

Language Use in Computer-Mediated Communication and Users' Social Identity

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Abstract : This study examines the relationship between language use in computer-mediated communication and the social identity of the user. The data were collected by surveying 298 Saudi bilingual speakers who are familiar with Arabizi, a blend of Latin characters and Arabic numerals to transliterate Arabic sounds, and then analyzed quantitatively by running tests for statistical confidence in order to determine differences in perceptions between young adults (ages 15-25 years) and middle-aged adults (ages 26-50 years). According to the findings of this study, English is the dominant language among most of the young adults surveyed, and when they do use Arabic, they use Arabizi because of its flexibility, compatibility with modern technology, and its acceptance among people of their age and sociocultural backgrounds. On the other hand, most middle-aged adults surveyed here tend to use Arabic, as they believe that they should show their loyalty to their origin. The results of the study demonstrate a mutual relationship between language use in computer-mediated communication and the user's social identity, as language is used both to reflect and construct that identity.

Keywords : Arabizi, computer mediated communication, digital communication, language use

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