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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONTEMPORARY ARABIC LANGUAGE USAGE

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become one of the most influential communication tools in contemporary society, significantly transforming the ways people communicate, interact, and express themselves through language. The Arabic language, with its rich linguistic heritage, multiple dialects, and distinctive relationship between Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and colloquial varieties, has experienced considerable changes as a result of digital communication. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube, and X have created new opportunities for Arabic speakers to communicate across geographical and cultural boundaries. However, these platforms have also encouraged the development of informal linguistic practices, including Arabizi, code-switching, abbreviations, dialectal expressions, emojis, and hybrid forms of communication. This study examines the influence of social media on contemporary Arabic language usage, focusing on changes in vocabulary, spelling, grammar, writing styles, language identity, and the relationship between Standard Arabic and regional dialects. It adopts a qualitative, descriptive, and literature-based research approach, drawing on recent academic studies published between 2023 and 2025. The discussion highlights both the positive and negative consequences of digital communication for Arabic language development. While social media contributes to the wider circulation of Arabic content, linguistic creativity, cultural interaction, and the development of new vocabulary, it may also reduce the frequency of formal Arabic usage in certain informal communication contexts. The study argues that social media should not be viewed exclusively as a threat to Arabic linguistic traditions but as a changing communication environment that requires appropriate educational awareness and effective digital language promotion. It concludes that balancing linguistic innovation with the preservation of Modern Standard Arabic is essential for strengthening the position of Arabic in contemporary digital society.

KEYWORDS:*Social Media, Arabic Language, Modern Standard Arabic, Arabic Dialects, Digital Communication, Arabizi, Code-Switching, Language Change, Linguistic Identity, Digital Literacy, Language Preservation, Online Discourse, Language Variation, Contemporary Arabic Usage.*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an essential part of everyday communication in contemporary society. The rapid development of digital technology has changed how individuals communicate, share information, express opinions, and maintain relationships. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, and X provide opportunities for individuals to communicate instantly with people from different geographical, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Nasr, A. M., Abdel-Sater, M. A., Hussein, N. A. G., Daniala, A., & Edrees, M. F. (2023). found that These platforms have also influenced language practices by encouraging shorter messages, informal expressions, abbreviations, and new forms of digital interaction. Language, which traditionally develops through social interaction and cultural transmission, is increasingly influenced by online communication environments. Consequently, social media has become an important factor in contemporary linguistic change.The Arabic language occupies a distinctive position in the digital communication environment because of its historical importance, geographical distribution, and linguistic diversity. Arabic is spoken across numerous countries and communities, with different regional dialects and varieties used in everyday communication. Modern Standard Arabic is commonly associated with formal writing, education, official communication, literature, and

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news media, whereas colloquial Arabic varieties are widely used in everyday conversations. This relationship creates a distinctive linguistic situation in which Arabic speakers frequently move between formal and informal language depending on their communication needs. Social media has further expanded this linguistic flexibility by providing spaces where different Arabic varieties can appear together.One significant development associated with social media is the increased use of colloquial Arabic in written communication. Traditionally, formal Arabic was strongly associated with academic writing, newspapers, official documents, and educational materials. However, digital platforms have encouraged users to write in the dialects they normally speak. People frequently use Egyptian, Levantine, Gulf, Iraqi, Moroccan, Algerian, and other regional varieties when posting comments, sharing videos, and communicating with friends. This development demonstrates that social media has expanded the written presence of spoken Arabic varieties and has created new opportunities for regional linguistic expression. Research on Arabic dialect identification also demonstrates the substantial diversity of user-generated Arabic content across digital platforms (Alsuwaylimi, 2024).

Another important development is the emergence and continued use of Arabizi, also known as Franco-Arabic. Arabizi involves writing Arabic words using Latin letters and numbers to represent Arabic sounds that do not have direct equivalents in English. This practice is particularly visible in informal online conversations, where users may prefer Latin characters because of typing habits, keyboard settings, convenience, or social familiarity. Although Arabizi can make communication easier for some users, it raises questions concerning Arabic spelling, literacy, and the future relationship between Arabic script and digital communication. Its development reflects the ability of language users to adapt communication practices to technological environments.Furthermore, social media has increased interaction between Arabic and other languages, particularly English and French. Many Arabic-speaking users incorporate foreign words, expressions, and technical terminology into their online communication. This phenomenon, generally described as code-switching or code-mixing, can be observed in comments, captions, videos, and private messages. The use of English terminology may be associated with education, professional communication, technological developments, globalization, and social identity. Recent research on Jordanian social media communication demonstrates that Arabic-English code-mixing is a noticeable feature of online discourse (Aburqayiq et al., 2025). Such practices reveal that contemporary Arabic communication is increasingly shaped by multilingual interaction.Social media also creates opportunities for promoting Arabic language learning, cultural identity, and linguistic creativity. Educational institutions, language teachers, writers, journalists, and cultural organizations can use digital platforms to distribute Arabic learning materials, literature, grammar lessons, and cultural information.

