrwaked arECA, MSA	○	○			○ (MSA/arECA)	○
5.	@YosriFouda MSA, arECA	○ ⁶	○	○	○	○ (ENG/arECA)	
6.	@kalnaga arECA, ENG, MSA	○	○		○	○ (MSA/arECA)	

- 4 These instances are extremely rare and encountered only in direct responses to other users' requests. Usually they are very short as in:

1) "أنا مسافر اليوم إلى المدينة المنورة .. زيارة رسول الله .. سأدعو لكم و أرسل سلامكم إليه .-عمرو خالد"

(I am travelling to Medina today... to visit the Prophet... I will pray for you and send him your regards – Amr Khaled)

"@_AmrKhaled_ ed3ely plzzzzzz we ed3y I ahly kolohom we slmly 3ala rasoul awee nfsy aro7 hinaaak aweeee bgd ,,rbna ytkbal mnk isa"

(Pray for me plzzzzzz (please) and pray for my entire family/people and remember me to the Prophet, seriously, I want to go there soooo much... May God hear your prayers isa (in sha allah/God willing) hader inshaa allah (At your service, in sha allah).

- 5 These tweets should be understood as exceptions – Amr Khaled's timeline (subsequently examined for a much larger sample of data) is a long list of tweets in *fusha*. Of those that are not, I found two directing at the Internet locations where the appropriate translations (English and French) of the transcripts of his TV show could be found:

E: "Now you can download full texts of the previous episodes of "Bokra Ahla: Better Tomorrow" in one file by clicking... [link]", and the same for the French translation a few tweets earlier,

F: "Vous pouvez télécharger le texte de tous les épisodes précédents du programme "Bokra Ahla: Demain Est Mieux" en un... [link]"

Also, when responding to a question/request, he might resort to another code. For example, "yes sure" in:

@_AmrKhaled_ ياريت تقوول لو ناوي تعمل برنامج لرمضان <- yes sure inshaa allah

(Please, tell me whether you intend to make a show for Ramadan – yes sure inshaa allah)

- 6 A large number of Fouda's tweets are brief announcements for the upcoming or previous shows (guests & topics) on OnTV where he works. They are usually introduced by "Watch on OnTV..." and are followed by a link. This increases the occurrence of MSA. When expressing his own opinion, giving a comment or having an exchange with another tweeter, Fouda's linguistic choices are more flexible and diverse.

	user	MSA	arECA	latECA	ENG	mix	either MSA/EC A
7.	@Ayman_Nour MSA	○				○ ⁷ (MSA/arECA)	
8.	@nawaranegm arECA	○	○				
9.	@Sandmonkey arECA, ECA/lat, ENG		○	○	○		
10	@waelabbas arECA	○	○	○			
11	@RamyRaof MSA, ENG	○	○		○	○ (MSA/arECA)	
12	@ahmadesseily arECA, ENG	○	○	○	○		
13	@salmasaid arECA		○		○		
14	@Zeinobia ENG		○		○		
15	@Gsquare86 ENG, arECA	○	○	○	○	○ (ENG/arECA) ⁸	

7 A rare occurrence and ECA-part clearly tagged by quotation marks:

أيمن نور: أنتهي زمن "مين يضمن؟" ميدان التحرير سيغير أي رئيس قادم على الالتزام بجميع تعهداته

[Ayman Nour: The time of "Who's gonna guarantee?" is over. Tahrir Square will force any future president to comply with all of his commitments.]

8 "Mortada Mansour at maglis el dawla odami ahoo" - "Mortada Mansour at the Council of State, right in front of me."

Appendix

4-3

Naguib Sawiris on Twitter

The following table contains fifty consecutive tweets by Naguib Sawiris collected in mid-July 2011. As in the actual Twitter timeline, they appear in the reversed chronological order. For easier following, the text of the tweet (excluding mentions) is given in bold. Tweets that contain some kind of code-mixing are marked with ↔. If applicable, the sign ⇒ means “in reply to.” In some cases, a tweet may contain “@username” without actually being a reply. This may indicate that the mentioned user might have removed the original tweet in the meantime, or, more often, that Sawiris is not responding to a particular tweet, but calling out someone, i.e. reacting to someone else’s tweet in which he was not mentioned. In the latter case, it will be indicated if his tweet was replied to. If applicable, the sign ⇄ indicates divergence (code- or script-switch) between Sawiris’s tweet and the tweet he replied to (English-Arabic, MSA-ECA, Arabic scrip – Latin script).

	<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	⇒ (⇄)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇒)
1	@el_neno1 greece	⇒	@NaguibSawiris to where (⇒11)
2	@DeeAdvocate papi with me	⇒	@NaguibSawiris If mommy is OK with it. (⇒11)

	<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	⇒ (↔)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇒)
3	@MahaTurk balash a7ssan! [better don't]	⇒ ↔	@NaguibSawiris am wearing mini mouse t.shirt today, hope no one will arrest me :) ¹
4	@sherif_azer I am!	⇒	@NaguibSawiris try to take your twitter with you so you can follow :) (⇒11)
5	@joooury_Q8 I'll recharge and come back stronger! ²	⇒	@NaguibSawiris Hi
6	@hany Samuel78 I am!	⇒	@NaguibSawiris i think you should take a serious action against threat of killing by that sick person youtube.com/watch?v=PdNWC8... ³
7	@MahmoudMDarwish Greece	⇒	@NaguibSawiris where ?? (⇒11)

- 1 In reference to the contemporaneous controversy over the cartoon picture of Mickey and Minnie Mouse which Sawiris had tweeted several days earlier (with the accompanying comment “Micky (*sic*) and Minnie after...”). Mickey and Minnie are featured as “Muslim fundamentalists” – wearing the kufiya (كوفية), an Arab male headscarf, Mickey is sporting a thick, long beard; Minnie is wearing the niqab. Many people found this tweet to be disrespectful and even insulting. Although Sawiris apologised immediately, several online campaigns were launched advocating for the boycott of his company. And there were even some calls for lynch of Sawiris. See more at :
<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/06/28/155128.html>,
<http://www.businessinsider.com/bearded-mickey-and-minnie-mouse-2011-6>
and http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hmj7ySNw4D3O0PA_cHFRafYuVvdg?docId=d2efb87c676d4a82a1b367c920a5946f. - last accessed 11 July 2011.
- 2 A reply to a particular user might trigger someone else's comment. This one, for example, prompted another user to call out Sawiris (and the user he had mentioned in his tweet) and tease him by switching to (Latinised) Egyptian Arabic: “@NaguibSawiris @joooury_Q8 eeh ya 3amou nageeb?!? rasedak 5eles ?? 7awel etisalat bteddy rased magany :PPP” [what's that, 'uncle' nageeb?!? your credit's used up?? try out etisalat, it gives free credit :PPP] – Here the tweeter is playing around Sawiris's use of the verb *recharge*, reinterpreting it as if belonging to a different context (mobile phone credit) and is jokingly suggesting that Sawiris should change his mobile operator and switch to Etisalat. Until May 2011, when he decided to dedicate himself to politics, Sawiris was the executive chairman of Orascom Telecom (large shareholder of Mobinil, one of the three mobile operators in Egypt).
- 3 See the previous footnote, and the relevant video at <http://youtu.be/PdNWC8ZeiDk> – last accessed 11 July 2011.

