

Romanised Jordanian Arabic E-messages

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Abstract

Romanised Jordanian Arabic is a newly emerging code of electronic communication extensively used by first generation e-message senders, which might be described as a hybrid lingua franca or even a pidgin. This study, based on 1098 e-mail messages sent by 257 undergraduate students, and on 1400 chat turns exchanged between nick-named senders, as well as on an A4 eight-page conversation run by seven participants, all of whom having a workable knowledge of English, reveals that notational formalism representing consonants is 37% systematically employed while the rest is variably represented; for one Arabic character there can be up to 6 corresponding symbols, mainly Roman, and Arabic numerals whose selection finds justification on pictorial and pronunciation basis. Vowels, on the other hand, are found less systematic where different sounds are assigned the same vowel character. Since all of the messages seem to have been exchanged between university students and/or graduates, code-switching is too obvious. It has been found out that 60% of the messages involve switching from English into Romanised Jordanian Arab. The majority of switches mainly involve nouns (61.84%), a conclusion which moderately supports previous sociolinguistic findings. Where a switch happens to be clausal, code-switching turns out to be 'code-mixing', the function of which is at best rhetorical. When switching is intra-sentential, the grammars of English and Arabic match each other but with noticeable word-order reversal.

Introduction

At the outset, we would like to formulate a working definition for Romanised Jordanian Arabic (RJA). Basically, it represents colloquial Jordanian Arabic, a patois, just like any other spoken Arabic variety, which over the last decade has been developing an electronically transmitted system of writing implementing a hybrid of characters, viz. Roman (Latin), which the English language uses, and a special set of Arabic numerals. Such a code has been widely used by email senders and participants in chat rooms as well as by SM senders over the cellular. If this writing system persists in the long run, it may present a big challenge to Standard Arabic (SA) at the age of globalisation in the Arab world. Indeed, there are great fears among particularly the conservatives and language purists. However, the code will remain a favourite linguistic choice for, especially, youngsters as long as there is no better competing code.

Although Arabic script has just started gaining ground electronically, yet preference is still given to the Romanised alternative in sending informal messages. Behind the vogue there could be a number of important and justifiable reasons. One such reason is perhaps to show that senders have good command at both English and Arabic. And this command enables them to communicate globally with their fellow Arabs all over the globe. In addition to having started establishing an identity of their own, users of both sexes can communicate freely without any social, religious, ethnic, or political constraints; senders exercise a tremendous amount of freedom that has never been enjoyed in the Arab world.

Unfortunately, only three studies tackled the issue of online language in the Arab world over the last decade. The first, which does not concern us much, is Obeid (2002) who studied formal emails at an industrial area in Bahrain. In this work, she mainly focused on formality vs informality, and grammaticality vs ungrammaticality in the messages she had collected, but with noticeable concern of finding out the attitudes of native vs non-native speakers of English towards emails sent in English script. Part of the study carried out by Warschsuer; El Said; and Zuhry (2002) handled informal email messages,

the code of which is described as a mixture of English and Romanised Egyptian Arabic and hence characterizing an “unusual” diglossic community (cf. pp. 7; 10ff) which we tend to call 'triglossic' instead. The third study, viz. Palfreyman & al Khalil (2003), which incidentally comes closer to ours, is more interesting than the former to which reference is made. Although it draws on data from a small corpus of instant messenger conversations, and from an email survey of users' experience with the Latin (Roman) form, yet the findings are strikingly similar to the ones which we have obtained from our comparatively larger corpus. What makes it interesting is the fact that it examines “how female Arab university students in the United Arab Emirates use the Latin alphabet to write vernacular Arabic in online communication” (p.2) from linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives.

Following more or less a similar line, but quantitatively and qualitatively different, we intend to answer a number of important questions (cf. Palfreyman & al Khalil 2003: 15):

1. How is RJA represented, and how close is it to SA and/or Jordanian Arabic (JA)?

How consistent is this representation across Jordanian users?

