

Reconciling the Modern Standard Arabic with the Local Dialects in Writing Literary Texts

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Abstract : This paper attempts to shed light on the question of the choice between standard Arabic and the vernacular in writing literary texts. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has long been the formal language of writing education, administration, and media, shared across the Arab countries. In the mid-20th century, some writers have begun to write their literary works in local dialects claiming that they can be more realistic. On the other hand, other writers have opposed this new trend as it can be a threat to the Standard Arabic or MSA that unify all Arabs. However, some other writers, like Tawfiq al-Hakim, Hamed Damanhouri, Najib Mahfouz, and Hanna Mineh, attempted to solve this problem by using what W. M. Hutchins called a 'hybrid language', a middle language between the standard and the vernacular. It is also termed 'a third language'. The paper attempts to examine some of the literary texts in which a combination of the standard and the colloquial is employed. Thus, the paper attempts to find out a solution by proposing a third language, a form that can combine the MSA and the colloquial, and the possibility of using it in writing literary texts. Therefore, the paper can bridge the gap between the different levels of Arabic.

Keywords : modern standard arabic, dialect or vernacular, diglossia, third language

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