<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	⇨ (↔)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇨)
8	@hanghali we do since 8 years :)	⇨ ↔ @NaguibSawiris لماذا لا تعلن عن منح دراسية مجانية مثلا باسمك تذكر انسانية روكفلر وويل جيتس وأوبرا وينفري [Why don't you establish, for example, some educational scholarships in your name that would be reminiscent of the philanthropy of Rockefeller, Bill Gates or Oprah Winfrey?]
9	@cotareq never! Howa dah ana ya te7ebenni kedah ya tekrahni.. [never! That's me, take it or leave it (take me as I am; lit. either like me, or hate me)]	⇨ ↔ @NaguibSawiris أنت تسير على حبل دقيق مشدود أعلى (sic) السيرك دون تدريب سابق السياسة تستدعي التخلي عن شخصيتك الأنسانية العفوية وإلا أوقعت محبيك معك [You are walking along a thin, tensioned rope at the circus without any previous training. Politics requires you to abandon your spontaneous, human personality, otherwise you will (fall and) bring down those who love you with you.]
10	@Shehab4S walla yehmak rabena bi ye3wad ! [never mind Lord compensates!]	⇨ على فكرة يا سوسو احنا لحد دلوقتي مخسرناك 130 مليون ... [By the way, Susu, so far we've made you lose 130 million...] ⁴
11 Am I allowed to go for a vacation?		
12	@11Nanoo شكرا [thanks]	⇨ ↔ @NaguibSawiris Im a Muslim&I dd not feel slightly offended by da cartoon pic.I myself had it as a profile pic 4 a while.Never mind those ppl
13	@moha1024 ميا ميا [definitely, certainly – miyya miyya]	⇨ @moha20106@NaguibSawiris خليك زي نا ⁵ انت بطبيعتك ابن بلد اللي في قلبك على لسانك [Stay as you are, with your character of a good] [guy who calls a spade a spade]

4 Referring to the boycott of his products.

5 Apparently a typo (ما).

<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>		⇨ (⇨)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇨)
14	@moha20106 Ashkorak ! [thank you]	⇨	@NaguibSawiris الاسلام دين تسامح واعلن اننى عدلت عن قرار المقاطعة , ولازلت من معجبك تحية لشجاعتك الاديبة المطلقة [Dr. Neguib, let bygones be bygones (may God forgive bygones), Islam is a religion of tolerance, and I declare that I refrain from (the decision to) boycott and I am still one of those who admire you. I salute your absolute moral courage.]
15	@ivanesque myself!	⇨	⇨ @NaguibSawiris I've got two questions for you, Sir, law sama7t [if you please]. 1st: Are you tweeting yourself, or someone else is doing it on your behalf? ⁶
16	@Monchkinz salem not salalem :)	⇨	@NaguibSawiris in salah salalem
17	@Monchkinz where?		
18	@pure_intention yes thanks many copies:)	⇨	@NaguibSawiris do you have a copy of the flyer against you?
19	@fifi186 not me!	⇨	@NaguibSawiris some times , it is better to hide ourselves away from the others, till they forget all about us
20	@SamehWagdy Wa7ed zaki we Takeem :) [someone smart and wise :)]	⇨	⇨ @NaguibSawiris Nice. Bass copy and paste men fein ba2a? :P #JustKidding [Just copy and paste? So, where is it from?] (⇨22)

6 This was my question. The second one was why he uses the Arabic script only for *fusha*, and writes *ammiyya* nearly exclusively in “franco.” I repeated the question weeks later. It was never answered. (See the exchange 38 in this data for Sawiris's response to a question (not mine) why he tweets in English.)

	<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	⇒ (↔)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇒)
21	@saadsalem alkefa7 men agl madaniat eldawla! [the struggle for the secular state]	⇒ ↔	@NaguibSawiris فوجئت بهجوم عليك يتهمك بمعاداة الاسلام وهو مالم اسمعه عنك فى اى وقت هل ممكن تشرح لمن يحبوك ما سبب هذا الهجوم [I was taken by surprise by the attack on you which accuses you of being hostile toward Islam and that is something I had never heard about you. Could you comment for those who like you, what is the reason for that attack?] (⇒22)
22	وَمَنْ لَا يُحِبُّ صُعُودَ الْجِبَالِ يَعِشْ أَبَدَ الدَّهْرِ بَيْنَ الْحُفَرِ .. لا تمش أبداً على الطريق المرسوم ، فهو يقودك حيث ذهب الآخرون. [Who does not want to climb the mountains should for ever and ever live among the holes. Don't you ever take a paved way for it will lead you to where others have gone.]		
23	@spidermanboss right u r!	⇒	@NaguibSawiris أعتقد أن هناك خوف ⁷ من حزب المصريين الأحرار بشكل خاص ومن الدولة المدنية بشكل عام بدليل الحملة الغير مفهومة للهجوم [I believe there is a fear from the Free Egyptians party in particular, and from the secular state in general, and the proof is this incomprehensible attacking campaign]
24	@Hayssom 70000	⇒	@NaguibSawiris عدد الفلورز ⁸ عندك زاد ل عشربن الف وشوبه (:) [The number of your followers has exceeded twenty something thousand]
25	@KarShaf 7elwa :) [nice :)]	⇒ ↔	@ElArmouty ⁹ لو متجوز تبوس المدام.. لو مش متجوز تبوس إيدك وش وضهر [If you're married, kiss your wife... If you're not, be grateful to God (lit. kiss the front and back of your hand)]

7 A typo – it should be خوف.

8 Note the use of the lexical borrowing “followers” - فلورز.

9 This tweet was directed to someone else in response to his tweet “#nationalkissingday Kissing What Exactly ??” Sawiris is here reacting to that response.