What linguistic and/or non-linguistic resources do users draw on in representing Arabic? Can their selection be justified?

What type of code-switching (CS) is involved in e-messaging between and among senders?

In an attempt to find answers for the above questions, we have collected some 1098 informal email messages collected from 257 undergraduate students doing B.A. in English language & literature at the Hashemite University in Jordan. In order to substantiate the results we obtained from email analysis, we later supplemented our corpus with 1400 chat-room turns exchanged among a large group of nicknamed chatters. Although the use of nicknames is the norm, gender is often revealed. We could also have access to an A4 eight-page conversation held between seven unidentified male and female participants. As we were unable to identify the users' level of education in the supplements, we took it for granted that senders were all university undergraduates or graduates because CS is characteristic of over half of the messages.

At first sight, the messages look English because they are mainly represented by Roman (Latin) letters, but as will be shown a message is communicated in JA which may include material from English, and hence the label RJA. Here is an example:

1. "hi ya 2mar
keefek, keef el 3o6lea wela lesa ma bauen 5erha men sherha? keef raw7tee on thursday?
?e7na t25arna ktter ro7na t2reban 3ala 3 o'clock, eshta'3lna kteer 3ala research el socio bs
sd2ee ino mt3eb kteer mafee reference ma3een wala 7ta fee 3no eshe b el encyclopedea... be el
nehayea ro7na 3ala dr. yasser el tamimi o t7adsna kteer o 3n jad ino kankteer helpful o 236ana a
model research to read... o bs intee sho a '7barek keefha ala2 salmee 3aleeha kteer
enjoy ur time
happy 3eed
byee"

The sender and receiver are female undergraduate students majoring in English language & literature at the Hashemite University in Jordan. As can be seen, the opening and the closing are, in addition to the other boldfaced words, in English. The rest is what counts as RJA, a reflex of colloquial Jordanian. The Arabic numerals stand for phonetic values. Number 2 stands for a glottal stop, 3 for a guttural sound, 7 for a voiceless pharyngeal consonant, etc. (see below for all correspondences). A rough translation of the message runs as follows:

Hi, moon!

How are you? How's the holiday so far, or still unable to tell? How did you manage to go last Thursday? We didn't leave till 3 o'clock because we were working on the sociolinguistic research paper. Honestly it's a too tiring task; there's not even one single reference to help us, nor is there anything in the encyclopedia. So we finally talked much with Dr Yasser Al-Tamimi about the problem. He was very helpful indeed; he gave us a research model to read. But what about you? Any news? How's Alaa? Pass her my greetings.

Enjoy your time.

Happy feast.

Bye!

Notational Equivalence

The table below shows Arabic consonants, their equivalence, and the general tendency of use in all the messages.

Table (1): Notational Equivalence: Consonants

Phonemic Symbol	Equivalence	General tendency
ʔ	α, αα, α', 2, e	α
β	β	β
τ	τ	τ
Π	τη, t, s	τη
δZ	γ, φ, k	γ
□	h, 7	7
Ξ	κ, γ, 7', 5, '7, 7	7'
δ	δ	δ
Δ	δ, ζ	ζ
ρ	ρ	ρ
ζ	ζ	ζ
σ	σ	σ
Σ	ση, ch	ση
S	σ, 9	9
D	δ, 'd, d', '9	δ
T	τ, 6	τ
Δ	ζ, τη, d, '6	ζ
ʕ	α, ε, 3, 2, 4	3
Φ	γη, 3', '3	3'
φ	φ	φ
θ	κ, γ, a, 2	κ
λ	λ	λ
μ	m	μ
v	v	v
η	α, e, eη, aη	η
ω	ω, υ, o, oo, ou	o
ψ	ε, ι, ψ, εε, u	ε
K	k, c	k

