

MASS COMMUNICATION AND THE MOTHER TONGUE

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The world witnesses today an increasing interest in mass communication and mass media, and a true belief in its mission and objectives. Mass communication in modern world develops in an astonishing manner, as a result of the technological progress in the mass media, electronics and printing. The Arab States, at present time, adapt themselves to keep pace with this progress in mass communication by sending forth an Arabic space communication satellite for broadcasting radio and television programs dealing with cultural and informative subjects.

This astonishing development in mass communication is only an extension to the triumphs achieved by the language to realize mass communication on a large scale. The language became predominant due to its great influence on the thinking of individuals and communities. Therefore we consider that the victory of mass communication over the limitations on broadcasting, imposes upon the mass media in the first place, a promotion of the standard of Arabic language, which witnessed as any other language the different states of the human evolution. Since the dawn of the human life, as it employed the spoken word and then the written word, and later on the stage of printing until it witnesses now the stage of broadcasting and the rise of mass media.

On the basis of this conception we put on these pages a question about the effect of this communicative stage on the Arab homeland on the one hand and on the classical Arabic lan-

guage as the channel as the creative writings, on the other.

First, the subject of the relationship between the language and the communicative expression requires a kind of agreement of the basic idioms, among which we first cite the "language", which is considered the most important means of the mass media. It is the "tongue", nevertheless it was considered by ancient peoples as identical to "dialect". The Arab tongue is the Arabic language in a wider sense. This language was confounded and included different dialects, each of which was known as a certain language, such as the "Modar language" and the "Tameem language". Now we say the English language or the Arabic language. This means the linguistic entity of a certain nation, although the dialects differ in pronunciation and meaning of words.

Language in the Process of Mass Communication

If the special meaning prevails over the general meaning of the language, the "informative" expression which is more restricted than the language, requires comprehending the relationship between the language and the mass media. Language is a series of gestures which exist in every community for the sake of this community and thus it is the most important means of mass communication. Therefore we have to know how to deal with and employ it in mass communication, through our understanding of its complex construction. Words,

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which are the smallest units of language are not mysterious things or riddles, but they are incidents in time and space. They have material dimension and symbolize meanings.

If the conception of mass communication remained unlimited for a long time a new theory came into being in the last few years. This theory helps us to evaluate objectively the data, included in any message, whether it is a report about a matter, a poem by Al Akkad, a telephone call, a piece of music, the weather forecast or a scientific discovery. This theory is called the information theory, which emanated from mere practical problems. Claude Shannon, the American Scientist laid the foundation of the theory of probabilities in information. Many scholars began later to apply this theory to great fields of science.

Words in mass media have two forms of existence : compulsory existence and actual existence. Every word heard or uttered leaves a group of impressions in the mind of both the speaker and listener. The first plays a positive part, particularly in mass media as he begins communication and the second plays a negative part as he receives the message.

Schramm says that when we communicate with others we try to have something in common with whom we communicate. In other words we have both a sender and a receiver of a certain message. The sender tries to communicate his information or endeavours to express his feelings which he transforms into words, heard or written. After sending the message, the sender expects that the receiver has in mind, the similar image which he, the sender, has in his own mind.

If we analyze the process of mass communication we find that it includes five main elements : The sender who formulates his idea in certain symbols, and sends them to the receiver who deciphers these symbols and explains their meanings. He then responds to them, expressing by sending a new message formulated in symbols, to the first sender, who in turn receives it, deciphers and responds to it. Thus the communication circulates and forms the most important characteristics of the reactive society.

Thus the role of the language in the process of mass communication and in editing the message, in particular is clearly shown. This linguistic message is transmitted through mass media to propagate rapidly. This depends naturally on the harmony between the sender and the receiver. If we realize the close relation of mass communication with life we find that the emphasis of mass communication is parallel to

the relationship of communication's dexterities with life. The recent studies proved that it is possible to help the writer of any mass media to emphasize the most necessary aspects of communication. The efficient writer does not disregard the role played by the language in the process of mass communication and does not neglect exciting the interest of others. Mass communication idiomatically - means providing people with the right news, sound data and established facts, which help them to form a pertinent opinion about a certain fact or a certain problem, in such a way that this opinion expresses what the masses think as well as their trends and inclinations. This means that the only end of mass communication is convincing the others through information, facts, figures, statistics and so on. Otto Groth gives a definition of mass communication and says "Mass communication is the objective change of the thinking of masses, their behaviour, their trends and their inclinations at the same time" Mass communication is an objective expression of the contributor, whether he is a journalist, announcer, or engaged in cinema and television.

