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Future of the Arabic Language

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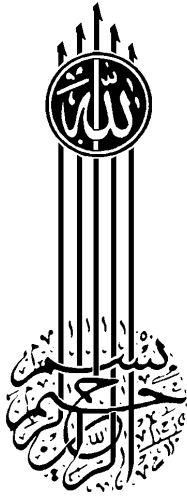


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Foreword

The future of the Arabic language engages the attention of a host of linguists, thinkers, men of letters, authors and researchers concerned with the development of thoughts, language, literature and cultural life in general within the Arab-Islamic world. The issue is receiving a great deal of attention in the Arabic language academies, the departments of Arabic language and literature inside Arab universities, and in the Arabic language faculties and departments of Islamic and world universities. The matter is also receiving paramount attention from Arab-Islamic centres for study and research, and from organizations, bodies, and institutions specializing in culture and education. Chief among these are the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization and its Arabization coordination bureau, the press and media, and the translation departments of specialized institutes and faculties.

The reflection on the future of the Arabic language is an issue of cardinal importance in the modern Arab-Islamic thought. This issue is inextricably linked to the sovereign authority of the Arab-Islamic Ummah on its culture, thoughts, presence of its civilization, and its present and future. This is a sovereignty issue in its comprehensive sense, and not only a matter of language, literature, and culture.

Indeed, the Arabic language present and future is one of the important concerns, which monopolized my attention since long. I have been highly concerned with the issue as a reader, a researcher, and in my capacity as Director General of the

Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. My concern has been focused on the issues of the Arabic language future, the analysis of the status of Arabic in the present era, more specifically in the first half of the twentieth century, as opposed to previous eras, particularly in the booming era.

Like any living being, Language is subject to contingencies and prone to the vicissitudes of time caused by developments, changes, and novelties. Language Life is part of its speakers' life. It becomes strong as they become strong and falls weak as they yield to weakness. It is a determining factor in renaissance. Whenever a civilization rises up and flourishes, its language follows suit and spreads far and wide. This rule is recursive in all eras and applies to successive civilizations and human languages.

No researcher working on the process of language evolution contests or questions the validity of this rule, which should be adopted in assessing the situation of the Arabic language in the present era, and in understanding the retrogression, weakness and problems of the Arabic language. The reality of this language is a true reflection of the state of the Ummah. The keen interest taken in redressing language problems and issues, to help reverse the disaffection of language by large groups of its speakers, is part and parcel of the core interest in the civilizational edification of the Islamic Ummah.

Hence my desire to make contributions to language studies dealing with the development and promotion of the Arabic language with the view to making it the language of the future, and renewing with its history as the language of the glorious civilization of the Ummah. In this effort I relied on the academic studies I have previously done in the field of linguistics based on my academic background as a specialist in

English language. I adopted a comparative method and opened up to conclusions likely to benefit the Arab researcher in spotting the causes and effects, which are at the origin of the Arabic language weakness and its failure to keep pace with the world development.

Being honoured by membership in Cairo Arabic Language Academy, my concern with the future of the Arabic language doubled. I contributed two research works to the 69th and 70th sessions of this academy: The first work was on the topic of “Language of Information and its positive Effects in achieving increasing linguistic Development”, while The second work was on “ISESCO’s Project of transcribing African Languages in Arabic Scripts”. I saw in the publication of these research works a benefit for scholars, researchers, university students, and readership in general. The two works engendered diligent effort, and innovation. They also contained all I consider as beneficial and useful in securing the continuity of the civilization role of the Arabic language, and enabling it to respond to the requirements of linguistic developments of the other living languages that have an effective influence and a worldwide spreading.

ISESCO’s civilization project of transcribing African languages in the Arabic script, is undeniably a prospective project in the first place, as it is seeking to bring the language of a group of Islamic African peoples back to the sphere of the Arabic script, thus bringing them closer to the Arabic Language, widening the scope of use of this language, and casting its radiance wide to embrace larger horizons. The present work falls within the framework of our endeavours to secure a better future for The Arabic language.

I felt duty-bound to have this book features an article I published on 6/08/1999 in “Al –Ashram”, a widespread Cairo newspaper, under the title of (The Arabic Language: A matter of existence).The article, of close relevance to the future of Arabic language, produced positive responses from its very instant..