As can be seen from the table, 10 Arabic consonants have only one Roman character each. Strikingly, these are used systematically whereas the rest have more than one correspondence. The most likely reason for this multiplicity is the fact that our e-message senders mimic other users' use of characters. Variation in the representation of individual consonants may largely be attributed to influences from differing educational backgrounds, sex, and regional Arabic accents in Jordan. When the above message was shown to a number of graduate students coming from the north of Jordan, a very much noticeable delay in deciphering the script had been observed. No wonder, even the authors of this paper found some difficulty in reading the first few messages at the beginning of their task. It seems that persons coming from Amman, the capital, have developed such system of representation much earlier. However, the other consonants have variants that range from 2-6. Obviously, this freedom of choice does not help establish a unified notational representation of the (phonemic) system. Yet one can only talk about a general tendency of use. For example, SA /dZ/ is commonly represented as < g > in almost all contexts rather than its second variant < j > or the much less commonly used /k/. That /g/ is selected can only be explained in terms of its pronunciation as /dZi:/ in the English alphabet although the pronunciation of < j > is close to < g >.

Unlike < g >, SA voiceless uvular /q/ is realized variously according not only to regional accent, but also to sex, age, socio-economic status, and educational background. For instance, the variant < a > or the less commonly used < 2 >, i.e. /ʔ/ 'a glottal stop', is mostly used by urban young females because it is a prestige for them. Unlike females, adult males predominantly use either /g/ or /k/ for /q/. The choice of < a > is determined by its pronunciation in English as /e/, which is rendered into /ʔe/ by Arabic speakers, and hence a justifiable. The use of < 2 > as an alternative may be justified on grounds of its resemblance to the graphic shape of Arabic free glottal stop, called 'hamza'. It remains to say that the general tendency of use as /k/ is an indication that the majority of messages are sent by males.

At the time SA /q/ is realized as /ʔ/, being one of its four variants (see Table 1), /ʔ/ as a distinct phoneme in Arabic phonology has six representations. Here an interesting generalization can be made about /ʔ/. On one hand it is a variant of /q/. On the other hand, it is a distinctive unit, but like /q/, represented graphically mostly as < a >, and less commonly as < 2 > for the same reasons given above. A third variant, much less common, is < e >. This choice is largely determined by the presence of a diacritic, called 'kasrah' in Arabic, co-occurring with the glottal stop in the orthography (cf. "enshallah" for /ʔIn Σa: ʔa ʔalla:hu/ 'If God will'). In case the first two variants co-occur in the same word, then the pattern is < a2 > as in "a2wa" for /ʔaqwa:/ 'stronger'.

One does not hesitate much to find similar justifications for the selection of number < 9 > as a variant standing for the voiceless mufaxxama (pharyngeal) fricative /S/, which is sometimes represented as /s/. This choice may find justification in the form number < 9 >. Most likely this Arabic numeral partly resembles the Arabic small letter called 'Saad'. Likewise, the voiceless pharyngeal fricative /H/ is realized most commonly as < 7 > which, again, resembles the corresponding free and concatenated Arabic letters. To draw an image similarity, you simply wind the tail of 7 a bit anti-clockwise and you get the required capital (or word-final, if you like) Arabic letter. Alternatively, place the tail of 7 horizontally and you get the Arabic small (or word-initial, if more convenient) letter. But /H/ is also realised as /H/, a representation which sounds more reasonable and closer to transliteration. On the basis of analogy, the scenario presented for < 7 > applies well to number < 3 >, a pharyngeal voiceless consonant in Arabic. Here one may claim that this symbol is a happy equivalent because < 3 > is a mirror image of the Arabic free letter. In this connection, Warschauser; El Said; and Zohry (2002: 11) claim that the numbers 2, 3, and 7 "represent phonemes". We believe that this stand will only be feasible when the code is systematically used by a well-defined and large community. Not only this, but when the general tendency of use is confirmed on the basis of vast amount of corpora. This then helps researchers to talk about type and token, or phonemes and their variants, as supported by statistical figures showing frequency of occurrence. Therefore, any Romanised version of Arabic ought to be recorded and accounted for periodically in order to see what future generations of electronic users will do.