Mass Communication and the Language of Civilization

Mass communication does mean communicating with all the people but according to Reeves and his two colleagues it includes selection of categories - groups or special masses who can be of great numbers - within the masses. The mass media meet with masses through a process of mutual selection. The mass media tend to select their masses basically through the content. The masses also tend to select the mass media through the content. The masses attracted by a certain mass medium may differ thoroughly from those attracted by another kind of mass media. Nevertheless it is obvious that they are interlaced to a great extent.

If the function creates the organ, the functions of mass communication created what we call "genres of the mass communication". These functions have not changed, since centuries, between the primitive culture and the contemporary civilization. But new forms and skeletons emerged to enlarge these functions and extend them. The "writing" developed to let the community keep its stock of knowledge so that it may not be lost by depending on personal communications or the memories of old folk. The "printing" developed so that the machine may multiply what is written to man, more cheaply and rapidly than man himself can do.

It is impossible to imagine a civilized community. It is impossible too to imagine a primitive tribe employing what a modern community employs. Every social stage uses a suitable mass media. Here we perceive the close relationship between mass communication and the language of civilization through investigating the human history. Mass communication is necessarily an art of civilization. It solves the problem of formulating knowledge in an actual practical way. Walter Lippmann, the American political commentator says : "The modern community does not lie in the scope of direct vision of anyone. It is not always comprehended and if a group of people comprehended it another group will not comprehend it". Thus the language of mass communication becomes a language of civilization, endeavouring to explain and integrate. If we throw a comprehensive look at mass communication, we will find that it goes deeply into body of civilization.

The process of communication is achieved on different levels of language and symbols. Communication is achieved on three levels of linguistic expression :

First : The aesthetic level used in literature ;
Second : The theoretic scientific level used in science ;

Third : The social functional objective level used by different kinds of mass communication.

These three levels exist in every human society. The difference between the sound integrated society and that decomposed the community is that the linguistic levels are approximately equal in the first while they are remote from each other in the second. The approximation of the linguistic expressions proves the homogeneity of the community, the equilibrium of its various classes, and the vitality of its culture, and consequently leads to its integration and soundness of mind. It is an established fact that the periods during which prevails a kind of harmony among the three levels are mainly the most flourished periods. If the linguistic level differs greatly from the other linguistic level there is mental severance in the community, which leads to disorder, weakness, senility and decomposition.

We are of opinion that this is right when we say that our Arabic language is in need of intellectual levels. This necessitates employing the Arabic language in the fields of modern civilizations, including different sciences. The

mass media are, in the first place, responsible for this because the language which they use with its social practical level is the language of civilization.

MASS COMMUNICATION AND LINGUA FRANCA

The Arabic language like any human language passed by the stages of the human development as H.G. Wells says that language is the main pivot of the whole human history movement. He divided this history into :

- First the period of speech ;
- Second the period of writing ;
- Third the period of printing ; and
- Fourth the period of broadcasting.

He took into consideration the assisting factors of this main pivot, like the invention of steam and electricity, as well as the close relation between printing and mass production. Wells, beyond any doubt, was one of the precursors of a new eloquence and art. He realized that human progress goes on with astonishing paces, especially in the field of controlling the immense energy. He expressed the need of the people to a new language for mass communication, which does not represent resurrection of old theories, or display the consequences of natural sciences in the human field, but they are a conditional response of what the language has gained of new energies.

On the basis of this conception we try to know the effect of mass communication on the Arab Homeland, on the one hand, and on the Arabic classical language, on the other.

We find first that the printing stage culminated in the decomposition of the Islamic World and dividing it into parts. When the Islamic and Arabic Orient knew the printing, press flourished. Nevertheless the regional calls appeared in the later years of the last century and the first years of this century. We are of the opinion that the callings for using the colloquial language are not only connected with regionalism, but so with this printing stage.

Printing, as says Marshal Maclohan, created the individualism and nationalism in the 16th century in Europe. The Gutenberg's invention of the movable type had great effect. Civilization derives its character from the mass medium. The European nationalities, in the stage of printing, were connected with putting an end to the Latin language. The colloquial language flourished and turned into independent languages in Europe.

Those who were affected with this vision call for regionalism as those who call for regionalism for political purposes. Those who call for colloquial languages were naturally affected with printing too. They called for using numerous dialects and employing them as official languages in the Arab countries to put an end to the Arabic language as it was the case of the Latin language in Europe. The printing prepared a suitable climate for this call. Therefore we cannot differentiate between the call for using colloquial language and the call for writing the Arabic language with Latin letters when we assume the effect of printing with general social entity.

The later years of the last century and the first years of the present century witnessed a rise in printing and press in the Arab countries. This is the stage which witnessed the call of "Spetia" (1880) and Wilcox (1893) in the Review of "Al Azhar" and the Egyptian writers who followed them like Salama Mousa. They predicted that the Arabic language would come to an end as did the Latin language.