	<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	⇒ (↔)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇒)
26	@msalsaif happy to see our brothers in saoudi following our beloved Egypt.. my respect!	⇒	@NaguibSawiris Love what u r doing in new Egypt. Did u ever notice the u look like Julian Assange :)
27	@AbDOPOLIS no	⇒ ↔	YomnaMostafa @NaguibSawiris :D@ السؤال الأكثر واقعية.. هل أنت نادم على دخول معترك السياسة? ¹⁰ [More realistic question: Do you regret for entering the political battle ground?]
28	@abdelsalam1999 not treue,never!	⇒ ↔	@NaguibSawiris يقال انك تشتم المسلمين هل هذا صحيح؟؟ [They say you are insulting the Muslims, is that true??]
29	↵ Vacation or no vacation: mabrook AlmasreenAla7rar officaly approved as the leading liberal party! [...: way to go to the Free Egyptians Party...]		
30	@Ms_Asal some care I hope:)	⇒ ↔	↵ And who the fuck cares what @NaguibSawiris does or says? <i>Batalo tedo el nas katar men 7a2ohom</i> , U only help them get more bloated. #Joke'sOnU [... stop it, let people make the most of their rights (?)...]
31	اقرأ حوار المصرى اليوم مع مهاتير محمد، رئيس وزراء ماليزيا الأسبق: كيف يتم بناء دولة عظيمة! (see 32)		
32	Read Almasry Alyoum's interview with mahatir mohamed ex primeminister of malaysia: how to build a great country!		
33	@AmirEITahan A proud Egyptian! Was easy to get!	⇒	@NaguibSawiris Can you please answer my question, why both of your Jets Reg. Code is MASRI and MASRY ? And how you got these names ?

10 This is actually a reply, *i.e.* follow up to another tweet – “@NaguibSawiris هل أنت نادم على دخولك تويتر؟”
[Are you sorry (have you regretted) for entering (joining) Twitter?]

<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	↔ (↔)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ↔)
34	@dovansm I am not! Thank you	↔ @NaguibSawiris وقتك اغلى من انك تضيعه مع ناس الحقد مالى قلوبها..ربنا معاك [Your time is too precious for you to waste it with people whose hearts are filled with hatred. May God be with you]
35	@jonamorem how can I help?	↔ @diptychal Praying is not enough! Help save #YoucefNadarkhani who could be executed in #Iran any minute! http://bit.ly/ktWXXo
36	@mina11fawzy http://www.almasreyeenalahrrar.org	↔ @NaguibSawiris اللي عاوز ينضم لحزب المصريين الاحرار في اسيوط يعمل ايه؟؟ [Whoever wants to join the Free Egyptians Party in Assiut, what should they do??]
37	@MaiAlghrory aah	↔ @NaguibSawiris هو انت بتوت بالإنجليزي ليه؟؟ احنا شعب 40% منه مبيعرفش يقرأ ويكتب إلا إذا كنت بتكلم حد تاني [Why are you tweeting in English?? We are the people 40% of whom are illiterate, unless you are talking to someone else] (⇒42)
38	@adelelhayeh_as inshalaah! [God willing]	↔ @NaguibSawiris بس أوعى ترجع من العطلة وتشر حاجة جديدة تثير جدل أكبر من الجدل المثار حاليًا في مصر (يجب تقدير الظروف التي نعيشها في مصر [But be careful not to return from the vacation and publish something new that would provoke a bigger controversy in Egypt than the one provoked by now (it is necessary to appraise the conditions in which we live in Egypt)] (⇒42)
39	↔ @EHABAHMEDAHMED abadan! Never! [Never! Never!]	↔ @NaguibSawiris #لية حاتأخذ راحة المفروض الثورجى لايرتاح حتى يحقق مايريد ولا انت زهقت [Why are you going to take a break? The revolutionary (rebel) is supposed not to rest until he carries out what he wishes, or you're fed up] (⇒42)

	<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	⇒ (↔)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇒)
40	@Abou_Eita you r right its addictive!	⇒	@NaguibSawiris I think you won't be able to stop tweeting until the weekend is over. (⇒42)
41	@mona_too I need a break and a brake :)	⇒ ↔	↔ @NaguibSawiris take a break not brake. <i>El tani beta3 faramel el 3arabeya lamo2akhza :</i>) [the former refers to the car-brake, no offence :)] (⇒42)
42	I think I'll take a brake from tweeting and relax this weekend..I guess I need it :)		
43	@YaraTambashawy not me:) ¹¹	⇒	On oct bridge a Mercedes in between 2 range rover full of guards. Who's the man?
44	<p>أوعدكم ان الاحزاب اللتي (sic) ستتمسك بمطالب الثورة ستكتب مستقبل مصر وان من يهرول لاقتصاص مقاعد هنا او هناك لن يذكره التاريخ بكلمة.</p> <p>[I promise you that those parties that will adhere to the demands of the Revolution will write the future of Egypt, while those that rush to get hold of a few seats (here and there) will not be mentioned by history, not even by a single word.]</p>		
45	@WaelTahoun means two parties !! Ya ostaz .. ¹²	⇒ ↔	<p>NaguibSawiris@ المفروض حضرتك تخلي بالك من الصياغة شوية عشان كلمة حزبي ممكن تخلينا نفتكر إنك تملك الحزب لا سمح الله</p> <p>Sir, you should take care of the wording a bit]</p> <p>”حزبي“ because the word (hizbi) might cause us to believe (make us think) that you own the party, [God forbid (⇒47)</p>
46	@nmgendy I'll give the money to Nile University !	⇒	N/A
47	<p>تحياتي لحزبي المصريين الاحرار والمصري الديمقراطي يعارض (sic) بشرف اليوم ويقف ضد التيار</p> <p>[Greetings to the Free Egyptians Party and Egyptian Social Democratic Party (that?) are opposing today and resisting the (main)stream.]</p>		

11 Not a reply (he was not mentioned), but a reaction.

12 Sawiris is correcting his critic that it was not *hizbī*, but *hizbay* what he intended to say in 47.

<i>Sawiris's tweet</i>	⇒ (↔)	<i>someone else's tweet</i> (reply to – if applicable ⇒)
48	<p>أكبر جريمة في حق الثورة وحق مصر هو ان نحرم انفسنا من الفرصة الحقيقية التي (sic) دفع شهداء الثورة بارواحهم من اجلها. [The biggest crime against (regarding) the Revolution and Egypt would be to deprive ourselves of the real opportunity for which the martyrs of the revolution paid with their lives.]</p>	
49	<p>انسحب حزب الجبهة وحزب التجمع من ائتلاف الوفد والإخوان، إذن المصريين الأحرار كان محق منذ البداية (see 50)</p>	
50	<p>Elgabha and tagamo3 parties withdrew from the wafd and Echwan coalition! Shows Almasreen Ala7rar were right from the beginning!</p>	