Arabic-speaking content creators can reach international audiences and encourage interest in Arabic language and culture. Nevertheless, the widespread use of informal expressions and non-standard spelling creates challenges for language education and formal communication. Therefore, examining the influence of social media on contemporary Arabic language usage is important for understanding the relationship between technological development, linguistic change, and cultural preservation. Yafooz, W. M. (2024). Explained that This research investigates how social media influences contemporary Arabic language usage and explores the positive and negative consequences of digital communication for Arabic linguistic practices. It considers the development of colloquial writing, Arabizi, code-switching,

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vocabulary innovation, spelling patterns, and the relationship between Modern Standard Arabic and regional dialects. The study also examines the role of social media in shaping linguistic identity and promoting Arabic language awareness. By reviewing academic research published between 2023 and 2025, it seeks to provide a balanced understanding of how digital communication is transforming Arabic language practices while identifying possible strategies for preserving Arabic linguistic heritage in an increasingly connected world.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. How does social media influence contemporary Arabic language usage, particularly in relation to Modern Standard Arabic, regional dialects, Arabizi, code-switching, vocabulary development, and linguistic identity?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of social media on contemporary Arabic language usage and identify the major linguistic changes associated with digital communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has introduced important changes in the ways Arabic speakers use language in everyday communication. Unlike traditional forms of communication, which often follow established linguistic conventions, digital platforms encourage spontaneous, rapid, and interactive language production. Users frequently communicate through short messages, comments, captions, and multimedia content. These communication practices have contributed to the development of new linguistic patterns that reflect the demands of digital environments. Arabic speakers increasingly use informal expressions and regional dialects in written communication, creating a digital language environment in which formal and informal varieties coexist.The influence of digital communication on Arabic is particularly important because Arabic has a long-established distinction between formal and colloquial language. Modern Standard Arabic is traditionally associated with formal writing and public communication, while regional dialects are commonly used in everyday conversation. Social media has challenged this traditional division by making colloquial Arabic increasingly visible in written communication. Nassif, L., & Shapiro, S. (2023). Explains that Users may write dialectal expressions when discussing personal experiences, sharing opinions, participating in discussions, or responding to entertainment content. This development suggests that written communication is becoming more flexible and closely connected to spoken language.Research by Alsuwaylimi (2024) demonstrates the diversity of Arabic dialects used in social media. The study introduced a dataset containing 121,289 user-generated comments representing Egyptian, Jordanian, Gulf, and Yemeni dialects. Its findings demonstrate the complexity of identifying Arabic dialects in online communication and highlight the importance of recognizing linguistic variation in digital environments. The research also illustrates that social media provides extensive material for studying contemporary Arabic language practices.

The transformation of Arabic digital communication should therefore be understood as part of a broader process of linguistic adaptation. Social media users do not necessarily abandon traditional Arabic structures; rather, they select linguistic forms according to their

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communication purposes, audiences, and social environments. Formal Arabic may remain appropriate for educational discussions and professional publications, whereas colloquial varieties may be more suitable for informal interaction. Digital communication consequently expands the contexts in which different Arabic varieties can be used.One of the most important issues in contemporary Arabic sociolinguistics is the relationship between Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic. This relationship is often discussed through the concept of diglossia, which describes the functional distribution of different language varieties within a speech community. Modern Standard Arabic generally serves formal and institutional purposes, whereas regional dialects are widely used in everyday social interaction. Social media has introduced new opportunities for these varieties to interact within the same digital communication environment.In online communication, users frequently move between formal and informal Arabic depending on the topic, platform, and intended audience. For example, a user may write a formal Arabic paragraph when discussing an educational subject but use a regional dialect when commenting on a humorous video. Similarly, social media influencers may combine Modern Standard Arabic with colloquial expressions to make their content understandable and attractive to wider audiences. These practices indicate that linguistic choices are influenced by communication objectives rather than exclusively by traditional grammatical expectations.