I also deemed it convenient to publish in the book the integral text of the recommendations of the international symposium on the theme : “Arabic Language... Whereto ?” organized in November 2002, as a result of cooperation between the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Islamic Development Bank. The recommendations contain valuable guidelines and useful orientations. They are of close relevance to the context, and represent a sample of the efforts I have, thanks to Allah, successfully made in the service of the Language of the Qur’an.

I presume that I have presented in the book the gist of my thoughts on this topic, and my diligent effort in advancing our beautiful language and in spanning bridges between it and the future.

May Allah crown our endeavours with success

Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri

Director General of the Islamic
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

**Language of Information
and its Effects on Achieving
Linguistic Development**

Linguists and philologists converge on the undeniable fact that language is a living being subject to the laws of development and evolution.

Evolution is the actual reason for the life of language viewed as a social being. The underpinning of evolution is a simple existence in the first place, and an evolutionary development in the second. During these shifts, the living creature is in an evolving formation, and a gradual change⁽¹⁾.

However, we shall not go that far in taking this whole saying for granted. To put it more accurately, we cannot understand evolution as a rupture with heritage, as a deracination, and as an encroachment on fundamentals and constant principles. The view we adopt on this issue is that of an evolution of language within the framework of its specificities and rules, according to a methodology put forward by linguists.

Our intent on being committed to this methodology, is not a restraint of the linguistic thought, or a form of sternness, self-withdrawal. It is rather the discipline required by our handling of the matter, and the caution commanded by discharging our duty towards our language.

Furthermore, there are levels of language evolution. The first level is the development of language from within. By this we mean keeping pace with the development of society, through, derivation, coinage, compounding, generation, and arabizing. This form of

(1) Amin Khouli, problems of our linguistic life, p. 46, published in 1987 in Cairo by the General Egyptian book Authority.

evolution is slow by nature, and might not be felt by speakers of language, in a generation or many generations, since they are living it and fusing with it. It is rather felt and perceived by later generations. The second level is the development of language from without. By this we mean the pressure impacts of imposing inflection, declension, and conjugation on language, through inversion, change, deletion, insertion, spoiling, distortion, and violation of the established rules, and adopted principles. This type of evolution is forced. It is imposed by the force of reality, or by the influence of an intellectual invasion accompanied by a linguistic invasion.

Thus the development of a language is not always sound and uniform. It might be a chaotic development that corrupts language and destroys its mainstays.

Throughout its long history the Arabic language never knew a development so rapid, an evolution so rush in keeping pace with changes, than now. This state of things is due to numerous factors and reasons. A rather more influential factor is the widespread power of the mass media, both written or audio-visual. This power reaches a high degree of influencing society values and principles, systems and behaviours, culture and language to the extent of making certain societies lose their civilization identity, and affects their cultural specificities, mainly language specificity.

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The relation between language and information do not always run in parallel lines. The two sides do not interact since they lack parity. Information is the strong side and its influence is so intense that it undermines the very specificities of language, and badly

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harms those specificities to the extent of spoiling the aesthetics of language.

Every science, art, or every section of the human activity has a specific language, in a sense or another. The language of information differs in many respects from the language of all fields of specialization. It is in a weak position in facing the power and omnipotence of information. Language rarely imposes its power on information. It is rather information that overpowers language, breaks into its sanctuary, constituents and fundamentals. Thus language yields to the power of information, follows its steps and serves its objectives, with no power or influence.

The power of a language derives from the power of its speakers. Language is made strong, prosperous, and widespread as long as its Community is getting strong, and making strides in cultural, literary, and scientific development, and in social, political and civilization boom. The status of the Arab and Islamic Ummah at this historical phase, does not give the Arabic language big chances of prominence and of mustering the sinews of power. This results in the weakness of the Arabic language, its inability to assert its existence and to control the flows of information, or to set itself aside from its sphere of influence. Thus language becomes subservient to information, and blurs the demarcation lines between reform and corruption.