Appendix

4-4

A young Egyptian expatriate on Twitter

The list presented below contains a selection of tweets of a young Egyptian professional who, upon moving to India for work, continued using Twitter in order to keep the circle of his followers up to date with his whereabouts and first impressions while settling in. What follows is approximately a quarter of his comments which he tweeted over three days:

1. I think what I like most about Indians so far is that they don't talk politics all day long. Or maybe it's just the fact I don't speak Hindi.
2. Indian women do not grow up to become MILFS, somewhere between their 20's and 30's, something goes horribly wrong.
3. I totally bought a blender for 134 Egyptian pounds today. I am the ultimate Jewish housewife.
4. I'm worried this place will make me even more Jewish about money.
5. I just fought with a cab driver over 20 rupees, that's 2.6 pounds. Ekhs.
6. Beggars here are much more forceful. A woman got down on her knees and hug/humped my thighs for some money.
7. I suppose the only thing that's negative about Indian women in Saris is the fact they're all fat asses and their bellies are drooping out.

8. Crossing the street here is more hazardous than being a Jew in Germany in 1939.
9. Holy shit. Forget what you've heard about Englishmen or Irishmen, Austrians drink like they're trying to die. #WTFhappenedLastNight
10. Okay so apparently Indian DJ's never heard that we're in 2011 because all their music is from the bad part of the 80's.
11. Woke up next to an Austrian girl. 3amar ya hend! ("long live India")
12. I bought a fridge, a washing machine and a stove today. Alright ladies, marriage proposal line starts next to the broomstick and the bucket.
13. You know what's worse than an Indian who can't speak English for shit? An Indian who can't speak English for shit on the phone.
14. Went to the gym today. I feel at peace now.
15. I take way too many showers here, this can't be good for my skin.
16. One of the guys in the flat says he studies English and wants to teach it as a profession. His English is even shittier than Indian English.
17. One of my roommates is F cups. And she likes to "air dry" after the shower. Howa rabena mebarek el re7la di men awl mabtadet.
(... Our Lord has blessed this trip from the very beginning.)
18. تاكسى بيقولى عوز ٥٠٠ رويى فى مشوار آخرو يعمل ١٥٠، قمت شخرتلو قعد يضحك، ركينى ببلاش؛ أجيشن ستايل
(A cab driver tells me he wants /or: "I want"/ 500 rupees for a ride which is 150 max, I started snorting at him, he kept on laughing, and gave me a free ride. Egyptian style)
19. Phone networks here are about as reliable as condoms that are made in India.
20. That's me in the corner, that's me at the shop, buying some Biryani, which is really

spicy, and my riksha driver wants to pee. #EditedLyrics¹

21. Not to be racist and what not, but if you have a Polish friend, he will steal your shit.
Dude totally took an apple from my fridge.

22. Aside from those featured in Bollywood movies, Indians have the rhythm of a fly
with one of its wings torn away and 5 of its legs missing.

23. Mom on Skype: "Khod el nemra di, wa7da sa7ebeti, te3raf wa7id, ye3raf wa7da
metgaweza wa7id, akhooh sakin fi Hyderabad, Kalemo". #CrazyMama

(Mom on Skype: "Take this number, one girlfriend of mine knows a man who knows a woman who is
married to a man whose brother lives in Hyderabad. Call him." #CrazyMama)

24. Take it from me, lama tetgawezo, gahezo el beit men el hend, gebt talaga, 3'asala
we botagaz, kolo bi 3000 geneih. Yakhi a7a!

(Take it from me, when you get married furnish your home with stuff from India, I got a fridge, a
washing machine and a stove, all for 3000 /Egyptian/ pounds. Holy shit!)

25. Feinik yamma tigi teshoofi ebni 7aymoot mel goo3, 7a2olaha te FedEx 7allet
ferakh bel khodar.

(Where are you mummy, come see your boy, he's gonna starve to death, I'll tell her to FedEx me a
pot of chicken with vegetables.)

¹ Reference to the song "Losing My Religion," a worldwide hit from the 1990s by the American band R.E.M.

References^{*}

Abdel Aal, Ghada. 2008.

[*I Want to Get Married*. Cairo: Dar El Shorouk]

غادة عبد العال. 2008. *عايزة أتجوز*. القاهرة: دار الشروق.

Abdel-Massih, Ernest. T. et al. 2009.

A Reference Grammar of Egyptian Arabic. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Aboelezz, Mariam. 2009.

Latinised Arabic and connections to bilingual ability. *Papers from the Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics & Language Teaching*. (ed. Steve Disney et al.) vol. 3: Papers from LAEL PG 2008. 1-23.

Alaidy, Ahmed. 2009.

Being Abbas El Abd (a novel translated by Humphrey Davies). Cairo, New York: The American University in Cairo Press.

Ali, Abdul Sahib Mehdi. 1987.

A Linguistic Study of the Development of Scientific Vocabulary in Standard Arabic. London: KPI.

Al-Sabbagh, Ahmad. 2011.

[*A Tear Book*. Cairo: Dar al-Masry.]

أحمد الصباغ (2011) *كتاب مسيل للدموع – Ketab Mosyel Leldemo3*. القاهرة: دار المصري للنشر

Al-Wer, Enam. 2006.

Variation in Arabic languages. *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (2nd ed.) (ed. Keith Brown). Elsevier. 341-344.

* All the Internet links that appear here were checked and alive ("last accessed") in the period between September 27 and October 3. Whenever possible, I tried to provide the so-called "short URLs" - they (should) work the same way as the long ones. The Internet links are given in square brackets. I used the square brackets also for quoting the translations of Arabic references and transcription of the names of their publishers (As with the personal names in this thesis, the latter, in most cases, do not conform to some sort of scientific transcription, but rather follow the way these publishers transcribe themselves). The original references are then given in Arabic as well. It is for purely technical reasons (involving difficulties of formatting bi-scriptural and bi-directional lines of a text) that references in Arabic script (originals) follow their translations and transliterations.

