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The role of the Arabic language in the era of globalization

This research is concerned with studying the role of the Arabic language in the era of globalization.

Before answering this question, let me point out that this question preoccupies the Arabs themselves. This is evident from the symposium in which I participated on 20.12.2021 and organized by the Egyptian Translators and Linguists Association and the Arab School of Translation. The symposium was titled: The Mutual Linguistic and Intellectual Effects between Arabic and Human Languages. My speech was titled: Influence and Intellectual Influence between Arabic and German



In order to define the role of the Arabic language in the era of globalization, the concept of globalization must first be defined, so that the effects of globalization on the Arabic language, and then its current and hoped-for role, become clear.

The concept of the era of globalization

Ulrich Menzel¹ agrees with Betka Fathi² that globalization represents a term that refers to the intensification and acceleration of cross-border transactions, i.e. to the increased networking in many areas around the globe, which ultimately serves to establish the global world community. Ulrich Menzel and Betka Fathi see the main reason for globalization in technical developments, especially in the area of transport and telecommunications.

In defining the term, Betka Fathi lists the advantages and disadvantages of globalization. She sees the advantages in the strengthening of interrelationships and mutual dependencies both between companies and between states and companies, in the possibility of rapid exchange of information and goods through computer-aided data transmission and logistics, in the global market, in the increase in foreign investment and in multinationals Companies with the choice of the most favorable production locations. However, she finds the disadvantages in job insecurity, price fluctuations, terrorism, currency fluctuations and growing competitive pressure.

According to Brockhaus³, globalization is understood as a complex term for several related but distinguishable structural changes in the international system. The global transformation – as the encyclopedia Brockhaus continues – is taking place at the economic, social, political and cultural levels.

Ulrich Menzel not only focuses on the explanation of the concept of globalization, but also goes into the historical background of this concept. He points out that the term is either not used at all or very rarely in the social science literature of the 1970s and 1980s, that it has had near-inflated usage since the early 1990s, and that the term is on the decline

- to the European world conquest at the end of the 15th century, when Columbus found the sea route to India
- to the Industrial Revolution and the associated mechanization in the 19th century.
- to the year 1945, which refers to the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the development of weapons technology and its global destruction of the world.

¹ See Menzel, Ulrich: Globalisierung. Geschichte und Dimensionen eines Begriff 2002
<https://www.bpb.de/veranstaltungen/dokumentation/130248/globalisierung-geschichte-und-dimensionen-eines-begriffs>

² See Fethi, Betka: Die Globalisierung und ihre Einflüsse auf die Arbeitswelt. In: TRANS Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften, Reviewed Journal aufgelistet in ERIH: European Reference Index for the Humanitie, TRANS Nr. 23, <https://www.inst.at/trans/23/die-globalisierung-und-ihre-einfluesse-auf-die-arbeitswelt/>

³ See <https://brockhaus.de/ecs/enzy/article/globalisierung>

In this context, the work of Natalie Lorenz and Michael Bachlechner "What is globalization? Definition – phases of development – dimensions" is of great importance. (2009).⁴ Natalie Lorenz and Michael Bachlechner emphasize that the concept of globalization has three phases, that it begins with the industrial revolution, that the second phase after the second decline of the Soviet Union marks the beginning of the third phase of globalization, which lasts to this day.

What interests me in this essay is that the second phase of globalization, after the second collapse of the Soviet Union, marks the beginning of the third phase of globalization, which continues to this day.

After the concept of the era of globalization became clear to us, it is worth asking the question about the current and hoped-for role of the Arabic language in the era of globalization. In this context, we must differentiate between the global view of the Arabic language in the age of globalization and the view of the people of the Arabic language, researchers and those interested in the Arabic language of the current and future situation of the Arabic language.⁵

The global view of the Arabic language in the era of globalization

The Arabic language is ranked sixth in the UNESCO classification at the global level. In this arrangement, UNESCO relied on the numbers of speakers of the Arabic language at the global level, whose numbers reach 422 million people. From my point of view, this arrangement reflects the status of the Arabic language at the international level.

⁴ See 6. Vgl. Lorenz, Natalie und Bachlechner, Michael: Was ist Globalisierung? Definition – Phasen der Entwicklung – Dimensionen. PS-Arbeit im Kerngebiet der Wirtschafts- & Sozialgeschichte, 2009. <https://webapp.uibk.ac.at/ojs/index.php/historiascribere/article/viewFile/225/114>

⁵ Of the research studies that have been written in this context, please see • رضا، مولاى أحمد: اللغة العربية فى زمن العولمة: الحال والحلول ، مجلة جيل العلوم الإنسانية والإجتماعية ، مجلة علمية دولية محكمة تصدر عن مركز جيل البحث العلمى ، العدد 79 – 138 – 129 ، أكتوبر 2021، <http://jilrc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/79%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%AF.pdf> ، • موسى، سعيدة حسين كريم: واقع اللغة العربية فى ظلّ تحدّي العولمة. مجلة • ، <https://www.awraqthaqafya.com/917/> • أحمد بن محمد: اللغة العربية فى عصر العولمة. الطبعة الثانية ، مكتبات العبيكان ، الرياض 2006 https://books.google.com.eg/books?id=lduCDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

