The Collocates of Women in Liberal Versus Politico-Islamic Discourse

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The status of women in the Middle East has always been a controversial issue, but there does not seem to have been quantitative studies of how the political and religious attitudes reflect on the presentation of women in the Arabic media. The current study examines the way women are presented in two websites of general circulation with the purpose of unearthing the linguistic connections of “woman” in liberal versus politico-Islamic discourse.

The study uses computational and corpus linguistics techniques to investigate a corpus of 40 million words extracted from the political Islamic website http://www.ikhwanonline.com and the liberal website www.almasry-alyoum.com in search for the collocates of the word “woman” in all its possible morphological representations. Due to the morphological richness of Arabic, the words were first stemmed, i.e. all the clitics were removed from the words, before all words within the range of 5 words before and after “woman” were subjected to collocational analysis using a combination of pointwise mutual information and raw frequency counts as a measure of association. The top 100 stems in each corpus source were selected for comparison.

The results of the study give a strong support to the conclusion that liberal and Islamic websites treat women differently. While the liberals stress political participation, rights, and work equality, the Islamists stress home, marriage, pregnancy and children. While the results are not new in the sense that this may sound like common knowledge, the study provides quantitative analysis and proof of the results.

We have provided quantitative analysis of large amounts of data in the study of a linguistic and humanities filed, an area that is still lacking in Arabic linguistic research. We hope to augment this with qualitative research in the future over the same data sets.

Media Learners’ Trends toward Language Training Materials at The Undergraduate Level and Their Impact on Shaping Their Perception of the Arab Identity: A Comparative Morphological Field Study on Various Media Faculties and Departments in Public and Private Educational Institutions in Jordan, Egypt and Qatar

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Background: The problem with the study lies in answering a series of scientific questions and assumptions that can be raised within the context of the following research question: "What is the nature and limits of interest of academic qualification institutions in the Arabic language, as compared to English, in educational courses offered by them at the undergraduate level - as this is the primary stage that interest in Arabic and oral presentation skills can be stressed, as compared to post-graduate education - and also because this stage is considered the main provider of staff for media institutions, including print and electronic newspapers, radio and television as well as advertising and public relations firms; what is the impact of teaching in English on young people's understanding of the nature and importance of the concept of Arab identity, which they only hold its surface morphological features?, what are the intermediate variables affecting the students' attitudes toward the adequacy and effectiveness of these subjects in shaping their linguistic capabilities?"

Main objective of the study: To contribute to spurring the interest of media academic qualification institutions in the Arabic language and oral presentation skills through monitoring the nature and extent of current interest in these subjects and to identify students' trends toward the language training materials they take.

Study methodology: An interpretative descriptive approach using surveys: to describe and analyze the educational curricula and learning plans for students learning at the media departments and faculties in Egypt, Jordan, and Qatar. Also, this approach – with its two components - was used to monitor and measure students' trends towards the linguistic qualification materials they take and the nature and adequacy of these subjects in qualifying them linguistically.

Comparative approach has been used to conduct quantitative and qualitative comparisons between the nature and number of hours devoted in study plans for media students for both Arabic and English languages in various social contexts and in Arabic and English public and private educational systems.

Results of the study: 1 - There is a growing interest in English on the part of media departments and faculties, much greater than their interest in Arabic, especially in private universities.

2 - Generally, there is weakness and lack of harmonization in language training materials for media students.

3 - Students tend to have much more interest in language training materials in English than in Arabic.

4 - Students have stressed that the language training materials they take, especially those in Arabic, are not adequate to qualify them properly in terms of language capabilities, and that the style and method in which they are taught are isolated from the language of the media, which should be corrected in order to maximize the benefits of offering language training courses.

5 - Students in different places of study and in different academic specialization had different attitudes towards language training materials.