International Journal of Multilingualism

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmjm20

, hello and bonjour: a postcolonial analysis of Arab media’s use of code switching and mixing and its ramification on the identity of the self in the Arab world

Hania A.M. Nashef a

a Department of Mass Communication, American University of Sharjah, P.O. BOX 26666, Sharjah, UAE


To cite this article: Hania A.M. Nashef (2013): , hello and bonjour: a postcolonial analysis of Arab media’s use of code switching and mixing and its ramification on the identity of the self in the Arab world, International Journal of Multilingualism, DOI:10.1080/14790718.2013.783582

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2013.783582

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
Ahlā, hello and bonjour: a postcolonial analysis of Arab media’s use of code switching and mixing and its ramification on the identity of the self in the Arab world

Hania A.M. Nashef*

Department of Mass Communication, American University of Sharjah, P.O. BOX 26666, Sharjah, UAE

(Received 15 August 2012; final version received 21 February 2013)

Code switching is a practice exercised by multilingual speakers. Linguists define the term as the simultaneous use of more than one language. Code switching is prevalent in postcolonial countries in which the colonial language has continued to exist alongside the native language. In the past, code switching in the Arab world has been confined to those educated in the missionary schools set up by the colonial powers. However, with the changes of media, its domain has grown to include a larger number of people. The linguistic-anthropologist Edward Sapir’s hypothesis of linguistic relativity has stressed the important role that language has played in the formation of the individual. I partly look at the role of the Arab media and its effect on identity formation drawing on postcolonial theory to situate the practice of code switching historically.

Keywords: bilingualism; codemixing; language attitudes; Arabic; postcolonial; codeswitching

Introduction

In the past, code switching has predominantly existed in the middle and upper strata of society in the Arab world. It was primarily confined to those educated in the missionary schools set up by the colonial powers, such as the British and the French. At present, however, its domain has grown to include a larger number of people within any given Arab society. The code switching is between the mother tongue, which is mostly colloquial Arabic with interjected fragments of modern standard Arabic, which is a more formal version of the language, on the one hand, and the language of the former colonising power, on the other. Linguists define code switching as the concurrent use of two or more languages by a bilingual or multilingual speaker during a conversation with another who is also bilingual or multilingual, while code mixing involves inserting individual foreign words in a single sentence or utterance. In this paper, I will not be considering them as separate processes, however. With globalisation, the eradication of traditional borders, and the increasing influence of media, namely the internet and satellite television, the use of code switching and mixing have become more common globally, with English namely evolving as the dominant language. Furthermore, both practices are prevalent in postcolonial countries in which the colonial language has continued

*Email: hnashef@aus.edu; hnashef@eim.ae

© 2013 Taylor & Francis
to exist alongside the native language or languages or within the cultural contexts involving a dominant culture, on the one hand, and a subordinate culture, on the other. The linguistic-anthropologist Edward Sapir’s hypothesis of linguistic relativity has stressed the important role that language has played in the formation of the individual, even influencing the way an individual thinks. In this paper, I will analyse the reason for code switching and mixing currently in the Arab world, from a postcolonial perspective. My examples will be from a number of television programmes broadcast on pan-Arab media to demonstrate the role this media have played in widening the use of both code switching and mixing. I will also argue how the use of code switching and mixing in media and in real-life initially result from the other’s inferiority towards the self, an inferiority that partly manifests itself in language. Code switching and mixing then develop into a habit and become the norm. If consciously used, the identity of such a self would remain in flux, as it is continually being constructed and reconstructed in relation to what is deemed superior. As I will be using a sample of television programmes from pan-Arab Middle Eastern channels rather than North African ones, I will be namely discussing code switching and mixing between Arabic and English. I will draw on theorists such as Frantz Fanon to illustrate how these practices function as a destructive force, a remnant of earlier colonial practices and their impact on identity.

A short history of the debate on the use of Arabic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

The debate on the use of the Arabic language vis-à-vis the language of the coloniser/occupier has been ranging at least since the end of the nineteenth century. It became more urgent when the Ottomans decided to do away with Arabic as the official language of the empire in favour of Turkish, even though the Arab lands under the Ottoman rule occupied a vaster region than Turkish-speaking lands. In this paper, however, I will not be pursuing a strictly historical perspective on this debate, yet it is worth mentioning that the discussions on the role of the Arabic language and the formation of identity have been around for at least a century. Reem Bassiouney (2009, p. 199) proposes that even though language is primarily used as an instrument of communication, it can also ‘be used as a symbol of one’s identity’. The question is not whether Arabic will continue to exist, but what role the language will be relegated to, and whether this will result in a loss of identity and ultimately culture. Yasir Suleiman (2003, p. 99) provides an important study on this ongoing debate in its historical perspective; he states for example:

‘The key point in the first theme (language and identity) is the repeated assertion by al-Yaziji that language and nation are two sides of the same coin. In a series of articles published in al-Bayān in 1897-8, al-Yaziji posits an equivalence relation between language and nation.