As the press appeared in the Arab world in the 19th century, enthusiasts for the Arabic language warned against the deterioration of Arabic. Voices of Authors and literary writers in more than one Arab country called for sticking to the correctness of language. Numerous books dealing with what is termed Journalese have been published. The objectives of these books were to correct

errors, and the erroneous writing styles, as well as to rehabilitate the Arabic language. The masters of language and early leading figures, keen on the soundness of the daily language of the press or the (daily language) made on the paradigm of (daily newspapers), were successful in their efforts.

The widespread dissemination of the press coinciding with an increase in the number of educated people from university graduates and laureates of schools and institutes, accompanied by the declining standard of education in general on account of many factors and reasons led to the weakness of Arabic language and to the dominance of the local colloquial language. This latter crept into the media in an almost uniform manner after alarm calls from linguists and language enthusiasts remained unheeded. The decisions and recommendations issued by language academies, or specialized conferences and symposia were also to no avail.

The result of this situation of Arabic language is that Arabic has been ushered into the era of widespread information while it is suffering an immune deficiency. This led to a sweeping invasion of the standard language by what is termed (the language of information). This intermingling of standard and colloquial languages generated a third hybrid language, which took no time to spread on a wider scale within the Arab countries and overseas, extending to places where Arabic communities knowing the Arabic language or non native learners of Arabic are living.

This third language, which became the accredited language of information, falls in an intermediate state as the theological school of Mou'tazila would put it. It is neither a standard language in its rules, criteria, structure and fundamentals nor the colloquial obeying no constraints, criteria, or rules. The characteristic feature

of this language is that it is widespread, carried to bigger horizons through the medium of the Arabic script. The danger here lies in the fact that standard Arabic being superseded by colloquial Arabic, which is getting widespread, despite its weakness and defects, and is considered as if it were the Arabic language raising beyond any suspicion or doubt. Thus this new language has acquired the (legitimacy of winning accreditation), has been given free ride to become the language of thought, literature, art, information and diplomacy. To put it differently, the language of life unchallenged by any other language of its kind.

Considering the wide spreading of the media of information, the diversity of its channels, tribunes, and media, and the deep and great impact information has on language and on society in general, the relationship between the Arabic language and information has grown into a linguistic phenomenon worth pondering. The aspects of this phenomenon are two-fold:

- **The first aspect** lies in the fact that Arabic Language has widespread and the scope of its dissemination and radiance has widened. Thus we can safely say that Arabic never reached this expansion in any of its historical eras. This is a positive aspect since the status of Arabic has been promoted in an unprecedented manner and demand for it has increased by and large, to the extent of becoming an international language in the broad acceptance of the word.
- **The second aspect** is that errors have become common in the language, grammatical mistakes diffuse among its speakers, analogies, structures, forms, and styles, which bear no link to standard Arabic. This language is imposing itself

on the cultural, literary and information life. It is taken as model to fashion oneself at to the detriment of standard Arabic, which is vanishing and going regressing, save in exceptional cases. Thus the hybrid language has become the rule and standard Arabic the exception. Hence, the negative aspect of this phenomenon.

Should we make a linguistic adaptation- similar to a legal adaptation- of this phenomenon, we would not be inconsistent with the truth if we said that the Arabic language in our era is suffering from a (pollution) badly contaminating the linguistic environment, perverting thought, infiltrating forms of disorder and confusion into minds. This unstable linguistic situation also causes a perversion of the intellectual life of the Ummah whose infection transmutes into a perversion in most areas. Meanings, significations, concepts and symbols are confused in the language of communication, among intellectual classes and people in social command. This creates ambiguity, confusion, and overlap in the meanings of words. If this state of things generalizes and expands it would cause a state of general chaos in the intellectual and cultural life and result in something more dangerous than all these.

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This diagnosis of the relationship between language and information enables us to grasp the reality of the linguistic situation of Arabic⁽²⁾ in this phase full of decisive regional and international changes. In the light of this, we would not be overstating the fact, ,

(2) we do not mean here linguistic creation, we rather mean the present situation of language, nuance.

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if we said that the situation is, in many respects, dangerous by all standards of measurement, and in every sense of the word. This danger should not prevent us from remedying the defects and cleaning the linguistic environment from pollution, and opening up the chance for linguistic development that would rehabilitate standard Arabic, and redress its situation. Thus the relationship between language and information would rest on a sound base. They both would interact with moderation and within reasonable bounds. No side would overpower the other. Thus language would safeguard its identity and information would perform its function of enlightenment, culture and decent entertainment. The two sides would complement each other and be in symbiosis, as language would be in the service of information and information would be supportive of the status of language.