I thank Professor Mark Sebba for sharing with me two of his papers (Sebba forthcoming, Sebba in press), and Professor Manfred Woidich for sharing (2010) which has become available online in the meantime.

- Amin, Galal. 2009.
 [The murder of the Arabic language. *Al-Shorouk*. (26 December)]
 جلال أمين (2009) "مقتل اللغة العربية" – الشروق
 [http://www.shorouknews.com/Columns/Column.aspx?id=165504]
- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2006.
 Introduction: sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 10(4): 419-438.
- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2007.
 Language choice and code-switching in German-based diasporic web forums. *The Multilingual Internet* (eds. Brenda Danet and Susan C. Herring). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 340-361.
- Angermeyer, Philipp S. 2005.
 Spelling bilingualism: script choice in Russian American classified ads and signage. *Language in Society*. 34. 493–531.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1990.
 Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. *Public Culture*. 2(2): 1-23.
- Arab Social Media Report. 2011.
Civil Movements: the impact of Facebook and Twitter. Arab Social Media Report.
 Dubai School of Government. 1(2). pp.30 [www.ArabSocialMediaReport.com]
- Armbrust, Walter. 1996.
Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Badawi, Elsaid. 1973.
 [Levels of Contemporary Arabic in Egypt. Cairo: Dar al-Maʿārif]
 السعيد بدوي (1973) مستويات العربية المعاصرة في مصر. القاهرة: دار المعارف
- Badawi, Elsaid, Michael G. Carter and Adrian Gully. 2004.
Modern Written Arabic: a comprehensive grammar. London, New York: Routledge.
- Bassam, Rehab. 2008.
 [Rice Pudding for Two. Cairo: Dar El Shorouk]
 رحاب بسام. 2008. أرز باللبن للشخصين. القاهرة: دار الشروق
- Bassiouney, Reem. 2006.
Functions of Code-switching in Egypt: evidence from monologues. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Bassiouney, Reem. 2009a.
Arabic Sociolinguistics: topics in diglossia, gender, identity and politics.
 Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

- Bassiouney, Reem. 2009b.
 The variety of housewives and coackroaches: examining code-choice in advertisements in Egypt. *Arabic Dialectology: in honour of Clive Holes on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*. (eds. Enam Al-Wer and Rudolf de Jong). Leiden: Brill. 273-284.
- Bassiouney, Reem. 2010. Redefining identity through code choice in *al-ḥubb fi 'l-manfā* by Bahā' Ṭāhir. *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*. 10: 101-118.
- Barton, David. 1994.
Literacy: an introduction to the ecology of written language. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bayat, Asef. 2003.
 From Amr Diab to Amr Khaled. *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*. (22-28 May) [http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/639/fe1.htm]
- Bayat, Asef. 2010.
Life as Politics: how ordinary people change the Middle East. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Bell, Allan. 1984.
 Language style as audience design. *Language in Society*. 13(2): 145-204.
- Belnap, R. Kirk. and Osama Shabaneh. 1992.
 Variable agreement and non-human plurals in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic. *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics IV*. (eds. Ellen Broselow, Mushira Eid & John McCarthy) Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 245-262.
- Belnap, R. Kirk. 1993.
 The meaning of deflected/strict agreement variation in Cairene Arabic. *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics V*. (eds. Mushira Eid & Clive Holes) Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 97-117.
- Belnap, R. Kirk and Brian Bishop. 2003.
 Arabic personal correspondence: a window on change in progress? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 163: 9-25.
- Blanc, Haim. 1960.
 Style variation in spoken Arabic: a sample of interdialectal educated conversation. In *Contributions to Arabic Linguistics*. (ed. Charles A. Ferguson). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 81-156.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2007.
 On scope and depth in linguistic ethnography. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 11(5): 682-688.

- Booth, Marilyn. 1992.
Colloquial Arabic poetry, politics, and the press in modern Egypt. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 24(3): 419-440.
- Cachia, Pierre. 1967.
The use of the colloquial in modern Arabic literature. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. 87(1): 12-22.
- Cameron, Deborah. 1995.
Verbal Hygiene: the politics of language. London: Routledge.
- Crouch, Ian. 2011.
The book of Egypt tweets. *The New Yorker*. (March 4) [<http://t.co/nFd70Ov>]
- Daher, Nazih. 1987.
Arabic sociolinguistics: state of the art. *Al-ʿArabiyya*. 20: 125-153.
- Dahlgren, Sven-Olof. 1998.
Word Order in Arabic. (Orientalia Gothoburgensia, 12.) Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.
- Davies, Humphrey. 2006.
Dialect literature. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. (eds. Kees Versteegh et al.) Leiden. vol. 1: 597-604.
- Denis, Eric. 2006.
Cairo as neo-liberal capital? From walled city to gated communities. *Cairo Cosmopolitan: politics, culture, and urban space in the new globalized Middle East*. (eds. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar). Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Desoki, Mohamed. 2011.
[25 January 2011: *The Revolution of Vinegar and Onion*. Cairo: Dar Dawwen.]
محمد الدسوقي رشدي (2011) ٢٥ يناير: ثورة الخل والبصل، القاهرة: دار دُون
- Doss, Madiha. 2006.
Cultural dynamics and linguistic practice in contemporary Egypt. *Cultural Dynamics in Contemporary Egypt. Cairo Papers in Social Science* (eds. Maha Abdelrahman et al.) 27(1&2): 51-68.
- Doss, Madiha. 2010.
ḥāl id-dunya: an Arabic news bulletin in 'aammīyya. Arabic and the Media: linguistic analyses and applications. (ed. Reem Bassiouney) Leiden: Brill. 123-140.
- Eid, Mushira. 1988.
Principles for code-switching between standard and Egyptian Arabic. *Al-ʿArabiyya*. 21: 51-79.