Similarly, Suleiman (2003, p. 99) states that ‘al-Husri shares...the view that language is the main ingredient of nationhood’. By the same token, al-Shaykh Abdalla al-'Alayli believes that ‘language is more important than geography in nation-formation’ (Suleiman, 2003, p. 119). Suleiman (2003, p. 123) also argues that ‘al-Bitar seems to be primarily concerned with the functional (or communicative) role of language in national self-identification’. Suleiman (2003, p. 85) also mentions
how Arabic was outlawed inside and outside the classroom; if a student was caught using Arabic, the pupil would be ‘subjected to corporal punishment’. It was also forbidden to use Arabic in the courts or in correspondence with government authority (Suleiman, 2003, p. 85). Outlawing the language of the land continued beyond the Ottoman Empire and the colonial rule that followed, and specifically in private schools established by the missionaries. Students learnt from early on that their own language is at best deficient and something that they should be ashamed of, as well as with other markers of their culture, such as clothes and food. In some of the Jesuit schools, in the 1970s, such as the Collège de la Salle (later Mont La Salle) in Lebanon, if a student was caught speaking in Arabic, he was given a wooden stick (signal) to hold onto. This stick was employed as a symbol of humiliation. Ziad Doueiri’s (1998) film, *West Beyrouth*, depicts a similar situation. In the opening scene, students of the French High School in Beirut line up and sing the French national anthem ‘La Marseillaise’, as ordered by one of the French teachers at the lycée. The teacher chooses to be completely oblivious to the events that are unfolding around them, namely the fighter planes in the opening scene, an event the students find amusing as they try to guess the model type of the fighter planes, and then cheer when one explodes. These events, which marked the beginning of the 1975–1990 Civil War, are immaterial according to the French teacher (Doueiri, 1998). It is ironic that the French national anthem is in essence a call to war, but in the film another war is unfolding. Tarek Noueiri, who is played by Rami Doueiri, decides that the Lebanese national anthem, ‘All for the Homeland’, is more suited to the occasion and starts singing it to the dismay of the French teacher (Doueiri, 1998). Noueiri, and as a form of punishment, is hence asked to write ‘Monsieur Tarek Noueiri fait le malin’ on the blackboard; he mockingly misspells ‘Monsieur’, writing it ‘meucieux’ and then ‘mes yeux’ (Doueiri, 1998). He is then subjected to a harangue of insults from his teacher, a narrative echoing colonialist mentality. He is accused of making fun of France, the benevolent and civilised country that is providing him with an education. Noueiri is also reminded that if it were not for France, his country would not have existed, which given the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement is paradoxically partially true; he is labelled a zero cultural entity, insolent, unappreciative, uncivilised and belonging to the jungle. According to his teacher, his only chance of survival is through the French education system, which will save him from himself and his primitive habits (Doueiri, 1998). Bassiouney (2009, p. 212) notes that French colonialism has tried to eradicate Arabic by making French the official language in its African colonies, as they believed that being ‘civilised entailed learning French’. This was partially implemented in Syria and Lebanon as these countries were under a mandate. In contrast, the missionary schools that were set up in British mandate Palestine, did not relegate the Arabic language to a lower status as such; however, as their aim was to educate the pupils in western mannerisms, ‘being civilized did not entail learning English specifically but learning and speaking a European language’ (Bassiouney, 2009, p. 236). Students were allowed to continue speaking their dialect within the school. Students were allowed to continue speaking their dialect within the school.

Al-Yaziji:

points to the danger posed by foreign schools which, by promoting their own national languages among Arabic-speaking pupils, create bonds of affiliation between these pupils and the nations whose languages they learn at the expense of the their native tongues and the bonds of nationhood it generates. (Suleiman, 2003, p. 100)
Another debate that has and is still going on is whether Arabic can be used for science or technology—the implication being that Arabic has outlived its purpose. It is ironic that during the Arab/Islamic Empire, Arabic was in fact the language of science. Suleiman (2003, p. 98) reiterates Al-Yaziji’s belief that stresses that the vitality of a language is derived from its people. This is still very much the case, especially when one has lost faith in one’s culture and language. In addition, with the Arab world lagging behind in technology, this feeling of inferiority is accentuated.11

Another argument refers to the difficulty of the Arabic language; it is worth noting that Arab children, paradoxically, do not have difficulty in understanding the cartoons that are dubbed into classical Arabic. Moreover, some of the larger pan-Arab productions have traditionally used classical Arabic in order to be able to sell their serials to a greater number of Arab countries. Some of these programmes have proved popular with children, especially the ones relying on the fantasy genre. *Al Jawareh* (Birds of Prey), (Saadi & Anzour, 1994), which is such an example, tells the story of a tribal leader, Ibn Al Wahhaaj, who accepts to take up a challenge by one of his people, to test the endurance of his three male children, Usama, Al Basheq, and Ouqab. The serial follows the fate of the tribe and the challenges the three sons face outside of the tribe. The programme, which first aired on EDTV (Emirates Dubai Television)12 at prime time in Ramadan of that year, was watched by people of all ages. *Al Jawareh* (Birds of prey), was very popular with children who started assuming the roles of the three sons and talking amongst themselves in classical Arabic. Moreover, 24-hour news channels such as Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera have partially reversed the trend of code switching and the use of dialects as they resorted to Modern Standard Arabic, instead of colloquial dialects, in order to reach a larger Arab audience. Hence, claiming that Arabic is a difficult language deterring its native speakers from using it efficiently is a priori a fallacious argument. It remains to be seen if the current protests and uprisings in the Arab world, which started in 2010 could change some of the attitudes and ultimately Arabs’ perceptions of their language and their capabilities.

