

The Effect of Social Media on English Spelling in Arab Context

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Abstract: This paper reports an empirical study which aimed at analyzing and identifying the spelling mistakes done by people of Arabic framework due to too much use of social media. Two different methods were used for data collection: primary research methods including a questionnaire survey and unstructured interview with the topic. The other method is the secondary research method including reference books, academic journals, articles, published and unpublished manuscripts and the internet. The experiment is presented here in the following format: first, the paper deals with describing for this study and then it presents and discusses the results. Finally, the paper summarizes the findings and concludes with some general remarks.

Keywords: Spelling, Social Media, Mistakes, Arab, Messages, Chatting

1. Introduction

Now, Spelling is to say or write the letters of a word in the correct order recollected from one's memory (Oxford Dictionary). We can also say that the word spelling attempt to transcribe the sounds of the language into alphabetic letters. Any word that doesn't match the target word in part or in full is marked as misspelling (such as "Paly" for "Play").

Social media, forms of electronic communication is now an integral part of the day to day life. Children are exposed to interact on social media at an early age. Quick communication through texting has now become a necessity. Keeping this necessity in mind people tend that there is no need to correct mistakes or to conform to regular spelling rules. But children who have been brought up with the internet do not question wrongly spelt words. Now you can see problems start from here.



Fig.1 shows the various kinds of social media we use now a day.

Lucy Jones, a former student at Manchester University, said: "We are now witnessing the effect of these linguistic variations on children born into the computer age with such a high level of access in and out of schools".

2. Method

2.1. Participants

For this study the author selected 20 Saudi students (age between 20 to 28 years) and 20 teachers (age between 30 to 60 years) from Jazan University.

2.2. Testing Procedure

The method includes a questionnaire survey and unstructured interview with the students of 18 to 28 years old and teaching and non-teaching staff of the age group between 30 and 49 years as part of the research separately.

2.3. Data Analysis

The paper, which surveyed a group of 18 to 28 year old Jazan university students, found the majority believed that unusual spellings are used on the internet because it is faster and has become the standard which can save time without losing the idea. But teaching and non-teaching staff between 30 and 49 years of age opined that the real meaning of communication is being affected due to the wrong usage of spelling.

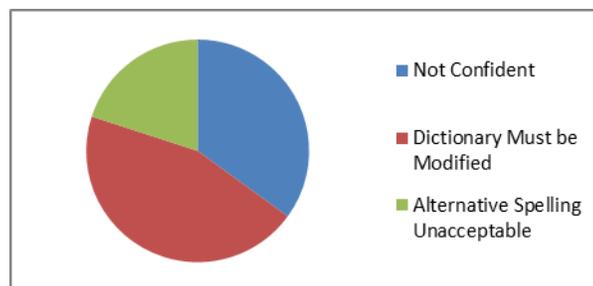


Fig. 2 Pie chart showing the result of the survey

2.4. Results

At the outset, the study has come out with a number of facts that more than 35% said they would not be confident in writing an important email or letter without referring to a dictionary or spell checker. 45% believe that dictionaries should contain modified spellings. In spite of the general use of so-called "variant" spelling, almost a third (20%) of those questioned said that alternative non-standard spellings are "unacceptable".

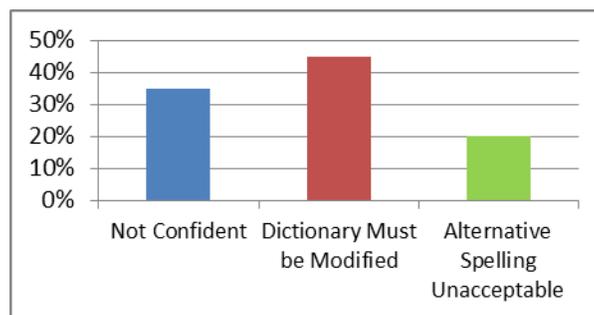


Fig. 3 Bar Diagram showing the % of the comments of the participants.

3. Discussion

There is a generation gap between the young and the old generation. It is apparently noticed in this study. The old generation participants differ in their opinion with the young generations because they do not easily accept the modification of the set rules in their minds. It may be language or tradition or culture. But the young generation always wants to experiment with the changing world attitudes. This is why social media is very attractive to them. In order to communicate quickly, everyone discovers one's own spelling and language. This is the very important factor that has given rise to spelling / language-change. The data analysis reflects this attitude of the young old generations. One can clearly see the disparities between these two generations. Let's see these disparities below:

<i>Old Generations</i>	<i>New Generations</i>
1. Time constraint.	1. No time constraint.
2. Lack of knowledge.	2. Learns new things.
3. Impatience.	3. Perseverance.
4. Not easily adoptable.	4. Highly adaptable.
5. No need to make relationships (friends.)	5. Always enthusiastic to make friends.

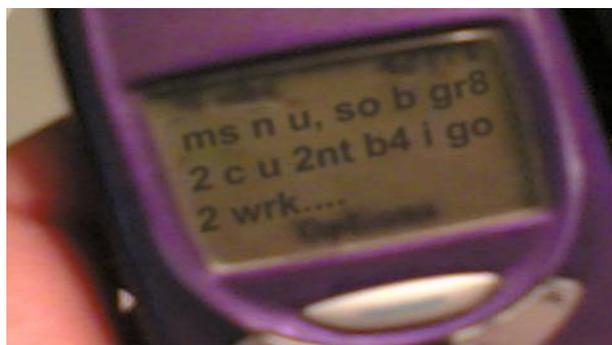


Fig. 2 showing the use of short form while chatting.

4. Conclusion

In the previous era, there was no social media and people used to accept short phrases to save money while sending TELEGRAMS. Contemporary life style is so busy and fast. Everybody is in a hurry. Abbreviated spelling is used in text messages and emails. This trend is responsible for spelling mistakes. This is why the beginners and learners are unable to memorize correct spellings, which is leading into great spelling-lapses. As a linguist, we observe that it is not right to conclude that these young generations are making mistakes. In fact, they are generating a new language. In this swiftly changing era of communication, there's nothing wrong in using new spelling or the abbreviation of language. Using new spelling or abbreviation creates new form language which we linguistically called pidgin. If this trend continues, the future generation will certainly accept this pidgin as a creole (new language). We may conclude that it is not right to say that young generations are doing mistakes rather they are generating another new language.

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