- Eid, Mushira. 2002.
Language is a choice: variation in Egyptian women's written discourse. *Language Contact and Language Conflict in Arabic: variations on a sociolinguistic theme* (ed. Aleya Rouchdy). Richmond: Curzon. 203-232.
- Eisele, John C. 2002.
Approaching diglossia: authorities, values, and representations. *Language Contact and Language Conflict in Arabic: variations on a sociolinguistic theme*. (ed. Aleya Rouchdy) Richmond: Curzon. 3-23.
- Eisele, John C. 2003.
Myth, values, and practice in the representation of Arabic. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 163: 43-59.
- Elbasiony, Mohamed. 2009.
[*The State of Facebook*. Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk]
محمد علي البسيوني (2009) دولة ال Facebook. القاهرة: دار الشروق
- El Esseily, Ahmad. 2009
[*A Book Without a Title*. Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk.]
أحمد العسيلي (2009) كتاب مالوش اسم. القاهرة: دار الشروق
- El Esseily, Ahmad. 2011.
[*The Second Book*. Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk]
أحمد العسيلي (2011) الكتابُ التاني. القاهرة: دار الشروق
- Elgan, Mike. 2011.
Why Twitter is obsolete. *PCWorld* (July 27). [<http://t.co/mNSULSQ>]
- El-Hassan, Shafer A. 1977.
Educated spoken Arabic in Egypt and the Levant: a critical review of diglossia and related concepts. *Archivum Linguisticum* VII(2): 112-132.
- El-Hassan, Shafer A. 1978.
Variation in the demonstrative system in educated spoken Arabic. *Archivum Linguisticum* IX: 32-57.
- Elsadda, Hoda. 2010.
Arab women bloggers: the emergence of literary counterpublics. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*. 3: 312:332.
- Emigh, William and Susan C. Herring. 2005.
Collaborative authoring on the web: a genre analysis of online encyclopedias. *Proceedings of the 38th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. 1-11.

- Etling, Bruce; John Kelly; Robert Faris, and John Palfrey. 2009.
Mapping the Arabic Blogosphere: politics, culture, and dissent. Berkman Center
 Research Publication No. 2009-06.
- Fahmy, Ziad. 2007.
*Popularizing Egyptian Nationalism: colloquial culture and media capitalism,
 1870- 1919*. PhD thesis, The University of Arizona.
- Ferguson, Charles. 1959.
 Diglossia. *Word*.15: 325-340.
- Ferguson, Charles. 1996 (1991).
 Epilogue: diglossia revisited. In *Understanding Arabic: essays in contemporary
 Arabic linguistics in honor of El Said Badawi*. (ed. Alaa Elgibali). Cairo: The
 American University in Cairo Press. 49-67.
- Gee, James P. 1990.
Social Linguistics and Literacies: ideology in discourses. London: The Falmer
 Press.
- Georgakopoulou, A. 2006.
 Postscript: computer-mediated communication in sociolinguistics. *Journal of
 Sociolinguistics*. 10(4): 548-557.
- Gully, Adrian. 1996-1997.
 The discourse of Arabic advertising: preliminary investigations. *Journal of Arabic
 and Islamic Studies* 1: 1-46.
- Gumperz, John J. 1982.
Discourse Strategies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hachimi, Atiqa. 2007.
 Becoming Casablančan: Fessis in Casablanca as a case study. *Arabic in the City:
 issues in language variation and change*. (eds. Catherine Miller, Dominique
 Caubet, Janet Watson & Enam Al-Wer). London, New York: Routledge. 97-122.
- Haeri, Niloofar. 1996a.
The Sociolinguistic Market of Cairo: gender, class, and education. London, New
 York: Kegan Paul International.
- Haeri, Niloofar. 1996b.
 Conceptualizing heterogeneity in Arabic. *Égypte/Monde arabe* (Première série,
 Les langues en Égypte, eds. Madiha Doss and Catherine Miller) 27-28:
 301-315. [<http://ema.revues.org/index1947.html>]

- Haeri, Niloofar. 1997.
The reproduction of symbolic capital: language, state, and class in Egypt.
Current Anthropology 38(5): 795-816.
- Haeri, Niloofar. 2000.
Form and ideology: Arabic sociolinguistics and beyond. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 29(Oct): 61-87.
- Haeri, Niloofar. 2003.
Sacred Language, Ordinary People: dilemmas of culture and politics in Egypt. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hafez, Sabry. 2010.
[The Internet and the isolationists. *Akhbar al-'Adab*, 31 July 2010]
صبري حافظ (2010) "الإنترنت ودعاة العزلة". أخبار الأدب. 31 يوليو
- Hanna, Sameh. 2009.
Othello in the Egyptian Vernacular: negotiating the 'doxic' in drama translation and identity formation. *The Translator*. 15: 157-178.
- Hanks, William F. 1995.
Language and Communicative Practices. Boulder: Westview Press
- Herrera, Linda. 2011.
Egypt's Revolution 2.0: the Facebook Factor. *Jadaliyya*, February 12.
[<http://bit.ly/nu8WoE>]
- Hinds, Martin and Elsaid Badawi. 1986.
A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic: Arabic-English. Beirut: Librairie du Liban.
- Holes, Clive D. 1993.
The uses of variation: a study of the political speeches of Gamal Abd Al-Nasir.
Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics V. (eds. Mushira Eid & Clive Holes)
Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 13-45.
- Holes, Clive D. 2004.
Modern Arabic: structures, functions, and varieties. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Holes, Clive D. 2008.
The 'mixed' Arabic of the letters of 19th and early 20th century Gulf rulers. *Moyen arabe et variétés mixtes de l'arabe à travers l'histoire (Actes du Premier Colloque International, Louvain-la-Neuve, 10-14 mai 2004)* (eds. Jérôme Lentin & Jacques Grand'Henry). Institut Orientaliste, Université catholique de Louvain: Louvain-la-Neuve. 193-230.

- Hopkins, Nicholas S. and Reem Saad. (eds.) 2004.
Upper Egypt: Identity and Change. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Høigilt, Jacob. 2011.
Islamist Rhetoric: language and culture in contemporary Egypt. Oxon, New York: Routledge.
- Ibrahim, Muhammad H. 1986.
 Standard and prestige language: a problem in Arabic sociolinguistics.
Anthropological Linguistics 28(1): 115-126.
- Ibrahim, Zeynab. 2009
 Cases of written code-switching in Egyptian opposition newspapers. *Arabic and the Media: linguistic analyses and applications* (ed. Reem Bassiouney). Leiden: Brill. 23-46.
- Idle, Nadia and Alex Nunns. (eds.) 2011.
Tweets from Tahrir: Egypt's revolution as it unfolded, in the words of the people who made it. (with a foreword by Ahdaf Soueif) New York: OR Books.
- Ilahi, Nadia. 2009.
 You gotta fight for your right(s): street harassment and its relationship to gendered violence, civil society, and gendered negotiations. MA thesis. The American University in Cairo.
- Irvine, Judith T. and Susan Gal. 2000.
 Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. *Regimes of Language: ideologies, politics and identities*. (ed. Paul V. Kroskrity) Oxford: James Currey. 35-83.
- Jacquemet, Marco. 2005.
 Transidiomatic practices: language and power in the age of globalization.
Language & Communication 25: 257–277.
- Johnson, Steven. 2009.
 How Twitter will change the way we live. *Time Magazine* (5 June)
 [<http://t.co/7FRQZ0A>]
- Joseph, John E. 1987.
Eloquence and Power: the rise of language standards and standard languages.
 London: Frances Pinter.
- Kaye, Alan S. 1970.
 Modern standard Arabic and the colloquials. *Lingua*. 24: 374-391.
- Kaye, Alan S. 1972.
 Remarks on diglossia in Arabic: well-defined vs. ill-defined. *Linguistics*. 81(1): 32-48.