**Identity, language and postcolonial implications**

The linguistic-anthropologist Sapir has constructed a theory on linguistic relativity, in which he stresses the importance language plays in the formation of the individual, going as far as influencing the way a person thinks. Culture and language are closely linked; we experience our culture through the language that has evolved from it. Sapir (1985, p. 10) also argues that language is heuristic and that ‘its forms predetermine for us certain modes of observation and interpretation’. If language is missing, we will not be able to comprehend or interact fully with a certain culture.13

Using another language to understand our own culture can lead to a sense of feeling alienation. Initially, a colonised subject adopts the language of the coloniser by force, rejects it at the beginning then learns to accept it before trying to make it part of his or her being. Fanon (1988, pp. 39–42) describes the process of change that the native undergoes in order to fight off the alienation and subjugation he or she feels. At the beginning, the subject severs all ties with his or her culture, adopting a new lifestyle, a new way of dressing, new habits, as s/he tries to emulate the master (Fanon, 1988, pp. 39–42). S/he even begins to despise everything that has so far constituted his or her culture, habitat and environment. This includes the language he or she uses. The disillusionment, which has been steadily building since colonisation times, is with
everything that concerns the country; this extends to the individuals. Having failed to find a stable identity, the individuals become stuck in a state of flux, trying on various personas hoping that one would fit. Catarina Kinnvall (2004, p. 748) sees in the search for an identity the problem that identity is always in the process of becoming as it is not ‘a fixed, natural state of being’. Hence, language is used to define this process of becoming within the self. In his study on the Antilles, Fanon (1986, p. 18) states:

‘The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio of his mastery of the French language. A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language.

The same applies to the Arab; by learning to master the language of the coloniser or the currently dominant language, he or she would feel closer to becoming accepted by the one who initially did not consider him or her human.

Since colonialism, the Arab identity has had to confront attacks from external sources, such as redefined boundaries, the emergence of new states and nationhoods, which has led to a process of self-questioning and re-defining. The person could no longer identify himself or herself as an Arab citizen but as a Palestinian, a Lebanese, a Saudi Arabian, an Egyptian etc. This is reflected in language as ‘Arab intellectuals now speak about the Syrian novel, the Iraqi short story, the Egyptian theatre and cinema, Palestinian poetry, the Jordanian or Kuwaiti song’, (Suleiman, 2003, p. 228). In the Arab world, as in other places such as Africa and Southeast Asia, the boundaries have been artificially created and carved by Colonial powers, without any consideration to realities on the ground. Hence, small non-viable nations have emerged, shrinking the outlook of their citizens. Instead of identifying oneself with a larger Arab entity, citizens have begun to identify themselves with a diminishing world that told them to redefine themselves as citizens of countries that have never existed in this particular geography before. This enforced reality has not only created a chasm, physically on the ground and psychologically within the psyche, but also within the very being of the individuals. The citizen learnt to exist as a Lebanese, a Syrian or a Jordanian, creating differences in order to justify the new territorial divisions. The emerging Arab countries had to redefine themselves, and pursued developments and modernizations that were modelled on the Western countries that once colonised them, without addressing the specificity of their societies. To some, however, modernity represented an imperialist project, to be rejected outright. As Kinnvall (2004) adds:

These reforms were initiated by the state, not by the people, and were often rationalized by the belief that it was the ‘modern’ educated few that were charting the future for the more ‘traditional’ and less educated sectors of society. As the reforms became expressed in developmental models and endorsed by the elites, the uncertainty created by the demise of such experiments created a disillusioned youth revolt in many Arab countries (p. 745).

Disillusionment with the governments and their failed socio-economic agendas has created persistent insecurity; the ontological reality of the individual has been questioned. Individuals felt that they had no control over their lives or their destinies. The new boundaries coupled with rapid socio-economic changes have alienated the
individuals from their society. Feelings of disillusionment with one’s country have extended to language and culture. This has led to more people, and especially the youth, adopting the language of the previous coloniser or American English, deemed superior, and considered the lingua franca of technology and scientific progress. The pervasiveness of American programmes and films is also another reason why American English has become so widespread in the Arab world and beyond. According to Toby Miller et al. (2005, p. 1),

Each year, more movie tickets are sold than there are people on the planet . . . Those audiences are mostly watching fiction conceived, made and owned by Hollywood’, and as the ‘US companies own between 40 and 90 per cent of the movies shown in most parts of the world . . . For 2001 and 2002, all the top twenty films in the world were from the US.

The UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics (Analysis of the UIS International Survey on Feature Film Statistics n.d.) states, ‘In 2006, the United States was the largest film producer in the developed world’. Therefore, the influence of American media is a global phenomenon. In her study on English usage in Iceland, Amanda Hilmarsson-Dunn (2010, p. 5) remarks:

It is evident that globalization has had important effects on how people view English, from both a national and an individual level. The paradox is that many nations and individuals recognize the need to know English but at the same time are worried about its dominance and continued spread, which can be to the detriment of the national language.

Hilmarsson-Dunn (2010, p. 7) adds that when a dominant language exists, people find the need to speak it, and when ‘children acquire language, they don’t acquire the code alone, but the ideas behind the language, that is, the meanings, values, beliefs, attitudes, and myths which make up their identity’. With globalisation, and with the Arab youth being exposed widely to American television shows and films, speaking colloquial American English has become the norm.