However, we do not despair from reforming the Arabic language in the short run. Nowadays something called (linguistic inflation)⁽³⁾ or (linguistic expansion) has been achieved due to the enlargement of the sphere of information and its impact on societies, and to the wide spreading of language in its current status. This serves the objectives of linguistic development in the

(3) In his book (language of Arabs in issues o the Arabic Language) page 85, published by the library of linguistic studies, Dar Al Qualam-Damascus-Addar Shaamia –Beirut, in its second edition of 1990 Dr. Hassan Dada gave an academic meaning to the term (Linguistic Inflation) starting from the assumption that origin in the various languages of creating words is that to every meaning coming to the mind there is a word that expresses it that is to say there is a single word to a single idea and a single idea to a single word as well. Confusion and disorder starts when there are two words or more for one meaning, or two meanings or more to one single word, though languages are not spared from being affected to a greater or a lesser extent. Though we do not debate the accuracy of this technical definition of the term, we tend towards the immediate meaning that comes straight to the mind : that is the automatic meaning denoting abundance and profusion.

very meaning of development adopted in the modern speech. Unlike economics inflation is no hazard for language .Inflation in this respect is an enlargement of the scope of language use and an enrichment of its contents and meanings, which is one noble objective among the objectives targeted by linguistic development.

Development as such , irrespective of whether it is economic, social or cultural, follows rules, regulations, and criteria and planned objectives. The same holds true for language development whose objective would not be achievable as long as its objective conditions are not attainable.

Among these conditions, which are such that if one condition were missing, linguistic development would loose its intended objective, we can state three main conditions coming as follows:

First : Language should abide by the adopted the rules, constructs, structures and criteria that would make it sound and correct without rigidity, or seclusion, while taking into account flexibility and adjusting to the new expressive innovations. It should not be debased but should rather safeguard its nature, authenticity and freshness.

Second : Language should cater to the needs of society, and rise to the standard of various high-pitched forms of expression, in order to be an evolving language that is keeping pace with its time, well fitted in its environment, expressing the culture, and the progress of its society. it should also follow its conditions and translate its hopes and expectations.

Third : A reasonable distance should be kept between the language of daily speech of the mass media and between the language of thought, literature and creation, in their respective fields .Thus there would be an ideal in language use, which the various classes of speakers and writers would aspire to, follow the model of, and strive to. The absence of this ideal would leave room for a model of a lower value and status, which would neither foster gift or talent nor safeguard language. This debased model would at best harm language and corrupt it

This third condition is of high importance, since the absence of an ideal in language would cause a sharp decline in the standards of oral and written expressions. It would lead to the spreading of colloquial languages, which rival with the standard language on the dominance over thought and speech, to the extent of becoming a model to be emulated. Here lies the risk, which threatens the Arabic language in its very core. Linguist fear this outcome, since constitutes a real threat to standard Arabic and the refined cultural values it represents, which are one of the civilization specificities of the Arab and Islamic Ummah.

These three conditions are represented in (the modern standard language) which follows language rules. The structures and forms of all languages do not resist development. Languages are not fixed and unmoving as hard rock, since they are living creatures like their speakers, who are , from cradle to grave, in a constant development and change. Likewise language structures and forms are in constant movement, and continual development

and change, which is a very big aspect of the new simplified style of our standard language⁽⁴⁾.

Modern standard Arabic is the gist of the development of Arabic in the present era. It is a (middle Arabic), which is higher in status than the everyday language. It is a language, which safeguards its specificities, structures and forms, and a modern Arabic language, in the very sense of the word modernity. Thus modern standard Arabic is witnessing a prolific period in all aspects. It has enlarged the contents of various sciences and literatures. It has made in roads to a simplified and easy style that would enable it to spread to any language. It conquered Arts specific to colloquial Arabic. But we know that modern standard Arabic has, since the previous century, occupied the largest popular space in the present time⁽⁵⁾.