Those orientalist, and those who followed them among the Arabs, did not realize that the linguistic development in the Arab Homeland differs from the Latin language in the days of the nationalities in Europe. But those who call for this were confused because the Arabs have to pass by a new stage of the human communicative development, i.e. the stage of "broadcasting" which enabled the man to make the limited moment a universal instant.

If the printing led to explosions in the society and became individual and divided, and if these explosions were connected with flourishing of the colloquial languages and the calls for using them, the period of electricity was not a factor of exploding and parting. Therefore we find that radio and television led to reunion. We live in a world which is more approximate to agglomeration and integration, like the electric circuit. The community feeling and the universal feeling flourished in this stage of broadcasting.

For this reason, we see that the calls for using the colloquial language in Egypt and the other Arab countries, when they reached the apex in the later stages of printing - if this arbitrary decisive differentiation between the stages can be done - the stage of broadcasting was striking the doors of the world. This meant on the Arabic ground announcing the birth of an "Arabic Village" from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf, if this expression is right.

Using the artificial satellites in mass communication, will lead to the revival of the Arabic community feeling, and resistance of the regionalism and the calls for using colloquial language closely connected with it.

The stage of broadcasting - particularly on the Arabic ground is connected with the Arabic lingua franca. The nature of modern mass communication supports, to a great extent, this assumption of the proceeding of the Arabic language. People, in the age of radio and television, are content only with positively taking part in mass communication. This social requirement imposes upon the mass media, which is a characteristic of our contemporary civilization to have the Arabic classical language as a lingua franca, which expresses this effective role, particularly after using the Arabic artificial satellite.

Mass media address the masses since the beginning. The best linguistic levels for them are those which belong to the comprehensive perceptions and artistic impressions. The classical Arabic language is the means to achieve this, because it is the language of civilization. It is also in our countries because it is based on the restitution of the general Arabic and Islamic characteristics. The lingua franca is the language which goes beyond the borders of the Arab country to all those who speak Arabic.

In the language of mass communication it is necessary to differentiate between the classical language and the difficult language which can only be spoken by few people. Every classical language is not always difficult and every colloquial language is not easy to be understood by the listeners, as says Al Akkad.

Mass Communication and the Arabic Lingua Franca

Using the classical Arabic language in mass communication is not very difficult. The language of mass communication is that easy simplified language. The mass media are characterized by showing the essentials of the Arabic language, like elasticity and depths, which made it pulsating with life and the true translation of meanings and thoughts as well as the wide scope of the words and expressions, which the practice, taste and circulation judge whether they are good or not.

Generalizing the classical Arabic language necessitates, in the contemporary stage of mass

communication, a constant effort to generalize this classical language and make use of its genuine characteristics. The mass media form the standard of people's activities and their relations. If their content conceals their nature, the "mass medium" itself reacts with the cultural model, within the frame of which it works.

In describing the lingua franca we say : First it is subdued to certain rules, which very slowly make it far from development in a long time. For this reason it is superior to the dialects used in daily talks, circulated in homes, streets and markets. Therefore it is used by those who like to improve their speech and expression, as well as the men engaged in mass communication on a large scale.

Second It is, as says Henry Sweet, the language which the listener cannot discern to which locality belongs the speaker.

The Arabic lingua franca is renowned for its many communicative characteristics, among which is the fact that it is a language comprehended by the common people. The people's dialects did not prevent them from understanding the simplified texts of the classical language. It is also a democratic language which addresses the old and the young in the same tone and does not confuse the singular pronoun with the plural one. It is a universal language, used by numerous peoples, since the establishment of the Arab State in the later years of the second Hegira century and the first years of the third Hegira century, which had the Arabic character in the fields of reli-

gion, language, culture and civilization. We are of the opinion that the characteristics of the Arabic language made it the most circulated language in the world. Modern linguistics consider it to be the third language in modern world, with regards to its circulation and extension.

Therefore the Arabic language of mass communication is the lingua franca. Our language is one of the richest languages in tradition. It is also one of the oldest languages which survived till the present time. It included the knowledge of the ancient peoples. Now it has been proved that it can include the fruits of the modern human thinking. It takes even part in the development of the literary and intellectual riches of the modern world.

In the language of mass communication the classical language realizes this approximation between the three levels of the language, i.e. the scientific, literary and practical levels. The classical Arabic language, beyond any doubt, made use of the Arabic development as well as that of mass communication, and gained more influence in mass communication, on the local and universal grounds. It is used in international organizations as an official language. This necessitates that the lingua franca in mass communication surpasses the difficult equation between tradition and modernism, and tries to make the levels of the linguistic expression approximate so that it may not be separated from the traditional language and the language of civilization.