Individuals feel that the dominant language empowers them, and with its use comes a change of behaviour and a search for a new identity. What has actually transpired for the most part is code switching and mixing between the individual’s dialect of Arabic and the dominant language. Therefore, the spoken Arabic has become heavily interjected with words borrowed from American English. N.L. Shin (2010, p. 56) argues that the drive for efficiency is a significant factor when it comes to lexical borrowing behaviours; this is partially true especially with the young who perceive the Arabic language as less efficient or unfit to ‘designate a foreign and new concept’ (Onysko & Winter-Froemel, 2011, p. 1552). Furthermore, Arabs have also started to refer to the Arabic language by the dialect they speak, i.e., I speak Lebanese or I speak Egyptian. Dubbing foreign television serials is now part of this trend; Turkish programmes, which are currently very popular in the Arab world, are for example being dubbed into the Syrian dialect; some Hollywood films are being dubbed into the Egyptian dialect. Mexican serials, popular in the 80s and early 90s, however, were dubbed into classical Arabic. Furthermore, the emerging Arab states following the colonialism period have resorted to controlling media, using the various media, initially radio and print, and then television, to promote nationalism and redefine the character and allegiance of their newly acquired citizens. This is
probably the reason for the overabundance of national songs praising the country or
the leaders on government television and radio stations in the Arab world.

As the Arabic language exists in a dual form, i.e., what is spoken is not what is
written, the spoken dialects, nowadays, comprise the spoken form of the language of
a particular country along with words from the language of the previous coloniser
and more recently, interpolations of American English. This is evident namely in the
host/interview shows on the pan-Arab satellite channels, whether government or
privately owned. For my argument, I have chosen a sample of television programmes
of similar genres, namely addressing the female gender or the whole family, but aired
on different and popular free-to-air pan-Arab satellite family-oriented channels, such
as the MBC, DMI, ADTV and Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC).

LBC, established in 1985 terrestrially and launched in 1996 on satellite, with
channels that now cover Europe, the Americas, Australia and parts of Africa, is one
of the most popular networks within Lebanon and with Arab speakers in the region
and beyond. Since its inception, it has distinguished itself with somewhat
provocative and innovative programmes transmitted against a prevalent regional
media saturated with taboos and restrictions. Being the first private station, LBC’s
personnel and staff, and with more private pan-Arab media ventures emerging,
quickly found jobs in Arab Gulf television stations, such as Abu Dhabi, Dubai,
MBC, Rotana, amidst others. Considered the trendsetters, others in the region
started to emulate, in both in the mode of presentation and the types of programmes
produced. The image of being different manifests itself in the language used,
especially in the programmes that concern women or the family, and as Bassiouney
(2009, p. 204) remarks, language practices ‘are sometimes more significant than
language policies’.

In an interview conducted in Arabic during an episode of ‘helweh murra’ (حلاوة مرة),
aired on LBC, in 2010, with Colette, who is the wife of Assi al Hallani, a Lebanese singer, 68 English and French words are used in the span of
21:37 minutes. The predominant language is French as Lebanon was under a French
mandate post the First World War, but as the United States is now the superpower,
some English words are included. Table 1 provides a detailed breakup of the
language employed, while the later tables will not be as detailed.

Laazim ti’raf (El Kahwaji, 2011) [You should Know], which is an
interactive show that gives general health tips and advice for a better marital life...
(with topics) ranging from general health...to giving advice on foreplay and
intercourse’, is also part of this trend. In the September 5th episode of the year 2012,
approximately 45 minutes, 77 foreign words were used. The borrowed words are
mostly English, supplemented at times with French words. As these topics are
essentially taboo on Arab television, the use of foreign words provides another
dimension in this case. Although most of the used terminology in this episode exists
in the Arabic language, the doctors who are presenting the programme felt more at
ease with the English terms. In some respects, this distances them from the taboo
topic by linking it to an external foreign medical authority through language. At
times, however, they have resorted to a literal translation of the term, as when spot
was translated into dot in Arabic. Both hosts, Labib Ghulmiyyah and Sandrine Attallah, pronounce some of the Arabic words or letters
in an affected way, giving the impression that these words are difficult for them to
articulate. Once again, this seems to be a trend on Arabic television, even if the hosts
or presenters are not consciously aware of it at this stage, or perhaps they are.
This trend is now common to nearly all the television programmes that are aired in the various dialects in the Arab world. In another programme produced by Dubai Media Incorporated, DMI, called ‘Inti Ajmal’, [You are Prettier], (Kamel, 2013), around 208 foreign utterances are used in a 32:22 minutes episode. In the same episode, the announcer, who code mixes with mostly English words, sometimes includes the odd French word as well. The participants in the programme also introduce English words in their dialogue, and this seems as a direct reaction to the announcer’s language; it is ironic that the English is not up to par, pronouncing ‘p’ as ‘b’, for example (Table 2).

Examples abound and here are more: in one of the episodes of ‘Sawalifna helwa’, [Our Chats are Fun], (2010), a DMI production, 103 foreign words are employed in 90 minutes by all of the participants and guests, irrespective of their nationalities (Table 3).

In ‘Joelle’ (2010), an MBC makeover programme, in which an American singer undergoes a makeover, around 76 foreign words are used by the presenter, and these do not include the English conversation between her and the singer (Table 4).