From this perspective modern standard Arabic represents hope in the sound development of language in this period where the cultural identity and the civilization specificities of nations and peoples are coming under attack. Modern standard Arabic is the language of information, thought, culture, administration and diplomacy. It is a language which does detach from the past, shun linguistic heritage, or fossilize within a phase of linguistic development. It rather keeps abreast of the new developments without impulsiveness, excess, or extremism, since language extremism is a disengagement from the rules, and a revolution on the rhetorical forms whose correctness and soundness are unquestionable.

(4) Page 242 of Dr Shawki Daif (Heritage, Poetry and Culture) published in 1987 in (the series 100 of the Literary studies Library), Dar Al Maarif, Cairo.

(5) Ibid., p. 242.

Based on the foregoing, we can safely argue that modern standard Arabic is the language of the present and the future .It is the objective response to the dangers threatening the Arabic language and the natural development of the genuine standard Arabic, whose use in society has weakened on account of the reasons and factors we mentioned earlier.

The expression (modern standard language) does not merely denote the simple meaning that comes first to mind. It connotes various meanings, such as linking standard language to modernism, which requires joining the modern time with all its changes and tendencies. This means in the first place adopting the results that modern linguistics came to and making the best of sciences linked to philology and phonetics. One of the meanings suggested by the term (modern standard Language) is that it abides by the rules of modern science.

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The increasing influence of information, whether it is written, or audio-visual , is one of the aids of extending Arabic language to broader horizons, going beyond the territory of the Arabic world to the Islamic world and to numerous world regions, particularly that video information plays a highly influential role in communicating the information message worldwide. Thus more room has in an unprecedented manner opened up for the Arabic language. This expansion of the Arabic language is somehow a renewal for the language and a dissipation of the illusion saying that there is no place left for Arabic, which has prevailed earlier.

This ongoing expansion of the Arabic language reflects its healthy state, and constitutes a cause for satisfaction. however pondering the second aspect of this Phenomenon would make us

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see the magnitude of the problem of the Arabic language in our present time. This problem would exacerbate in the future if we do not take the initiative of looking for the appropriate solutions. The phenomenon under examination is treacherous as it has two levels: a positive level and a negative one. The positive level lies in the spreading of Arabic language on a wider scale in the present time. The negative level lies in the fact that contentment with the actual standard of language and confidence in its present status brings about complacency, satisfaction, and an acceptance of the status quo. This state of things results in turning away from language heritage and assets. If things remain as they are now, this would lead to something akin to a rupture of relations with the Arab and Islamic culture and its sources and origins.

To avoid this duality and this negative side we should adopt a comprehensive approach in dealing with language. This means that the efforts made at the level of language academies in the Arab world or at other levels in the departments of Arabic Language within Arab universities should keep pace with language development due to the influence of the mass media. This technical and academic work should also keep pace with the present situation of the Arabic language, without haughtiness or slight. This situation should not be comprehended far from reality but as a part of this reality whose positive interaction with would cause language boom, expansion, safeguarding, development and renewal.

There are four rules to this approach, summarized as follows :

First : dealing with language as a living creature capable of developing as its speakers wish. This means that language development originates from the will power of its speakers, as they are the parties benefiting from this development.

Second : The relationship between the development, reform, improvement and innovation of language and the changes occurring in the Arab societies should be well knit. Thus the process of development would come in response to the development of society and would stem from its everyday life.

Third : Opening up to the fresh world innovations, particularly those relating to fields of science, technology and modern linguistics, with all its ramifications and to its related areas of research. The endeavour should also be made to borrow, translate and benefit from the results of these sciences with the view to enriching the Arabic language and binding it with progress in human thought.

Fourth : Paying attention to the legal and legislative side of development in a painstaking effort to monitor its course and to control its results, through setting up laws to be passed by the competent authorities of the state. The purpose is to impose language reverence and compel it on society, institutions and communities, in pursuance of law as it is the case within some western countries.

The approach we are calling for suits our globalisation era, fits the nature of challenges facing the Arabic language, and matches the cultural reality in the Arab world.

The language of information in the globalisation era is not stable. It is in a constant change, though not always in the benefit of language. we can neither be on the sidetrack of globalisation

stream, nor keep our language from being unaffected by (the globalized information).