However, the selection of < 7' >, a voiceless dorso-velar emphatic consonant in Arabic, is justified on the same basis as < 7 >, except that the apostrophe stands for a dot in the corresponding Arabic letter. Some users opt for typing the apostrophe to the left. Still a considerable number of users choose number < 5 >. This shape also looks like the Arabic free letter, but its choice seems to be largely constrained by least effort; the context seems to turn the apostrophe redundant. And the same argument is true for the alveolar emphatic /D/, which is commonly realized as < d > without the apostrophe. Similar to < 7' > is the most frequently used voiced dorso-velar emphatic consonant < 3' >.

phe. Similar to < 7' > is the most frequently used voiced dorso-velar emphatic consonant < 3' > , standing for /Φ/, also represented in Arabic orthography with a dot just above the character.

Two more symbols are worth considering, viz. /w/ and /y/. Although both are maintained word-initially, and each represented in five different ways, yet the picture here is quite different from that shown by the former consonants, simply because they are semi-vowels, to use the traditional term. The former is mostly represented by rounded short or long vowels, and the latter by front or mid short vowels realized commonly as < o > and < e > respectively.

Variability also extends to vowels. Senders have not only reduced the number of vowels present in colloquial Jordanian Arabic (CJA), but changed their values or dropped them altogether, and thus creating consonant clusters that are inadmissible in any Arabic variety. Surprisingly, vowels are maintained much more in messages sent over the cellular and chat rooms than in email messages. To illustrate such tendencies, we offer the following instances representing the three modes respectively:

2. bs eza konti z3laneh 3ashan hadeek el 2esah.. im really sorry u lazem tsma3eni
'But if you're upset because of that story, I'm honestly sorry. And you must listen to me'.

3. X: 5alas latez3al ana bas bamza7 'Fine. Never mind; I'm only kidding'
Y: mashey 'O.K.'

4. hi how r u sho a7'bark enshalh mne7 t3rf bde asmeek elnaem t3rf leh laenk 7ta wenta
btb3tle elmsg btkon naem anyway kef dwamk blmstshfa enshalh ma btt3b feh kter bs ma ekon
t3bak bnsek yane laene 7assatk nesene ma b3rf emkn laen ma bashofak wabnsf elwaqet ma
b7ke m3k wsh3re enk babared bmsha3rk

i need u so much

'Hi! How are you? What's up? Hope you're doing well. You know, I'd like to call you a sleeper. Do you know why? Because even when you send me a message you seem to be asleep. Anyway, how's your work at hospital? Hope that your work isn't cumbersome. But even if it were, you're not supposed to ignore me; for I've such a feeling, perhaps because I've not been seeing much of you. And at the same time it may be because I don't often talk to you owing to your cold passions. .

Indeed u so much'

As can be clearly observed in samples 2 & 3, the majority of vowels required for delivering the messages are maintained. The picture in these two instances is closer to transliteration. In contrast, the email message demonstrates a sharp drop in vowels, a phenomenon that renders reading similar messages much slower than reading mobile and chat messages. The most likely reason for maintaining or dropping vowels may be attributed to the relative length of the message; the longer it gets, the more dropping is expected. However, common to all e-messages is the observation that the vowel system of CJA is often misrepresented in RJA. As has been argued for the variability of representing /w/ and /j/ above, CJA vowels are given different and variable values although similar symbols are employed, viz. < a,e,o > and to a lesser extent < aa,oo,ee,i,u >. These are sometimes used interchangeably. Because of the great amount of free variation in symbolic simulation, i.e. neat or near representation of speech sounds in online texts, we have not attempted to establish a phonemic inventory for vowels either. But as we have already done with consonants, we will present below their general tendency of use. One, however, may take both tendencies as working hypotheses for future research.