Adding the plural form of Arabic syntax to English or French words is also very common in these programmes; the root is the foreign word and the ending is the Aat, which is the form for feminine plural in the Arabic language; for example, programme becomes programaat, mobile becomes mobaylaat, etc. If we were to apply Carol Myers-Scotton’s model of the matrix language, here Arabic is no longer the dominant language, as the grammatical suffix for the feminine plural is added on a root of a foreign word. Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller (1988, p. 52) have noted a similar practice in their study of English loanword usage in five diverse francophone neighbourhoods in Canada, where the ‘entire word will have French morphology but...
English phonology’. Poplack et al. (1988, p. 93) also remark that in code switching, the speaker alternates between two coherent grammar systems, while in borrowing only one grammatical system is used.

Ha-tat (hats), fabri- kaat (Fabrics), كثير [kteir] (a lot), thank you, so غير [gheir] (different), lookkat (looks) are some of the hybrid words/phrases that are used in the episode of Style aired on 10 November 2011, on MBC1 (Labban, 2011). In this 50-minute episode, the Lebanese announcer, Hélène Watfe, interviews Tony Yacoub, a Lebanese designer, along with others who have worn or modelled his clothes; in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of English words</th>
<th>Number of French words</th>
<th>Hybrid words</th>
<th>Sentences/phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated:</td>
<td>Repeated:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Cendré</td>
<td>Makyaji</td>
<td>Correct me if I’m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look</td>
<td>Degradié</td>
<td>Moda</td>
<td>wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heels</td>
<td>Classique</td>
<td>El look</td>
<td>Big no no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Ombré</td>
<td>Default (Fr)</td>
<td>Return it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Reflet</td>
<td>area</td>
<td>Cash on delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend/trends</td>
<td>Accessoire</td>
<td>Ay reason</td>
<td>As long as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>Default</td>
<td></td>
<td>Price tag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get the look (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latest trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fashion show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Something different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full make-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic designers (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you (2) so much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not counting ‘OK’ and other common words due to confines of space.

Table 3. DMI TV programme: ‘Sawalifna helwa’, or ‘Our Chats are Fun’, 90 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of English words</th>
<th>Number of French words</th>
<th>Number of hybrid words</th>
<th>Sentences or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated words:</td>
<td>Repeated words:</td>
<td>Checkaat</td>
<td>Step-by-step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fans</td>
<td>Merci (7)</td>
<td>Provaat</td>
<td>Two zeroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group/groups</td>
<td>Autostrade</td>
<td>Fi nota</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curve</td>
<td>Madame</td>
<td>Merci kteir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/characters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clip</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcard/postcards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not counting OK and other common words due to confines of space.
episode, at least 255 French and English words are used; even the info-graphics used in the breaks are written in English (Table 5).

When Watfe speaks to actress Nadia Najm, subtitles are added to translate some of the English words in her dialogue. However, as with the announcer of the DMI programme, when the announcer interviews a designer from New York, her English is not very fluent; this supports Poplack et al.’s (1988, p. 97) statement that bilingual proficiency does not influence the rate or reason for borrowing.

‘Kalaam Nawa’em’, ‘كلام نواعم’, [Chat of the Fair Sex], an MBC programme, which tries to depict more serious issues by presenting real-life situations and discussing sensitive topics, is aimed at the Arab family. The producers of the programme argue that for, ‘the first time on Arabic Television, four women come together to discuss the hottest issues, up-to-the-minute news, and real-life stories’ (Allied Media Corp. n.d.). In episodes 272, 274, 286, 294 and 373, each around 55 minutes, which deal with subjects ranging from whether sexual issues should be discussed on air, piracy near the Somali coast, Turkish dramas on Arab television, Ramadan drama, a Jordanian twin adventure team raising money for charity,
swindling of Gulf tourists in Arab countries, to illegal organ sales, aggressive children, and prostitution, 262 English words were used (Salamah, Bseeso, Bargout, & Jamal, 2011). Episode 371 of the same programme, on the other hand, allocates a large portion of its 60 minutes to interview westerners who have chosen to make the Arab world their home. Bseeso interviews Erga, an American woman who lives in Wadi al Rum desert in southern Jordan, while Salamah interviews Evelyn, a Swiss lady, who has made Al Faiyum in Egypt her home. In the programme, we also meet Rayan, a Dutch national, who has settled in the Sudan, and a Swiss chef, Mauricio, who makes Saudi Arabia his temporary home. In this episode, the interviews are conducted in English; however, the comments by Bseeso try to undermine the Arab culture by continuously pitching the Westerners’ behaviour, which is considered righteous and proper, against some inappropriate Arab practices used to undermine and stereotype the Arabs.

