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Multiglossic Arabic from the perspective of ideological conceptions

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I. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic research of Arabic language

1- the grammar of Old Arabic type

from the pre-Islamic era

2- the grammar of Neo-Arabic type

from the Medieval era

II. Aim of this research

Why do people want to stick to the grammar of Old Arabic type, that is prescriptive grammar ?

Is it from the ideological perspective ?

III. Significance of this research

1- motive of linguistic change

2- ideology-induced linguistic change as an inevitable perspective

3- the basic thinking which Arabic speaking people traditionally have.

This research is part of a larger study that aims to elucidate the actual situation of the mutual interaction on the continuum between Old Arabic type and Neo-Arabic type.

IV. Preliminaries :

The term Classical Arabic started to be used in 19th century in the western, especially German, scholarly tradition :

Nöldeke (1896), Caspari (1897), Brockelmann (1904),
Völlner (1906), Reckendorf (1921), Fück (1950) ...

Classical Arabic is depicted in the framework of the western philological tradition and it is different from the description of Medieval Arab grammarians (Arab Linguistic Tradition).

Standard Arabic : the modernized version of the grammar of Old Arabic type with much influence of Neo-Arabic.

Political standardization : Political ideology (Pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism) created Standard Arabic, around the 19th century.

Acquisition of this grammar through school education

The educated elites only possess the knowledge of

Standard Arabic.

Colloquial Arabic : Native language of Arabs is their regional colloquial Arabic. Arabic speaking area expands widely so that various kinds of colloquial Arabic exists.

Arabic dialect ? : This is not the 'standard - dialect' relation.

As for Standard Arabic :

- X coherently prevalent

- X native speaker, at least of its original dialect

- X one of the dialects which had synchronically existed

V. Standardization process

V-1 Standardization of Arabic in Islamic era

The past plays an authenticating and legitimating role in the standardization process.

“It is a well-known fact that the prestige of Arabic in the world derives from the role of the language as a medium of the *Qur’ān* and that of the vast intellectual tradition to which Islam has given rise since its appearance on the world stage in the seventh century.” (Suleiman 2003 : 42-43)

Religious standardization

“The emphasis on Arabic in the *Qur’ān* further reflects the privileged position of the language among the Arabs of pre-Islamic Arabia as the medium of their most highly prized cultural product, poetry.” (Suleiman 2003 : 44)

As early as the eighth century (from the end of seventh century to eighth century CE) Arabic grammar was codified and frozen to fix. → Prescriptive Arabic

V-2 Prescriptive norm --- normative bind --- purism

Codified grammar : a norm to avoid and eliminate regional colloquial influences.

“colloquial words are a linguistic illness and we must protect our language and our pens from their hovering in the vicinity.” (**Muḥammad al-Xaḍar Ḥusayn 1934**)

pure, prestigious and authentic Arabic = *fuṣḥā*. (pure)

‘Linguistic Fundamentalism’

V-3 Diglossia --- Multiglossia

diglossia by Ferguson (1959) → multiglossia by Hary (1992)

“The systematic nature of the intermediate variety in Arabic argues for a one-system model. This system includes a continuum with two extreme ends : the acrolect [=prescriptive Arabic] ... and the basilect, or Colloquial Arabic. In the middle, the mesolect, one finds countless varieties, or lects, used by native speakers on different occasions and under various circumstances.” (Hary 1992, 28) ([] added)

intermixture (Shivtiel 1995, 215) : Normally prescriptive Arabic (*Fuṣḥā*) is mixed with their regional colloquial varieties (*ʿĀmmiyya*) in grammar and style.

"These ... are , of course, the poles of the dichotomy : there are many intermediate and mixed languages, which serve various communicative functions. Until the 20th century, for about 1400 years, the colloquial had been considered an inferior language, not fit for use as a vehicle of literature."
(Rosenbaum 1995, 143)

mixing in the phonological level

احنا برنامج الحكاية الكاملة والهدف من البرنامج هو ان
احنا نكدم للجمهور الحكاية ولا شيء غير الحكاية

iḥna barnāmig il-ḥakīka l-kāmila wi-l-hadaf min il-barnāmig huwa

inn iḥna nkaddim li-l-gumhūr il-ḥakīka wa-la šay' gēr il-ḥakīka

They can only pronounce /k/ (voiceless velar plosive)

according to their colloquial norm when they should

pronounce /q/ (voiceless uvular plosive) in the prescriptive

norm.

mixing in the morphological level 1

'eye' + dual suffix

ʿayn-ayn, *ʿayn-ēn*, *ʿēn-ēn* ○ (matrix : colloquial)
ʿēn-ayn, *ʿīn-ayn* X (matrix : prescriptive)

'think' + pro.suffix (3f.sg)

tafakkar-it, *itfakkar-it* ○ (matrix : colloquial)
itfakkar-at X (matrix : prescriptive)

mixing in the morphological level 2

Although Speakers normally use the complete colloquial forms, they tend to

prefer *lam + jussive* (prescriptive) to *mā + perfect* (colloquial).