Recent research on written Arabic in YouTube comments has examined changes in the use of Standard and Colloquial Arabic across different periods and types of content (Almoaily, 2025). This research is particularly relevant because it investigates how digital discourse may challenge the traditional association of Standard Arabic with serious content and colloquial Arabic with informal entertainment. It provides an important basis for examining the changing relationship between formal and informal Arabic in online environments.The increasing presence of colloquial Arabic in digital writing does not automatically indicate the disappearance of Modern Standard Arabic. Instead, it suggests that Arabic users are developing more flexible language practices. Both varieties continue to serve important social purposes. However, the increased visibility of dialectal Arabic creates questions about formal writing skills, educational standards, and the role of Standard Arabic in future digital communication. Educational institutions therefore need to recognize the importance of both linguistic varieties while encouraging students to understand the appropriate contexts for their use.Arabizi is among the most recognizable linguistic developments associated with Arabic digital communication. It refers to the use of Latin letters and numbers to represent Arabic words and sounds. The practice developed partly because of technological limitations in earlier communication environments, although it has continued through social habits and user preferences. Redouane, M., Lagnaoui, A., Haissen, F., Sadki, O., & Raji, M. (2024). Explained that For example, numbers such as 3 and 7 may represent Arabic sounds that are difficult to reproduce through conventional English spelling. Arabizi is particularly common in informal conversations, online comments, and messaging applications.The popularity of Arabizi reflects the relationship between language, technology, and social identity. Some users consider it convenient because they are familiar with Latin keyboards or because they frequently communicate in multilingual environments. Others use it because it has become part of their peer-group communication style. In certain contexts, Arabizi allows speakers to express local identity and maintain informal relationships with friends. Consequently, it should be understood as a digital linguistic practice rather than simply as an incorrect form of Arabic writing.

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However, Arabizi also raises concerns about Arabic literacy and spelling. When users regularly write Arabic words using Latin characters, they may become less accustomed to conventional Arabic orthography in informal digital contexts. This can create difficulties when distinguishing between casual online writing and formal academic writing. Nevertheless, it would be inappropriate to assume that every user of Arabizi has weak Arabic literacy. Individuals may use Arabizi in informal communication while maintaining strong reading and writing abilities in Arabic.Guercif's 2023 study of linguistic practices in the digital age discusses the emergence of hybrid expressions alongside Standard and colloquial Arabic. The research identifies Arabizi and Franco-Arabic as examples of the changing forms of linguistic expression associated with social networking sites. These developments illustrate how technological environments contribute to the creation of new writing practices. Therefore, Arabizi represents both a challenge for conventional Arabic orthography and an example of linguistic creativity in contemporary communication.Code-switching and code-mixing are important characteristics of multilingual communication. Code-switching generally involves alternating between two or more languages within a conversation, whereas code-mixing involves combining linguistic elements from different languages within a sentence or expression. In Arabic digital communication, English is particularly visible because of globalization, international education, technological development, and the widespread use of English-language applications and terminology. Alsuwaylimi, A. A. (2024). revealed that Arabic-speaking social media users frequently incorporate English words into Arabic sentences. Expressions relating to education, technology, entertainment, business, and popular culture may appear in English even when the surrounding conversation is conducted in Arabic. These practices may reflect the absence of familiar Arabic technical terminology, the influence of international media, or the desire to communicate with multilingual audiences. In other situations, English expressions may be used to create a particular social impression or demonstrate familiarity with global trends.

Aburqayiq, Altakhainah, and Alsariera (2025) investigated Arabic-English code-mixing among Jordanians on social media. Their research examined recorded videos from Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Using Muysken's classification, the researchers identified insertional, congruent lexicalization, and alternational forms of code-mixing. Their results showed that insertional code-mixing represented 80% of the identified instances. The study also discussed the influence of social status, prestige, globalization, technological developments, artificial intelligence, and educational background.These findings demonstrate that language mixing is influenced by social and cultural circumstances rather than being exclusively a linguistic phenomenon. Users may choose English expressions because they are convenient, widely understood, or associated with particular professional and cultural environments. At the same time, extensive reliance on foreign vocabulary may create challenges for the development and promotion of Arabic terminology. A balanced approach should therefore encourage Arabic vocabulary development without unnecessarily restricting multilingual communication.Language is an important component of individual and collective identity. People use language not only to exchange information but also to communicate cultural belonging, regional background, social relationships, and personal attitudes. Social media has expanded opportunities for Arabic speakers to express their identities through regional dialects, traditional expressions, multilingual communication, and culturally specific vocabulary.Online platforms allow Arabic-speaking individuals from different countries to communicate directly. This interaction creates opportunities for cultural exchange and increases the visibility of linguistic varieties that may receive less attention in