Marwan Kraidy (2006) notes that with the advent of satellite in the Arab world, a simplified version of Modern Standard Arabic, which he refers to as ‘white Arabic’ is being employed; this, however, is more common in more serious programmes, such as news, current affairs programmes or documentaries. (Ahmar bilkhah el ‘areed), [Red . . . in bold], which according to LBC website ‘sheds light on social and cultural taboos’, a mixture of MSA and Lebanese dialect are heard. In the 66-minute episode 8 of season 5, which discusses crimes against children, interviews with two mothers whose children have been harmed or killed, a police inspector, a psychology expert and a criminal, only 31 foreign words are used (Maktabi, 2011). (حکمة نساء) (hikmat nisā’), [Females’ Cure or Wisdom], a family medical programme on Abu Dhabi Television, ADTV, hosted by four doctors who give their expertise on medical issues and answer viewers’ concerns, fluctuates between MSA and the dialects of the four female doctors (Fadil, 2011). In episode 20, which is 56 minutes long, topics dealing with child obesity, old age, children using mobiles, infants’ separation from mothers to smoking are discussed, 68 foreign words are used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of English words</th>
<th>Number of French words</th>
<th>Hybrid words</th>
<th>Sentences or phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>168 Repeated Hats</td>
<td>49 Repeated Haute-couture (mispronounced) Programme Atelier Artiste</td>
<td>22 Domainaat Thank you kteir Gook luck la’ilak As usual we just wish him the best of luck ma’innu He doesn’t need it Recherchaat chapeauyaat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Everything is good It was beautiful Special design Special touch We’re lucky to be Finger print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyeliner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vintage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not counting ‘OK’ and other common words due to confines of space.*
In addition, certain expressions are a literal translation from the English language producing a nonsensical phrase in Arabic, as when one of the doctors says ‘زیاد وزن’, (yirbaḥ wazen), [gain weight], which should have been ‘زیاد وزن’. In another ADTV production, (Abwaab), [Doors], which is essentially a programme on culture and is narrated in MSA, hardly any foreign words are employed in episode 51 (Khoury, 2011). In her study of Egyptian women’s speech in talk shows, Bassiouney (2010, p. 113, 114) notes the choice for using MSA is usually linked to the identity the woman is trying to project and the authoritarian image she is trying to assign herself. In ‘Abwaab’, the interviews with actor/singer Karim Abu Zeid from Egypt, artist Lydia Muawwad from Lebanon and singer Reem Banna from Palestine, are conducted in MSA; even though the responses are in the dialects of the interviewees, the latter hardly resort to code switching (Khoury, 2011). This is probably a reaction to the language of the presenter, as speakers tend to reciprocate the language they hear. Furthermore, the choice of MSA projects a certain identity and image of the announcer. Barring the news channels, however, we, in most cases, have a distorted mélange of two or three languages, and the choice of the interjected words reveals simple terms that have Arab equivalents.

In search of identity

When the search begins for a new identity, however, for many, history constitutes the easiest venue. As the history of these nations has undergone numerous interruptions by external forces that helped redefine their current existence, the linear progression cannot provide history as a credible source or site for the search of a lost identity of which the physical or a verbal communication is an integral part. Having failed in attaching oneself to a foreign culture, the individual revisits his or her own. Fanon states: ‘This culture, abandoned, sloughed off, rejected, despised, becomes for the inferiorized an object of passionate attachment. There is a very marked kind of overevaluation that is psychologically closely linked to the craving for forgiveness’. The individual begins to rediscover his or her culture as if revisiting it anew. In insisting to re-enact what he or she perceives as the Truth, inaccurate representations arise. He or she continues to imitate what he or she perceives the ancestors have done; this extends to social habits, including dress, manners of speaking, and manners of eating. In the Arab world, this has included the re-introduction of the veil, a change of lifestyle and terminology. Some words have been resurrected from ancient texts, in the hope that such words can give their utterers credibility. Using obsolete words is akin to code switching as it also creates a chasm between the person who articulates these words and the receiver of them. Prior actions have to be scrutinised within this vision of history, with a reference to an action that Prophet Mohammed may have undertaken or words that he may have uttered. The culture that is created by the individual does not truthfully reflect the history, but it is a contrived interpretation of a perceived history. It is an attempt to revisit and exist in a more glorious time in which Arabs were respected. Given that some of the fundamentalist Moslems resort to using rigid forms of the classical Arabic, a new tension has arisen between them and those who reject their way of life and prefer to see themselves as secular. The tension, which is essentially between two opposing lifestyles, begins to manifest itself in the use of the Arabic language—rejection of fundamentalism, unfortunately, in some instances, brings with it a rejection of the language, which is now relegated to the position of a language that is very much part of a past.
Dariusz Galasiński and Chris Barker (2001) see that identity is always undergoing a continual Derridean deferral and addition. Moreover, Galasiński and Barker (2001, p. 31) argue that identities ‘are both unstable and temporarily stabilized by social practice and regular, predictable behaviour’. Stuart Hall, Held, Hubert, and Thompson (1996, p. 598), on the other hand, state: ‘The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent “self”. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions’. The rejection of one’s language, culture and original identity, leads the individual to continually deconstruct her/himself. Galasiński and Barker (2001, p. 42) state that given ‘that language does not mirror the world, we can never say what we “really are”. We can only go on making what we consider to be better, more useful, descriptions of ourselves’. The language that is not ours becomes the better language; so we begin to construct ourselves through it. We compose a project of our desired self, and on this self attribute the traits that we find desirable. In this respect, we create ourselves anew and bring new subjects into being through the perceived language of the other. We use language to differentiate ourselves from our listeners.