(left side)

(right side)

lam ʾara-hu ⇔ *mā raʾay-tu-hu* ⇔ *mā raʾ-ēt-o* ⇔ *mā šuf-t-o*

(I didn't see him.)

classism

mixing in the syntactic level

(1) *ʿayy muḥāfiẓ ʿind-ina yurīd ʿan yakun ʿind-u ḡāmʿa*

(any governor **in our country** wants to **have** a university)

(2) *ʿilli ni-šūf-ha wa ʿallati naʿīš-ha* (**which we see** and experience)

(3) *ʿil-muškile baʿa ʿinna-nā ʿind-anā nās miš kways-a w-mumkin
tusruq it-tallāḡa nafs-a-ha*

(The problem remains that **we have bad people and it is possible to
steal the refrigerator** itself.)

(27March 2014 pc)

mixing in the level of sentence and beyond

(4) *yubuṣṣi hina huwwa ʿāyiz yirūḥ il-ḥaram ṣaḥīḥ huwa l-ḥaram sikitu ʿal-ēh ʿinna-mā huwa hawa yaʿni ʿēh ʿadala ʿan-i l-ḥaqq-i ʿila hawan fi nafs-i-hi rasūl illāh ma ʿamal-š kida mā ḍalla ṣāḥib-u-kum wa-mā ġawā.* (šayx Muḥammad M. Šarawi, Šarqiyya, 1997)

(He looks here. True, he wants to go to the ka'aba. This is the way towards it, but what was it that he wanted ? He deviated from the right path for a desire in his soul. **The Prophet of God did not do that.** You companion = Muḥammad has not strayed ; he is not deluded.)
(Bassiouney 2013 : 60)

ʿadala ʿan-i l-ḥaqq-i ʿila hawan fi nafs-i-hi (from some ḥadīs)
mā ḍalla ṣāḥib-u-kum wa-mā ġawā (53 *al-nağm-2*)

(5) *ʿalay-hi fa-l-nattaqi llāh-a taʿālā wa-li-nağ^ʿal-a l-qurʿān-a l-ʿazīm rabī^ʿ-a qulūb-i-na wa-li-naʿxud min-hu ma fiʿ-**na li-ʿiṣlāḥ dunyā-na wa-ʿisʿād-i ʿuxrā-na*** (šayx ʿabd al-Zāhir, al-qāhira, 1999)

(Let us fear God, and make the glorious Qur'an the spring of our hearts. Let us take from it what we want to reform our world, and make ourselves happy in the hereafter.)

nominalization : Colloquial Arabic < Prescriptive Arabic

ʿiṣlāḥ < *nuṣliḥ* (we reform)

ʿisʿād < *nusʿid* (we make happy)

The speaker tends to change his speech style to the **colloquial based** one unconsciously : a deviation from the prescriptive Arabic in the direction of Colloquial Arabic

Prestige / authenticity attracts people :

‘Whenever a variety of a language with social, religious, economic, or other prestige comes into contact with a variety without such prestige, speakers and writers of the latter will, at times, try to use forms of the former even if the forms are unnecessary in that linguistic environment.’ (Hary 2007, 275)

‘Prestige plays a key role in terms of background analysis of the creation of pseudocorrections ; in addition, the issue of ‘authenticity’ must be taken into account.’ (Hary 2007, 276)

If we dare to use the traditionally used term diglossia we must re-define it as follows :

In the actual linguistic situation the colloquial speech includes more or less prescriptive features. The mixing situation of various varieties and styles between two extreme ends on the multiglossic continuum is normal.

This is the most typical characteristic of diglossia.

VI. Prescriptivism --- ideological perspective

This kind of mixing situation is triggered to appear due to the powerful influence of prescriptive thinking.

VI-1 *Hikmat al-‘arab* (wisdoms of Arab)--- before Islam

“The past is mined, ideologised, and symbolically elaborated in order to provide determination ... with respect to correct and future challenges”. (Fishman 1972 : 9)

“it is only by returning to that past that purity of Arabic and wisdom of its people can be excavated and reconstructed as a first step in molding the present in the image of the past.” (Suleiman 2003 : 50)

ḥikmat al-ʿarab (wisdom of the Arabs) : link between people and authentic Arabic

The Arabic-speakers of Central Arabia (Najd and their immediately surrounding areas) created this treasure.

ḥikmat al-ʿarab has been transmitted through outstanding poetry in Old Arabic.

Poets excelled in skills to deal with Old Arabic grammar.

Arabs cherished this principle and tradition through history.

Grammar of the prescriptive Arabic capsulates this treasure.

bloodiness of linguistic elements : some virtues in being a thoroughbred rather than a mongrel, legitimate rather than bastard (Thomas 1991:23)

data for making the prescriptive grammar

1- *al-Qur'ān*

2- pre-Islamic poetry

3- colloquial Arabic of the Arab tribes in Central Arabia of seventh century and roughly up to the 9th-10th century C.E.