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traditional media. Users can share local expressions, traditional stories, poetry, jokes, and cultural information with international audiences. Regional dialects consequently become important resources for representing local identity and establishing relationships with online communities.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, descriptive, and literature-based research methodology to examine the influence of social media on contemporary Arabic language usage. The methodology is designed to investigate linguistic changes associated with online communication and to understand how social media platforms influence vocabulary, spelling, grammar, writing styles, language identity, and the relationship between Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial dialects. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research focuses on understanding language practices, communication patterns, and social meanings rather than measuring a single numerical relationship. The study relies primarily on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic conference proceedings, published research papers, and relevant scholarly publications released between 2023 and 2025. The literature selection focuses on studies addressing Arabic digital communication, Arabizi, code-switching, dialectal language, online identity, and linguistic transformation. Relevant studies were identified through academic search platforms and publication databases, with attention given to publication dates, relevance to the research question, research methodology, and contribution to Arabic sociolinguistics. The selected literature was examined through thematic analysis, allowing recurring ideas and linguistic developments to be organized into major categories. These categories include the increased use of colloquial Arabic, the development of hybrid writing systems, Arabic-English code-mixing, digital vocabulary innovation, changes in spelling and grammatical conventions, and the educational implications of informal online writing. Particular attention was given to identifying similarities and differences between the conclusions of individual studies. Research evidence from different Arab communities was also considered to avoid treating Arabic-speaking populations as linguistically homogeneous. The methodology recognizes that Egyptian, Levantine, Gulf, Iraqi, and North African Arabic varieties have different linguistic characteristics and social contexts. In addition, the study distinguishes between evidence reported directly by previous researchers and broader interpretations developed through the present literature synthesis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design follows a descriptive-analytical structure that examines the influence of social media on contemporary Arabic language usage through the interpretation and comparison of existing academic findings. The study is organized around the central research question concerning the relationship between digital communication and changes in Arabic linguistic practices. The first stage involves identifying the main concepts associated with contemporary Arabic usage, including Modern Standard Arabic, colloquial Arabic, Arabizi, code-switching, language variation, and digital identity. The second stage involves selecting relevant academic publications from 2023 to 2025 that investigate these concepts in relation to social media. The third stage involves organizing the selected literature into thematic categories to establish the major patterns and differences reported by researchers. The fourth stage involves comparing the findings of different studies to identify common developments

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and areas of disagreement. The final stage involves interpreting the evidence through sociolinguistic perspectives and developing conclusions concerning the positive and negative implications of social media for Arabic language development. The research design considers different social media environments because language practices may vary between platforms. For example, WhatsApp and similar messaging applications encourage personal and informal communication, whereas YouTube and Facebook comments provide spaces for public discussion. Instagram and TikTok encourage the use of captions, short expressions, audiovisual content, and interactive responses. X provides opportunities for concise public discussion and the circulation of opinions. These differences are important because linguistic choices depend partly on the communication purpose and audience of each platform. The research also considers the influence of age, education, multilingual background, geographical location, and social identity as contextual factors discussed in the reviewed literature. However, these factors are treated as analytical considerations rather than variables measured through an original survey. The descriptive-analytical design makes it possible to examine social media as both a communication technology and a social environment in which language develops. It also provides an opportunity to understand the relationship between linguistic innovation and language preservation without assuming that every change represents a decline in Arabic language quality.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis is based on a thematic examination of the academic literature published between 2023 and 2025. The selected studies are compared according to their research objectives, methodologies, linguistic focus, and major conclusions. The analysis identifies recurring patterns in contemporary Arabic digital communication and organizes them into interconnected themes. The first major theme concerns the increased use of colloquial Arabic in written communication. The reviewed literature indicates that social media has expanded the visibility of regional Arabic dialects by allowing users to write in the varieties they use in everyday conversations. This development is especially noticeable in informal comments, entertainment content, personal messages, and discussions among friends. The second theme concerns Arabizi and hybrid writing practices. The literature identifies the use of Latin characters and numbers as an important characteristic of informal Arabic digital communication. This practice demonstrates how users adapt their writing to technological environments and personal preferences. The third theme involves Arabic-English code-mixing. Research on Jordanian social media communication by Aburqayiq et al. (2025) provides evidence that insertional code-mixing is particularly common in the material they examined. Their findings indicate that language mixing can be associated with prestige, education, globalization, and technological development. The fourth theme concerns dialectal diversity and digital language processing. Alsuwaylimi (2024) examined a dataset of 121,289 social media comments representing four major Arabic dialects and demonstrated the importance of dialect identification in online language analysis. Similarly, Alhafni et al. (2024) investigated dialect identification and normalization, demonstrating that differences in dialectal spelling create challenges for Arabic text-processing systems. The fifth theme concerns linguistic identity and cultural expression. The literature suggests that users employ regional dialects, informal expressions, and multilingual vocabulary to establish relationships and express personal and cultural identities.