Denise E. Murray (2010, p. 167) sees that language is central to identity construction, as through ‘language we position ourselves—we let others know who we are and how we want to be perceived’. Code switching positions a person in a certain framework, or as Myers-Scotton (1995, p. 111) remarks becomes part of social-identity negotiations; the person is implying that certain words are not available in his or her native language and has to resort to a more superior language. This is understandable if a certain term does not exist in the original language, for instance a technological or medical term; but for the most part, the words that are interjected are everyday words that do exist in the native language. A barrier is hence created between those who are monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. At times, the announcers or media personalities are not bilingual, but throw in foreign words, thinking that they can impress more. Myers-Scotton’s (1995, p. 47) argues that code switching is in part the performance of the imperfect bilingual, while Bassiouney (2009, p. 29) states that individuals code switch to fill in lexical gaps, as they claim they do not have the right expressive word in a language. In the television programmes I looked at, however, the trend of inserting foreign words when Arabic terms exist is not only becoming very common but is a way of showing the person westernised, the assumption being that this is more civilised. Myers-Scotton argues that ‘bilingual elites’ ‘pronounce loans as close to the originals as possible’. It also grants more authority to the person uttering these words. In the television programmes, the language generally sounded pretentious and was by no means an indication that the person who resorted to code switching was fluent in both languages. As the media have a great influence on the mass audience, viewers will consciously or subconsciously begin adopting these words and incorporating them in their own speech.

Itha biddak, which is a literal translation of the French expression ‘si tu veux’ or ‘si vous voulez’, is a term that has infiltrated the Arabic dialects, but is essentially meaningless in Arabic. Sometimes the incorporation of the words is incorrect, because either the actual meaning of the word is not understood or the word is mispronounced. As previously stated, using the foreign words and conjugating them by adding Arabic linguistic forms, is also a very common trend, which voids the meaning in both the languages used. Furthermore, when one uses
code switching the flow of speech is broken, and at times to the degree, the person does not sound fluent in their native tongue. Watching these programmes, one can be almost certain that there is a conscious effort to make the uttered Arabic dialect sound pretentious and unnatural. The hosts or presenters sound as if they are incapable of even pronouncing the rudimentary letters, let alone actual words or sentences. This practice is by no means looked down upon; on the contrary, it is condoned and praised, especially the implication here is that the person is not really Arab. Didier L. Goyvaerts and Tembue Zembele (1992, p. 73) see code switching as a way to exercise power and stress a superior position, while Leigh Swigart (1992, p. 89) argues that it exposes a dual identity. The way I speak is an important part of the identity I am trying to construct, as the ‘identities do not have a fixed essence but rather are always made and remade’ (Sherwell, 1999, p. 59). By that, I can thus reinvent myself into a self that is perceived more cultured and acceptable with the image I have been led to understand is more civilised. According to Abdel-Rahman Abu-Melhim (2012, p. 455), speakers code switch to appear more prestigious and stylish, while Mark Sebba and Tony Wootton (1998, p. 276, 284) argue that the practice allows individuals to shift identities, given that social identities are flexible constructs.

Conclusion

Both code switching and mixing aid in the negotiation of one’s identity vis-à-vis the recipients of one’s utterance. Through the previously discussed examples of the television programmes, I have tried to demonstrate at once the pervasiveness of both code switching and mixing in the pan-Arab media, and how the chosen words do not reveal any lexical complexity nor do they reflect complex connotations. They are for the most part simple everyday words that have colloquial equivalents in the Arabic language. I propose that the reason for using code switching and mixing is not that the corresponding Arabic word does not exist but that using a foreign word seems to give more empowerment to the person, creating barriers between those who are or appear to be bilingual and those who are not. Moreover, the trend ultimately allows the speaker to reconstruct his or her identity as deemed desirable, in this case not completely Arab. In the discussed context, such practices expose an unstable identity, which until this day measures itself against a colonial standard. Media set the trend and people imitate.

‘Inequity’, (Bin Hafez, 2007), is a short documentary by a young Emirati filmmaker who presents the issue of the use of the Arabic language by young Emirati college students. In the film, a number of male and female students are interviewed and questioned on their use of Arabic and/or English and what their native Arabic language means to them. The reasons they used to justify their code switching or using English rather than Arabic are the complicated rules of the Arabic grammar, being enveloped by English since childhood, the easiness of the English language, the education curricula, foreign domestic helpers, etc. (Bin Hafez, 2007). The film shows how even their perceptions of themselves change with the language they are using (Bin Hafez, 2007). One of those interviewed in the film admits, however, that he feels embarrassed when he is amongst his family; due to his code switching and lack of complete fluency in the Arabic language, he not only feels ashamed but also of a lower status (Bin Hafez, 2007). A young female student, on the other hand, says she is rather embarrassed by speaking Arabic because it is old-fashioned (Bin Hafez, 2007). I would
like to conclude this paper with a quote in Arabic from the film by one of the male students: ‘لحنتك هي هويتك وانا مستحلل اتنزال عن هويتي’ ([lughtik hey haweetek wa ana mustaheel atnazal 'an haweeti], ‘your language is your identity and I would never let go of my identity’ (Bin Hafez, 2007).