Table (2): Notational Equivalence: Vowels

Vowels	Variation	General tendency
i:	e,ee,i,ei,i,y, ey,y,i,eee,eh	ee
a:	a	a
a	a,e,ea	a
e:	e,ee	e
l	e,i,ea	e
u	o,ou	o
u:	o,ou,oo	o
o:	o,oo	o

Code-switching and Code-mixing

First we need to make a distinction between CS and CM. The former involves the switching of syntactic categories such as NP, VP, Adv, etc. from one code to another, e.g. samples 2 and 3 below. The latter is either the switching of whole clauses from one code to another, e.g. samples 18 and 62, or using English as a code but expressing content in Arabic, e.g. “believe me, you’ll the fun at the end when you get married” and “why are you mad at haitham ... walik yel3an abu ille biza3lik... wala yihmik .. everything will be just fine’ (Haitham, damn that who upsets you. Never mind!) (sample 18). Although both quotations display Arabic flavour, yet the second clearly demonstrates what Hudson (1996: 53) has described as “a kind of linguistic cocktail”. Holmes (1992: 46) maintains that the user in this case intends to convey their “rhetorical skills” and hence fulfilling the affective function of language. Our focus, however, will be on CS which has been found to clearly characterize the majority of the 88 emails collected whereas only 13 messages (14.77%) are typed out completely in RJA without involving any CS. The remaining 75 messages (85.22%) exhibit switches from English into RJA (63 messages representing 84%) or vice versa (12 messages representing 16%). Below are representative samples:

Sample (1): an RJA email devoid of any CS

mar7aba enas.....keef 7alek?? lesh ma ejete mbare7 ma3 albanat ????????? ra7 3aleke nos 3omrek.... bastanake bokra.... matet27'are.....

‘Hello Enas. How are you? Why didn’t you come with the girls yesterday? You’ve missed it. I’ll be waiting for you tomorrow, so don’t be late.’

Sample (2): an RJA email into which English is code-switched

Hi, kefik, sho 3amleh? Kef kano emt7anatik elfirst? Enshalla 2bda3te fehom o kano mna7 metel ma bdik!!!! ana mne7a o emt7anati mashe 7alhom el7amdulla...yalla enshalla betawfe2 dayman o alla yekon m3ik...and take care of urself... & have a good luck 2albi,,,bye..

‘Hi! How are you? What’s up? How did you do at your first-term exams? Hopefully great just as expected! I’m fine, and my exams are OK. Thank God. If God will, you’ll always succeed. May Him be with you. Take care, and good luck (my heart). Bye.

Sample (3): an English email into which RJA is code-switched

Subject: Re: where r u????

habibt...walla every time i sign on no one is online so i stay a couple of minutes then i sign off. i don't stay on if no one is on...a guess its just a sidfe... you know.. well i miss you too...walla..how are things with you???? let me know.. and write me and tell me when you have time so i can meet you on line again like last time it was so much fun... so let me know exactly what time you can and ill be there!!!!

love you more than ever...

Gloss: my love, by God, by chance, and by God, respectively.

Sample (62): a representative example of code-mixing and code-switching

hi mone how r u, I misssssssssssssss u so much bs z3lana mnk coz u ignore emaile bs ra7 akon mne7a w a3tebrek ma 3melte chk 3la emailk. Honey I wanna 2 4 get kol elmshakel el madia plz try 2 halp me, I no u try 2 help me w thanx again 4 ur nice heart.i lov u soooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo much.

'Hi Mona! How are you? I miss you so much but I'm angry at you because you ignored my email. However, it's alright; for I'll take it that you've not checked your mail box. Honey! I want to forget all material problems, so please help me. I know you try to help me.

And thanks again for your kindness. I love you so much.'