The view of those interested in research studies in the Arabic language about its current and future status in the era of globalization

Many research studies in the field of the Arabic language, in addition to media programs concerned with the affairs of the Arabic language, indicate fears of the disappearance of the Arabic language.⁶ What raises these fears among them is the conviction of the existence of Western, especially American, hegemony in the era of globalization, followed by the export of the English language in exchange for other languages, including the Arabic language. What confirms their fears is the practical reality in which Arab youth are increasingly interested in studying foreign languages, especially the English language, as a main requirement in the labor market. The tendency to use foreign languages has reached naming the names of shops with foreign names, which prompted Algeria to issue an official decision forcing citizens to use the Arabic language in naming shops as a natural response to the failure of the Arab world to top the list of industrialized countries, although researchers in the field of the Arabic language confirm that the defect is not in the Arabic language, but in the citizen in the Arab world and their lack of scientific achievements that are immortalized through the Arabic language and their translation from Arabic into other languages, as was the case in the past. What increased the fears of the Arab citizen about the disappearance of the Arabic language is that the Arabic language is not used in the desired way on the World Wide Web, although this is due to mistakes made by Arab institutions that began to avoid them within the framework of the institutional quality processes that they began to adopt. All this happened with the presence of a sector in the second generation of the children of immigrants who are not fluent in the Arabic language, which prompted the Egyptian Ministry of Immigration to support the initiative to learn Arabic.⁷

The desired role of the Arabic language in the era of globalization

If we carefully look at the global view of the Arabic language in the era of globalization and put it in the framework of comparison with the view of those interested in research studies in the Arabic language, it will become clear to us that we are unable to deny the reasons for fears of the disappearance of the Arabic language, although this does not mean that it will disappear, especially with the efforts made to preserve it through Interest in globalization by holding

⁶ Even the BBC media confirmed the fears of the extinction of the Arabic language <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/interactivity-49568167>

⁷ <https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/5903572>

celebrations for the International Day of the Arabic Language and paying attention to the openness of the Arabic language to other languages, which is commendable and supports the hoped-for cultural dialogue and its consequences in the consolidation of world peace at a time when wars and conflicts are increasing in the era of globalization. The hoped-for role of the Arabic language in the era of globalization is the cultural role and cultural openness to other languages and cultures in a way that supports the dialogue of cultures and religions, and thus the culture of peace at the local, regional and international levels.

Examples confirming the support of the Arabic Language Department at the Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University, to open up to foreign languages:

- A symposium held by the Department of Arabic Language on the problems of learning foreign languages and problems of translation. I participated in it as a representative of the German Language Department



- When I was head of the German department, I attended an educational seminar to support the establishment of a scientific conference between the Arabic and German departments to support dialogue between Arabic and foreign languages. This is the certificate of appreciation that I gave to the head of the Arabic language department after he attended the seminar and explained how to cooperate in establishing the scientific seminar



- This trend towards cooperation between Arabic and foreign languages in holding seminars was not limited to the Arabic language department only, but extended to include the Heliopolis Literature Club, which invited me to discuss a literary work in Arabic on the January 25 revolution and put it in a cultural dialogue with the literary works of the writers of the revolution during Hitler's rule. Among them are the literary works of the Austrian writer Jura Soyfer



- His Eminence, the Grand Imam Ahmad al-Tayyib, delivered his speech in the European Parliament on religious dialogue in 2016. This confirms, from my point of view, the readiness of Al-Azhar to cooperate with the Western side in supporting religious dialogue in the age of globalization to support world peace.⁸ The importance of such activities increases, especially after the process of burning the Qur'an in Sweden⁹



Speech of the Grand Imam before the European Parliament 2016

⁸ Registered link to deliver his speech in the European Parliament
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4OOrs_7XPc

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-64379810>

However, we must be aware that Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, in addition to its openness to the outside world, should support the explosion of the cultural revolution in the Arab world in order to build the contemporary Arab man and the contemporary Arab society. To achieve this goal, the late Dr. Mohamed Hassan Kamel, the founding president of the Union of Arab Writers and Intellectuals in Paris and the ambassador of peace in the Peace Federation of the United Nations, recommended me to give the Grand Imam a copy of the book Oh God, a Cultural Revolution in the Arab World. This book represents a series of dialogues that I did with him, titled Oh God, a Cultural Revolution in the Arab World. It addresses the thorny issues that must be detonated and raised to support the building of the contemporary Arab man and the contemporary Arab society¹⁰



Image from the cover of the book¹¹

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¹¹ الوردي، رانيا: اللهم ثورة ثقافية في الوطن العربي. سلسلة حوارات مع د/ محمد حسن كامل - الرئيس المؤسس لإتحاد الكتاب والمثقفين العرب - باريس وسفير السلام في فيدرالية السلام التابعة للأمم المتحدة. دار الحسيني للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع 2021

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