→ prestige and authority

geographical restriction : linguistic purity, summed up in the principle of *faṣāḥa*, whose lexical meaning in word root denotes the idea of purity, correctness, and eloquence.

VI-2 Ethics of Islamic thought --- after Islam

(6) *dālīka huwa al-**ḍalāl**-u l-ba^ʿīd-u* (14 ʿibrahīm-18)

(This is a deviation far away from the human right path, deluded by his desire in his soul.)

Example (7) includes this sentence.

(7) *yad^ʿū min dūn-i llāh-i mā lā yaḍurr-u-hu wa-mā lā yanfa^ʿ-u-hu dālīka huwa al-**ḍalāl**-u l-ba^ʿīd-u* (22 al-ḥaḡḡ-12)

(Instead of God, they call upon what can neither harm nor help them. This is a deviation far away from the human right path, deluded by his desire in his soul.)

Example (8) includes the important key word *ḍalāl* meaning 'corruption' 'deviation from the right human path' 'degeneration of morals'.

(8) *fa-mādā ba'd-a l-ḥaqq-i 'illā l-ḍalāl-u fa-'annā tuşrafūna.* (10 Yunus-32)

(Apart from the Truth, what is there except **deviation** ? So how is it that you are dissuaded ?)

triad of purity, correctness and ethics / morality

“a close connection [exists] between puristic attitudes and the cultural ethos of a speech community” (Thomas 1991 : 2)

ḍalāl = deviation from the norms of correct speech
= deviation from the right path

speech → ethical judgment

incorrectness in speech → blemish / fault

The Prophet *Muḥammad* :

committing errors in speech = deviation from the right path

the assertion in *al-Qurʾān* (26 :195) that it was revealed in

“perspicuous” Arabic (*mubīn*) : “*bi-lisān-in ʿarabiyy-in mubīn-in*”

In the 8th century *Sībawayhi* (d.793) wrote a comprehensive grammar of Old Arabic, which is called *al-kitāb* (the book) or *kitāb Sībawayhi* (The book of *Sībawayhi*). The grammar prescribed by *Sībawayhi* has continued to be the frozen norm as the most authoritative prescriptive grammar.

One of the varieties of Old Arabic spoken in Central Arabia has developed to be prescribed in the historical process.

A completely correct utterance must fulfill two conditions

semantic : to convey the intended meaning

structural : to comply with the rules for the form

and arrangement of words.

mustaqīm ḥasan : [morally] right and [ethically] good

mustaqīm qabīḥ : [morally] right and [ethically] bad

ḡayr mustaqīm : not [morally] right : unintended meaning

muḥāl : wrong, perverted, twisted

: internally contradictory

VII. Findings

Arab Linguistic Tradition strongly established the strong connection between the prescriptive grammar and purity, correctness, authenticity and morals / ethics. This brought about the authority in the prescriptive thinking in Arabic multiglossic settings.

VIII. Conclusion

ḥikmat al-ʿarab is the basis of Arabic thinking. Due to the ethnic / national ideology and religious ideology Arabic speakers strongly want to stick to the prescriptivism.

ethnic / national ideology : key word *ḥikmat al-ʿarab* : purity and authority decendent from the past in the genuine Arabs in Central Arabia

religious ideology : key word *ḍalāl* meaning 'corruption' 'deviation from the right human path' 'degeneration of morals'

Arabic speaking people have traditionally thought of only the codified Arabic as the prestigious and authoritative Arabic which they have called *‘arabiyya* (Arabic). The prescriptive thought has made this kind of assumption. This means that there is a discrepancy between their assumption and the actual linguistic situation, which is a very multiglossic situation. This prescriptive thought has still been deeply rooted in the minds of Arabic-speaking people. That is why people still now stick to the prescriptive norm although it is not their native language.

IX. Further Research

Various ways of thinking in the link between standardization and ideology might be found according to the period and each grammarian in the first four centuries of Islamic period. Further research through meticulous perusal of the old extant archives of medieval Arab grammarians is needed.

I want to research for some more rules or systems of mixing of varieties and styles in the lect-contact settings in multiglossia.

هذا باب علم ما الكليم من العربية

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وبه نستعين
فإن للكلم اسم وفعل وحرف جاء للمعنى ليس باسم ولا فعل ولا اسم رجل وفرس وإنما الفعل تامثلة أخذت
أحداث الأسماء ليست الماضية ولما يكثر ولم يقع وما هو كائين لم ينقطع وإنما ما مضى فذهب
وسمع وحده ومكت وأما بنا ما لم يقع فإنه فو لك أمر الذهب وأقتل واضرب ومخبر أي ذهب ويضرب
ويقتل ويضرب وكذلك بنا ما لم ينقطع وهو كائين إذا أخبرت فهذه الأمثلة التي أخذت
من أحداث الأسماء ولها أمثلة كثيرة مستبين أن سائر الله والحداث نحو الضرب والحمد والقتل
وأما ما جاء للمعنى وليس باسم ولا فعل فهو كرم وسوف رواو القنم وأم الإصناقة ونحوها

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