Regardless of the judgement or opinion we make or have on globalisation⁽⁶⁾, it provides anyone willing to develop his language with various chances to do so. Satellite dishes, Internet, electronic mail, and computer provide the required elements for operations of computing, classification, storage, retrieval, and correction, and only God knows what future technology might come up with.

This requires us to take the following steps :

First : Energising and updating the educational system, through the development of linguistic discourse to satisfy all typologies of simple scientific discourse and all modes of expression. These should be accompanied by innovations in the corpus of Language responding to the need of keeping abreast with the new findings of our time.

Second : Building linguistic repertoire and data banks

Third : The automatic processing of language through the use of machine translation software.

Fourth : Electronic publication of Arabic language heritage in compact discs (C.D.)⁽⁷⁾.

We consider the work done by Professor Dr. Shawki Daif in the area of language ease as a model to emulate. Among his published books, serving as good guiding examples, there is (linguistic

(6) See our book (Reflexions on modern issues) published by Dar Shorouk, Cairo, 2002. In this book we examined the question of globalisation in its different aspects and dimensions. We also have a book on (The Islamic world in the Age of Globalisation) to be also published by Dar Shorouk.

(7) Dr. Saleh Bel'id Lectures in issues of the Arabic Language, p. 301, publications of the University of Mantouri Constantinople 1999.

simplifications) book, in which he included simplifications in the uses and rules of Arabic language. He thought it wise to present those simplifications to writers and readers with the view to sweeping from their way what they consider as deviant forms of correct Arabic rules⁽⁸⁾.

A big portion of the problems of Arabic language is to be attributed to personal causes. By this we mean the weak ambition of Arabic speakers, their laziness to perform their duty towards their language : the language of their religion, the badge of their cultural identity, and the token of the sovereignty of their civilization, and their negligence in discharging their historical duty of safeguarding their heritage, and protecting their moral existence.

The distress of Arabic language is not merely in the multitude of words and terms brought by the world of contemporary civilization to our world, which looks underdeveloped. The real distress of Arabic lies in the psychological defeat of its speakers in facing the linguistic invasion and their capitulation to foreign languages in the field of science. A stubborn front fighting to keep Arabic away from the fields of science and technology has formed in the Arab world. As long as the elite working in the field of science knows English or French for instance, there is no harm in isolating or even killing Arabic, despite a quasi unanimity on three facts representing a common conviction among all those concerned

(8) The first edition of (linguistic Facilitations) was published by Dar Al-Ma'arif, Cairo, in 1990.

The author has a second book on this topic published by Dar Al-Ma'arif, Cairo, in 1994 under the following title (Perversions of standard Arabic by colloquial Arabic in terms of rules, structures, letters, and diacritical marks) the two books contain a wealth of benefits. In both books, he adopted an approach of independent judgement worth following.

with the present and the future of Arabic and with solving its problems. These facts come as follows :

First : Arabic is capable of assimilating sciences and no society can achieve progress or civilization unless it is achieved through its proper language. Hence Arabs would progress only through their own language.

Second : The English knowledge of most people working in science does not rise to the level of English of native speakers. They use a language they do not completely master, and they neglect their own language where their performance level would be high. The result is that they become increasingly weaker.

Third : The level of what students of the Faculties of science learn in English or French is weak. It is definitely weaker than if they have learned their subjects in Arabic at the hands of teachers who were good in Arabic⁽⁹⁾.

In the light of all these we can say that the defect is in the speakers of language and not in language. The linguistic development depends on the effort we exert on the ground and among people not in books. The positive effects of the relationship between language and information would be useless, unless we, each from his position and within his competence area, do perform our duty, of well studied and well planed work with the view to preserving the soundness of language, and achieving additional linguistic development by making the best of the technical and

(9) Abdussabour Shahiin, Arabic is the language of science and technology, p. 366, Dar Al i'tissam, Cairo, second edition 1986.

technological possibilities available to us, to promote the status of our language through science, by means of combining our efforts and making checks and laws that would preserve language from deviation and prevent it from failing to assume its role of building the civilization edifice and bringing social progress.

**ISESCO's Project for Transcription of
African Languages
in Arabic Script**

In the Seventh Century of the Hegira, the very learned scholar, Bnou Mandour, moaned, in the introduction to his reference book (Lissan Al-Arab Al-Mouhiit), the lamentable state of Arabic language in his time. Five centuries later, the most erudite scholar, Dr. Shawki Daif, in one of his books, brought the good tidings of the boom of Arabic language and its expansion.