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FINDINGS

The findings of this literature-based study reveal that social media has become an important influence on contemporary Arabic language usage. The reviewed research demonstrates that digital communication has expanded the range of contexts in which Arabic is written, spoken, modified, and shared. One major finding is the increased visibility of colloquial Arabic in written communication. Social media users frequently employ regional dialects when communicating with friends, commenting on videos, sharing personal experiences, and participating in online discussions. This development has contributed to the wider recognition of dialectal varieties as important forms of everyday digital expression.A second finding concerns the development of Arabizi and other hybrid writing practices. The use of Latin letters and numbers to represent Arabic sounds demonstrates the flexibility of language in response to technological and social conditions. Although these practices may create challenges for conventional Arabic spelling, they also demonstrate the creativity of digital language users. Their significance should therefore be evaluated according to communication context rather than treated automatically as evidence of linguistic decline.A third finding is the increased presence of Arabic-English code-mixing. The research by Aburqayiq et al. (2025) demonstrates that code-mixing is an established feature of the Jordanian social media material they examined. English vocabulary is incorporated into Arabic communication for different reasons, including educational, technological, professional, and social purposes. This finding suggests that globalization and multilingual interaction play important roles in shaping contemporary Arabic communication.A fourth finding relates to linguistic diversity. Arabic social media content contains considerable regional variation, and users employ different vocabulary, spelling conventions, and grammatical structures according to their dialects. The research by Alsuwaylimi (2024) and Alhafni et al. (2024) demonstrates that this variation creates challenges for computational language identification and text normalization. It also confirms that Arabic digital communication cannot be understood adequately through a single standardized linguistic model.A fifth finding concerns language identity and cultural expression. Social media provides opportunities for users to communicate in their regional dialects and share culturally meaningful expressions. These practices help individuals maintain connections with their communities and express personal identities. Online communication can also increase the visibility of local linguistic traditions and encourage interaction between Arabic-speaking communities from different countries.A sixth finding concerns the educational implications of digital language practices. Social media offers opportunities for Arabic language learning through educational videos, digital discussions, online dictionaries, and language-learning communities. However, the frequent use of informal writing may create difficulties when users transfer abbreviations, inconsistent spelling, or dialectal expressions into formal academic contexts. The reviewed literature therefore supports the importance of digital language awareness and appropriate Arabic writing instruction.

CONCLUSION

Social media has significantly influenced contemporary Arabic language usage by transforming the ways Arabic speakers communicate, express their identities, and participate in digital communities. The development of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, and X has created new opportunities for Arabic communication and expanded the presence of Arabic content in the digital world. At the same time, these platforms have

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encouraged linguistic practices that differ from traditional formal writing. The increasing use of colloquial Arabic, Arabizi, code-switching, abbreviations, and hybrid expressions demonstrates that Arabic language practices are continuously adapting to technological and social developments.The study concludes that one of the most important effects of social media is the increased use of colloquial Arabic in written communication. Regional dialects have become more visible because users prefer expressions that reflect their everyday speech and cultural backgrounds. This development has strengthened opportunities for informal communication and allowed different Arabic-speaking communities to express their identities. However, the growing use of dialectal forms also raises questions about the position of Modern Standard Arabic in formal writing, education, and professional communication.Another important conclusion concerns Arabizi and Arabic-English code-mixing. These practices demonstrate the influence of globalization, multilingualism, and technological development on Arabic communication. Although they provide flexibility and convenience in informal contexts, their excessive or inappropriate use may create challenges for conventional Arabic spelling and formal language development. Nevertheless, linguistic innovation should not automatically be regarded as a threat to the Arabic language because language naturally adapts to changing social conditions.The research also establishes that social media provides important opportunities for Arabic language promotion and education. Teachers, researchers, educational institutions, and cultural organizations can use digital platforms to distribute learning materials, promote Arabic literature, explain grammatical structures, and encourage younger generations to develop their language skills. Digital communication can therefore become an effective instrument for strengthening Arabic language awareness and expanding its international presence.

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