As can clearly be seen from these representative samples², messages usually open with an Arabic greeting, e.g. mar7aba or English hi(iiiiiiii), or a form of endearment, e.g. HABIBTI as in (3). Contrary to Baron's (2001: 244) contention that openings and closings are dispensable, the majority of our 88 emails open with greetings and end with closings. Only 10 do not have an opening but do have a closing while 15 have a closing without an opening. Elsewhere (p. 238), she admits that email conventions have evolved to open messages with "Hi" and to close with "Best" or "Cheers".

Characteristic of all the messages is the heavy use of deictics, viz. 'you' and 'I', in addition to the vocative ya 'you' which is followed by first name, nickname, or a form of endearment, e.g. 'Take care ya albe' (my heart, i.e. love) or 'hi ya khokha' (hi peach!). This supports our claim that the messages are informal and more of conversational style. Informality is also depicted by the frequently used expressions of endearment as well as the name of God, etc. at, sentence initial, medial, or final position and, thus, functioning as discourse markers. Warschauer; El Said; and Zohry (2002: 11) have come up with a similar finding as regard such use, but to the exclusion of CS or CM. The following capture this phenomenon nicely:

1. Walla (God) every time I sign in(sample 15)
2. eshtarena (b3eed 3annik shoes) 'we bought, shunted!, shoes' (sample 5)3
3. How is life with you hayatee? 'my life' (sample 21)

Excluding such discourse markers as well as CM from further consideration, we come now to the question of CS, especially from English into RJA (but see Appendix for the other way round). Expectedly, the majority of switches attested in all the messages are Ns and NPs (47 out of 76 instances, 61.84%), and in the descending order: PP (12 instances, 15.78%), clauses, functioning as nominals (7 cases, 9.21%), Adj (4 instances, 5.26%), V and Adv (3 cases each, 3.94%). The majority of N and NP switches abide by Arabic syntactic rules. For example, in sample (2) above repeated here for convenience as:

4. kara2et e-mail kom ? 'Have you readyour?'

'e-mail' fills the position of an object in the accusative. Not only this, but a possessive suffix is added to it in conformity with Arabic structure. A similar example is:

5. 7ta wenta btb3tleel elmsg btkon name (sample 23) 'even when you send me a message, I would be asleep.'

Again the direct object 'msg' is in the accusative. Additionally, the English indefinite article is converted into a definite prefix. This example, among others, is interesting because so many vowels are dropped and hence the formation of inadmissible consonant clusters. Neither Jordanian nor SA allows more than two running consonants word-medially or finally. It seems that email users are aware that the consonantal root in Arabic is quite sufficient for expressing meaning in most cases. Our data, however, have revealed that 74.21% of Ns and NPs are objects in the accusative case, whereas only 29.78% fill the subject position, eg.

6. el dolar nazel 'The dollar dropped.' (SV: marked order) (sample 2).
7. lma shofet email k 'when I saw your email'(VS: unmarked order) (sample 74).

Our email users are seen to have been capable of also code-switching NPs headed by Arabic prepositions with and/or without modification, e.g.

8. eshta3'lna kteer 3ala research el socio 'we worked hard on the sociolinguistic research.' (sample 9).
9. o bsht3'el 3ala el e-mailat 'and I'm working on emails.' (sample 14).

Notice how word order in (8) is reversed. In (9), the noun is made definite and plural. Arabic structure is preserved even when English VP, Adj, and Adv are switched into RJA, e.g.

10. iza can 3endek bt2dree send them to me 3shan ba7th 'if you have it, you can send them to me for research work.' (sample 11).
11. w smi3it enne got engaged 'and I heard that she got engaged.' (sample 12).
12. it is sure enno el3'orbeh mo sahle 'Surely, to be an alien is not something easy.' (sample 74).
13. 3n jad ino kan kteer helpful 'honest, it was very helpful.' (sample 9).
14. elek 3nde a7'bar nice kter 'I have good news for you.' (sample 63).
15. eza sar m3e eshe ba5brkm directly ok. 'if anything props up, I'll report instantly.' (sample 2).