Notes
1. Arab world refers to Arabic-speaking states within Western Asia and North Africa.
2. www.chambersharrap.co.uk
3. The Quran is probably the reason why Modern Standard Arabic is still alive.
4. Ibrahim al-Yaziji (1847–1906), a Syrian linguist, poet, and journalist, was instrumental in creating a simplified Arabic font.
5. Sāṭī’ al-Husnī (1882–1968), a Syrian educationalist, was an Arab nationalist whose views on Arab nationalism was somewhat influenced by German Romantics, such as Herder, Fichte and Arndt.
6. Lebanese, linguist and jurist who was born in 1914, who was quoted as saying ‘I think in Arabic, therefore I am an Arab’ quoted in (Suleiman, 2003, p. 121).
7. One cannot deny the important role that the missionary schools played in advancing education in the region. The American University of Beirut, which was established in 1871 by American missionaries in Greater Syria, has, in the past, produced some of the finest scholars and leaders within the region. In Palestine, for instance, the English High School for Girls in Haifa, and the German Catholic School in Jerusalem, offered a complete secondary education for girls.
8. With the missionary schools, appearance was always equated with modernization or westernisation, which was placed on a higher pedestal. Okkenhaug (2002) quotes the comments of Said K. Aburish who was born in the 1930s: ‘The more western our dress, the more we liked it, and the more other children envied us—another reflection of implicit admiration for British ways. My sister Wagiha Mahboud’s dresses were the envy of everyone. Because she looked like any western girls there were revealing comments: ‘she looks like a pretty English girl’ or ‘we ought to change her name to Elizabeth’. The inference from such a statement is that the more western the girl looks, the better and more cultured she is seen to be.
9. ‘Sykes-Picot Agreement, (May 9, 1916), secret convention made during World War I between Great Britain and France, with the assent of imperial Russia, for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The agreement led to the division of Turkish-held Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine into various French- and British-administered areas. The agreement took its name from its negotiators, Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and François Georges-Picot of France.
   Its provisions were as follows: (1) Russia should acquire the Armenian provinces of Erzurum, Trebizond (Trabzon), Van, and Bitlis, with some Kurdish territory to the southeast; (2) France should acquire Lebanon and the Syrian littoral, Adana, Cilicia, and the hinterland adjacent to Russia’s share, that hinterland including Aintab, Urfa, Mardin, Diyarbakir, and Mosul; (3) Great Britain should acquire southern Mesopotamia, including Baghdad, and also the Mediterranean ports of Haifa and Akko (Acre); (4) between the French and the British acquisitions there should be a confederation of Arab states or a single independent Arab state, divided into French and British spheres of influence; (5) Alexandretta (Iskenderun) should be a free port; and (6) Palestine, because of the holy places, should be under an international regime (Encyclopaedia Britannica). The agreement also paved the way for the creation of the state of Israel in historical Palestine.
10. In a phone interview with a former pupil of The Jerusalem Girls’ College (JGC), conducted on 26 August 2011, N.B., who attended the school from 1944 to 1948, confirmed that students were allowed to use Arabic on the school premises; attention was also given to its instruction.
11. The ‘Arab Human Development Report (2002)’, states ‘Arab countries’ access to and use of cutting edge technology, exemplified by information and communication technology (ICT), is very limited. Only 0.6% of the population uses the Internet and the personal
computer penetration rate is only 1.2%. More generally, investment in research and
development does not exceed 0.5% of gross national product, well below the world average’.
12. EDTV has now grown to include other media outlets, and is now called Dubai Media
Incorporated.
13. In her TED speech in December 2010, Patricia Ryan, an English teacher who has worked
in the Arab countries for at least three decades, describes an incident that her friend
encountered in one of her classes. She says:

I want to tell you about my friend who was teaching English to adults in Abu Dhabi.
And one fine day, she decided to take them into the garden to teach them some nature
vocabulary. But it was she who ended up learning all the Arabic words for the local
plants, as well as their uses – medicinal uses, cosmetics, cooking, herbal. How did those
students get all that knowledge? Of course, from their grandparents and even their
great-grandparents. It’s not necessary to tell you how important it is to be able to
communicate across generations. (Ryan, 2010)

When language is lost so is the knowledge of that culture.
14. It is interesting to see how the sad incident of the Tunisian Mohammed Bouazi’s setting
himself on fire on 17 December 2010, in answer to humiliation he incurred at the hands
of a police officer, not only led to protests and a crumbling of the regime in Tunisia but
also sparked off demonstrations all over the Arab world. Bouazi’s action has
symbolically erased the borders set by colonialism.
15. Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal al Saud of Saudi Arabia owns 48% of the shares of LBC Sat.
16. On DMI’s site, the synopsis states that this programme concerns itself with the woman’s
external appearance, getting expert advice from beauty and other specialists to give
advice to the participants on how they should dress, and on ways to improve their
appearance. The programme’s host is Graziella Kamel.
17. The programme falls in the genre of beauty programmes for women, and its main
concern is to create a ‘new look’ for the female participant.
18. On DMI’s site, the synopsis says that 6 journalists from different Arab countries discuss
the ways in which their own countries deal with a particular topic or situation, along with
the host of the programme. The programme’s aim is to reveal the cultural similarities and
dissimilarities between the various Arab countries, through light-hearted animated
discussions.
19. MBC has the highest viewership in the Arab world. According to Market Watch, ‘MBC
is the largest media conglomerate and broadcasting group in the Middle East with over
165 million viewers worldwide. Launched in 1991, it is the first pan-Arab free-to-air
satellite station’.
20. This is evident in a number of religious programmes and channels, but I will not be
discussing this trend in this paper.

References
europeanjournalofsocialsciences.com/ISSUES/EJSS_35_4.htm
programs.htm
Fund for Economic and Social Development.
Bassiouney, R. (2010). Identity and code-choice in the speech of educated women and men in
Egypt: Evidence from talk shows. In R. Bassiouney (Ed.), Arabic and the Media
(pp. 97–121). Leiden: Brill.


[Our Chats are Fun]. (2010). Dubai Media Incorporated. TV program, Dubai, UAE: DMI.