- Kaye, Alan S. 1994.
 Formal vs. informal in Arabic: diglossia, triglossia, tetraglossia, etc., polyglossia – multiglossia viewed as a continuum. *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik*. 27: 47-66.
- Kaye, Alan S. 2001.
 Diglossia: the state of the art. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 152: 117-129.
- Kholoussy, Hanan. 2010.
 The fiction (and non-fiction) of Egypt's marriage crisis. *MER Online – Interventions* (December) [<http://bit.ly/ojWZFW>]
- Lahlali, El Mustapha. 2011.
 The Arab Spring and the discourse of desperation. *Arab Media & Society*. 13 (summer). [<http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=772>]
- Leap, William L. and Tom Boellstorff. 2004.
Speaking in Queer Tongues: globalisation and gay language. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Lentin, Jérôme. 2006.
 Middle Arabic. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. (eds. Kees Versteegh et al.) Leiden. vol. 3: 215-224.
- Mansour, Gerda. 2007.
 Diglossia in the context of language change and variation. *Al-Logha* 6: 9-27.
- Massad, Joseph. 2007.
Desiring Arabs. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mazraani, Nathalie. 1997.
Aspects of Language Variation in Arabic Political Speech-making. Richmond: Curzon.
- Mehrez, Samia. 2010.
Egypt's Culture Wars: politics and practice. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Meiseles, Gustav. 1979.
 Informal written Arabic: a preliminary evaluation of data. *Israel Oriental Studies*. 9: 272-314.
- Meiseles, Gustav. 1980.
 Educated spoken Arabic and the Arabic language continuum. *Archivum Linguisticum*. XI(2): 118-148.

- Mejdell, Gunvor. 1996.
Some sociolinguistic concepts of style and stylistic variation in spoken Arabic (with reference to Naguib Mahfouz talking about his life). *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature* (ed. J. R. Smart). London: Curzon. 316-326.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2002.
Features of *luġa wuṣṭā* – mixed discourse in spoken Arabic in Egypt. *Aspects of the Dialects of Arabic Today*. (eds. A. Youssi et al.) Rabat: AMAPATRIL. 317-328.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2006a.
Mixed Styles in Spoken Arabic in Egypt: somewhere between order and chaos.
Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2006b.
Code-switching. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. vol. 1 (gen. ed. Kees Versteegh). Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2008a.
What is happening to *luġhatunā l-gamīla*?: recent media representations and social practice in Egypt. *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 8: 108-124.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2008b.
'Middle Arabic' across time and medium/mode: some reflexions and suggestions. *Moyen arabe et variétés mixtes de l'arabe à travers l'histoire (Actes du Premier Colloque International, Louvain-la-Neuve, 10-14 mai 2004)* (eds. Jérôme Lentin & Jacques Grand'Henry). Institut Orientaliste, Université catholique de Louvain: Louvain-la-Neuve. 355-372.
- Miller, Catherine. 2005.
Between accommodation and resistance: Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo. *Linguistics* 43(5): 903-956.
- Milroy, James. 2007.
The ideology of the standard language. *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*. (eds. Carmen Llamas, Louise Mullany and Peter Stockwell).
Routledge: London. 133-139.
- Mitchell, T. F. 1975.
Some preliminary observations on the Arabic koine. *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*. 2(2): 70-86.
- Mitchell, T. F. 1980.
Dimensions of style in a grammar of educated spoken Arabic. *Archivum Linguisticum*. XI(2): 89-106.

- Mitchell, T. F. 1986.
What is educated spoken Arabic? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 61: 7-32.
- Mitchell, T. F. and S. A. El-Hassan. 1994.
Modality, Mood and Aspect in Spoken Arabic (with special reference to Egypt and the Levant). London and New York: Kegan Paul International.
- Mohamed Mahmoud, Ghada. 2008.
[*And This is My Dance*. Cairo: Dar El Shorouk.]
غادة محمد محمود. 2008. *أما هذه.. فرقصتى أنا*. القاهرة: دار الشروق.
- Moll, Yasmin. 2010.
Islamic Televangelism: religion, media and visibility in contemporary Egypt. *Arab Media & Society*. 10
- Mufwene, Salikoko. 2002.
Colonisation, globalisation, and the future of languages in the twenty-first century. *IJMS: International Journal on Multicultural Societies*. UNESCO 4(2):162-193. [www.unesco.org/shs/ijms/vol4/issue2/art2]
- Negm, Nawara. 2009.
[*A Nest on the Wind*: Cairo: Dar el Ain]
نوارة نجم (2009) *عش عَ الريح*. القاهرة: دار العين للنشر والتوزيع
- Otsuji, Emi & Alastair Pennycook. 2010.
Metrolingualism: fixity, fluidity and language in flux. *International Journal of Multilingualism*. 7(3): 240-254.
- Owens, Jonathan. 2001.
Arabic sociolinguistics. *Arabica*. 48(4): 419-469.
- Palfreyman, David and Muhamed al Khalil. 2003.
A funky language for teenzz to use: representing Gulf Arabic in instant messaging. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 9(1).
[http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol9/issue1/palfreyman.html]
- Panović, Ivan. 2010.
The beginnings of Wikipedia Masry. *Al-Logha*. 8: 93-127.
- Parkinson, Dilworth B. 1991.
Searching for modern *fuṣḥā*: real-life formal Arabic. *Al-^cArabiyya*. 24: 31-64.
- Parkinson, Dilworth B. 1993.
Knowing standard Arabic: testing Egyptians' MSA abilities. *Perspectives on Arabic linguistics V* (eds. Mushira Eid & Clive Holes). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 47-73.