Few comments need to be made here. The structure of (10), (11), (13), and (15) may also be said to correspond to English structure although the code has been described as RJA. Examples (13) and (14) are in conflict because they are typed out by two different users. Where the former has the adjective 'very' in the normal English pre-modification position, the latter has it in the normal Arabic post-modification position. The syntactic position of the adverb in (15) is the same in both English and Arabic. All in all, one is tempted to come up with the following generalization: corresponding syntactic categories in two codes are very much likely to be substituted than the dissimilar ones. And as widely reported in the literature on CS, Ns and NPs are proportionally the highest on the scale. Table (3) below shows the percentage of CS from English into RJA per each grammatical category. (For convenience, Ns & NPs are designated as NP):

Table (3): CS from English into RJA

Category	Percentage %
NP	61.84
PP	15.78
Clause	9.21
Adj	5.26
Adv	3.49
V	3.49

Conclusion

Given the limited number of email messages, viz. 88, 13 of which typed out solely in what we have termed RJA, the study has shown that RJA is an unstable code and hence given the name of a pidgin represented mainly by the Roman alphabet. Half of the notational symbols are systematically used; for one Arabic character there is one corresponding Roman symbol. The other half is used unsystematically; users vary in establishing a one-to-one equivalence; there can be up to five variants for one single character. Accordingly, justifications for choosing one symbol rather than another can be found. For example, 7 is more like the Arabic letter representing a voiceless pharyngeal fricative. By analogy,

7' is more like the Arabic letter representing a voiceless velar fricative. Although this is the general tendency, some emailers choose number 5 for 7' simply because the Arabic number, when pronounced, starts with this velar fricative. A similar argument seems to apply nicely to the English letter g which is pronounced as /dʒ/ and hence taken to stand for the Arabic voiced palato-alveolar consonant.

Likewise, Arabic number 3 is a mirror-image of the voiced pharyngeal consonant occurring word-finally in Arabic. The generalization that can be made in this respect is that email users rely either on pictorial or pronunciation similarity. Selection is largely determined by the availability of approximate characters on the key-board. Despite variation, however, one may account for notational equivalence in terms of a general tendency (see Table 1). Equivalence has also been seen to cover abbreviations and replacements by a single character (see Table 2). The two types of equivalence, however, need to be compared with those to be adopted by second generation email senders.

The second important issue addressed by this paper has been the question of CS and CM. The latter involves switching from one code to another at the clause level. Such a strategy, if ever one, is adopted deliberately because users might like to show off, i.e. that they are capable of using two codes efficiently, or for rhetorical reasons. CM has also been shown to include switching of the content, rather than form, of one code into another. Unlike the former aspect of CM, this kind of switching is largely unconscious and may be attributed to transfer from Arabic. CS, on the other hand, has been given considerable attention. Noticeably, emailers tend to switch English NPs (61.84%) into RJA. This finding confirms what is already established in the literature on CS. An interesting finding revealed by this study is that English NPs filling the object position pertaining to Arabic syntax scored 74.21% whereas those filling the subject position scored only 29.78%. Out of the 76 cases of switching, the remaining grammatical categories scored as follows: PP (15.78%), clauses (9.21%), Adj (5.26%), V and Adv (3.94% each). Future studies are likely to confirm our results.

Endnotes

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Eight more examples are provided in the Appendix for convenience.

Shoes have never been an object of admiration in the Arab culture although you may compliment someone on buying a new pair of shoes. So 'shunted!', i.e. away from you, is a discourse marker functioning as a polite softener.

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Appendix

Sample No. 26

Marhaba mama

How are you? ana good. eating well. I live in a very beautiful house. It is nice I am praying a lot a lot. University is good too. lazem adros a lot. Ma bdk send me kef atbuk (cook)? Hala ana in the university. Pray for me.

Ciao

Yazan

Salamati la aboui... I'm going to send you a letter.

Sample No 29

Mar7aba ..el7amdolellah eno omoratk tmam, keef emte7ank el yom? el koll be5er o besalmo 3lek. Ne7na hl2 ben2dem emte7anat el final ana 2damet yom el 5amees.. o..mashe 7alo, belal ya 7aram lessa blshan o el banat kman, bedksh tshoof ala? o 3endha emte7an...m39bah o betwalwel el jo fe 3aman bejanen, o el shware3 kolha yafetat llente5abat. 6b3n lma we9l masgk ma 3rft arod 3melt reply o ma zb6 l2nk bara el shbakeh, 5lek 3la ete9al o 6mena 3la a5bark 2wal be 2awal.

god bless u

Sample 36

hi 7bebe kefak enshalh eno emte7ank a7san mn emt7ane????????? wlahe eno yahode alah yestor wlah ya 7bebe shklo 7bebtak 3mra ma btenga7 bhlmadeh winokta eno nfs eldoctor ele 3nde emte7an bmadeto yom el27ad ant7er a7sanle yla bye bde arwe7 a7ke m3 7bebe

Sample 43

hi kefak enshalah b7 ' er. awal shemabrok hada ele fhemto mn masegatak eno aluh hadaak w ra7 te7'tob w alah ywaf2ak bs feh ashia2 kteeeeeeeer ma fhemtha 3al 3mom ma bede anaked 3lek bs bsara7a ana nadmana 3lasadaqetna kont mfakra enak 3'er elnas bs lel2asaf !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ea sede msh kter msta3'reba l2enk msh r7 tkon a7san menhom. Kan nefse a7tafez bsortak el7elwa fe bale bs ea 7'sara. try to forget our friendship and plz try more to be honest with yourself. good luck. ah nset a7kelak ene shatabet raqamak plz delet my phone number.

Sample 56

Mr7ba ea kbeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeer. esh ea r7'es ma btes2al wla 3la balak wela metlahe bgam3tkom, tfda7 3ardkom 3la halgam3a ya zalma sa7ra kef lw enha 3edla.

Bgolak etafagna e7na w elshbab ne3mel re7le 3al 3agabe 3 aiam w erta7 a7mad msh ra7 ytla3 l2eno ahlo gaien mn elsafar kman yomen. shof wad3ak w e7kelna aw etesel b 7asan 3al bet bokra.by

Sample 72

hi rasha. kefk w sho 3amle. ana tamam. sa7e7 et7adadat emte7ana elfirst w awal madeh 3lena syntax 2 bekon yom a7ad 28/3. wel poetry in 1/4. sa7e7 do u know that ana b5ales be 7/4 msh moshkele w bassssssssss. plz replay soon. bay

Sample 79

Wassup sis, how uni..couldnt open the forward u sent me..how it going 7bebe kollo ok..kef mama..am ok...shwae tired from all this stupid studying. waiting for the mon, so we can do better anshalluh. i miss u sis. say hi 2 mama. by the way tell samo that adont get her emails....mashe 7bebe! take care.

Sample 85

hi baby..how r u....I hope u r great....kef al exams?? Ana alyom bas 7'alast first...can u 7abebte send me Roba's mobile num??? Plz eb3ate 3amobile awal ma tshofe elemail leno ma 3ende rased.....bye hany

Code-switching and Code-mixing

Table (2): Word-form Equivalence

Word (s)	Abbreviation	Word(s)	Abbreviation
Are	r	It's	Its
You	u	Don't	Don't
I will	Ill	Very	V
I am	im, um	See	C
Between	Bt	Because	coz, cuz
Please	Plz	Something	Sth, smth
Your	ur	Got to go	Gtg
Can't	cant	As known as	Aka
Didn't	didnt	Too, to	2
Today	2day	For	4
Forget	4get	Before	B4
At	@	From	4m
People	ppl	Brother	Bro
University	uni	Number	Num
Thanks	thanx	Internet	Net
Bye	By	What's up	Wassup
Science and Technol- ogy	tecno	Monday	Mon
Biology	bio	Sociolinguistics	Socio
Check	chk		