- Parkinson, Dilworth B. 1996.
 Variability in standard Arabic grammar skills. *Understanding Arabic: essays in contemporary Arabic linguistics in honor of El Said Badawi*. (ed. Alaa Elgibali). Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press. 91-101.
- Parkinson, Dilworth B. 2003.
 Verbal features in oral *fuṣḥā* performances in Cairo. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 163: 27-41.
- Pennycook, Alastair. 2008.
 Translingual English. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*. (International Forum on English as an International Language, special forum issue, eds. Sharifian, Farzad; Clyne Michael) 31(3): 30.1-30.9.
- Pennycook, Alastair. 2010.
Language as a Local Practice. London, New York: Routledge.
- Perez, Juan Carlos. 2011.
 As Twitter turns 5, it delivers 350B 'tweets' per day. *Computerworld* (15 July).
 [http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9218454/As_Twitter_turns_5_it_delivers_350B_tweets_per_day]
- Rampton, Ben. 1995.
Crossing: language and ethnicity among adolescents. London: Longman.
- Rosenbaum, Gabriel M. 2000.
 'Fuṣḥāmmiyya': alternating style in Egyptian prose. *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik*. 38: 68-87.
- Rosenbaum, Gabriel M. 2004.
 Egyptian Arabic as a written language. *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*. 29: 281-340.
- Rosenbaum, Gabriel M. 2008.
 Mixing colloquial and literary Arabic in modern Egyptian prose through the use of free indirect style and interior monologue. *Moyen arabe et variétés mixtes de l'arabe à travers l'histoire (Actes du Premier Colloque International, Louvain-la-Neuve, 10-14 mai 2004)* (eds. Jérôme Lentin & Jacques Grand'Henry). Institut Orientaliste, Université catholique de Louvain: Louvain-la-Neuve. 391-404.
- Safouan, Moustapha. 2007.
Why Are the Arabs Not Free? - the politics of writing. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Sallam, A. M. 1980.
 Phonological variation in educated spoken Arabic: a study of the uvular and related plosive types. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. XLII(1).

- Sebba, Mark. 2007.
Spelling and Society: the politics and culture of orthography around the world.
 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sebba, Mark. forthcoming.
 A multimodal analytical framework for multilingual texts.
- Sebba, Mark. in press.
 Introduction: language mixing and code-switching in writing. *Language-Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: approaches to mixed-language written discourse.* (eds. Mark Sebba, Shahrzad Mahootian, Carla Jonsson). Routledge.
- Shehab, Shaden. 2011.
 Anti-strike law effective? *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*. 1041 (31 March – 6 April).
 [<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2011/1041/eg5.htm>]
- Shenker, Jack. 2010.
 Sadat's daughter to sue over claims he poisoned Nasser. *Guardian*
 (20 September)[<http://t.co/k9onlRX>]
- Schielke, Samuli. 2009.
 Being good in Ramadan: ambivalence, fragmentation and the moral self in the lives of young Egyptians. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (special issue 1: Islam, Politics, Anthropology): 24-40.
- Shiels, Maggie. 2011.
 Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey rejoins company. *BBC* (28 March 2011)
 [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12889048>]
- Soliman, Abdelmeneim. 2008.
The Changing Role of Arabic in Religious Discourse: a sociolinguistic study of Egyptian Arabic. PhD thesis. Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Somekh, Sasson. 1979.
 The diglotic dilemma in the drama of Tawfiq al-Hakim. *Israel Oriental Studies*. 9: 392-403.
- Somekh, Sasson. 1991.
Genre and Language in Modern Arabic Literature. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Soueif, Ahdaf. 2011a.
 In Egypt it was silence or shouting. Now it's a great conversation. *Guardian*. (8 March) [<http://gu.com/p/2ntyk/tw>]
- Soueif, Ahdaf. 2011b.
 Egypt's revolution is stuck in a rut, but we still have the spirit to see it through. *Guardian*. (12 July) [<http://gu.com/p/3vg8q/tw>]

- Spot On. 2010.
Middle East & North Africa Facebook Demographics (May 2010). Spot On Public Relations [http://www.spotonpr.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/FacebookMENA_24May10.pdf]
- Street, Brian. 2001. *Literacy: a critical sourcebook*. (eds. Ellen Cushman et al.). Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. 430-442.
- Stroud, Christopher and Lionel Wee. 2007.
 Consuming identities: language planning and policy in Singaporean late modernity. *Language Policy* 6: 253–279.
- Suleiman, Yasir. 2003.
The Arabic Language and National Identity: a study in ideology. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Suleiman, Yasir. 2004.
A War of Words: language and conflict in the Middle East. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suleiman, Yasir. 2006.
 Charting the nation: Arabic and the politics of identity. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. 26: 125-148.
- Szwed, John F. 2001.
 The ethnography of literacy. *Literacy: a critical sourcebook*. (eds. Ellen Cushman et al.). Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. 421-429.
- Thompson, Clive. 2008.
 Brave new world of digital intimacy (I'm so totally, digitally close to you). *The New York Times* (5 September) [<http://nyti.ms/nlnYHp>]
- Versteegh, Kees. 1997.
The Arabic Language. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wise, Lindsay. 2004.
 Amr Khaled: broadcasting the nahda". *TBS Journal*. 13 (fall)
 [<http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Fall04/wiseamrkhaled.html>]
- Wilmsen, David. 1999.
ḥāga tāni?: an examination of degendered adjectival agreement in Cairene Arabic. *al-ʿArabiyya*. 32: 219-238.
- Woidich, Manfred. 1994.
 Cairo Arabic and the Egyptian dialects". *Actes des premières journées internationales de dialectologie arabe de Paris*. (eds. Dominique Caubet & Martine Vanhove) Paris: INALCO. 493-507

Woidich, Manfred. 2010.

Von der wörtlichen Rede zur Sprachprosa: zur Entwicklung der Ägyptisch-Arabischen Dialektliteratur. *Dialektliteratur heute – regional und international. Forschungskolloquium am Interdisziplinären Zentrum für Dialektforschung an der Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, 19.11.2009–20.11.2009.*

(ed. Horst Haider Munske).

[pdf available from: <http://www.dialektforschung.phil.uni-erlangen.de/dialektliteratur>]

[http://www.opus.ub.uni-erlangen.de/opus/volltexte/2010/2199/pdf/04_Woidich_Aegyptisch_Arabische_Dialektliteratur.pdf]

Wodich, Manfred and Rabha Heinen-Nasr. 2004.

kullu tamām!: an introduction to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. Cairo, New York: The American University in Cairo Press.

Yaghan, Mohammad Ali. 2008.

'Arabizi': a contemporary style of Arabic slang, *Design Issues.* 24(2): 39-52.