Upon a quick look, it appears that there is a form of a striking historical paradox. But upon a deep consideration one might decipher the two cases and come to a satisfying conclusion.

After a prelude, Bnou Mandour, in the introduction to his book (Lissan Al-Arab Al-Mouhiit), said : "After noticing at that time a predominance of difference in language and form to the extent that grammatical mistakes in speech were inadmissible, and Arabic speaking was considered as a disgrace. People were vying in the compilation of books translated in foreign languages, and in eloquent non-Arabic speech. At a time where people boasting of languages other than the language of the book I compiled , the way Noah built the Ark while his kinsfolk were sneering at him. "(1)

In his book entitled (Heritage, Poetry and Language) published in 1987 Dr Shawki Daif said :

"In our time, standard Arabic is flourishing. This boom infused it with a modern scientific language, various literary genres, and a simple style. It has invaded the field of the press and it is seriously trying to invade Radio. I am confident that standard

(1) Bnou Mandour (Lissan Al-Arab Al-Mouhiit) introduction page : d, Youssouf Khayat edition-prefaced by Abdallah Al-Allayli - from Dar Al-Jeel - Dar lissan Al-Arab - Beyrouth 1988.

Arabic will go on booming till it supersedes colloquial Arabic, not only in the remaining popular literary genres, but in dialects of daily communication."⁽²⁾

The comparison between what Bnou Mendour wrote in the seventh century, and what Dr Shawki Daif wrote in the fifteenth century regarding the state of Arabic language, opens up a wide perspective for reflection. I am pleased to introduce my talk with this comparison since it would stimulate reflection on the state of Arabic in our time, particularly since the turn of the twentieth century and more specially since the creation of this academy, that is celebrating its seventieth anniversary of creation, an occasion for generous gift, development, and enrichment.

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Irrespective of the attitude of its speakers and the problems it is suffering or facing, the reality of the Arabic language is a cause for satisfaction, not merely on account of being the language of the divinely protected Qur'an but on account of this linguistic progress, which has been expanding throughout the twentieth century. One of the mainstays of this progress is the creation of language academies in various Arabic

Capitals. Chief of these is the Academy of Arabic Language in Cairo, which is -truly- the highest legislative power of Arabic language, as the chairman of this academy put it in the previously mentioned book.

(2) Shawki Daif (Heritage, Poetry and Language), chapter on (Modern Standard Arabic), pp. 242-244, series of literary Studies library) (100), Dar Al Maarif - Cairo, 1987.

The steady efforts made in the service of the Arabic Language, during the last seven decades were all fruitful. Notwithstanding this fact, the safeguarding of the Arabic language, its protection, its spreading effort within the Arab and Islamic societies, among the Islamic peoples who do not speak Arabic, or within the Arab and Islamic communities abroad is not simply an educational and a learning enterprise, a cultural and literary activity, or one of the positions in the Ministries of education or in the specialized institutions, bodies and organizations. This work stands at the core of shoring up the constituents of the Arabic identity, safeguarding the elements of the Arab and Islamic entity, and protecting the specificities of Arab and Islamic societies and the pillars of the Arabic culture and the Arab and Islamic civilization . A work of this magnitude and vitality, falls within the plan of building the future, marking its landmarks. The Arabic language is one of the cornerstones of the cultural, civilization, and cultural security of the Arab and Islamic Ummah, both in the present and in the future. It is a pillar of strength of the national, pan-Arabic, and Islamic sovereignty. It is not merely a speech but a banner for this sovereignty that each state of the Arab-Islamic community is keen on.⁽³⁾

Central to the Arabic language safeguarding , and the renewal of its mission in the present and in the future, is the care for the languages of the Islamic peoples, which have been written in the Arabic script ever since they came to being. A scientific, theological and literary heritage, which has been and still is one of the mainstreams of the Arab-Islamic culture has been recorded in

(3) Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijiri, *Civilizational Edification of the Islamic World*, Volume IV, p. 81, Publications of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Rabat, 2001.

Arabic script. European colonialism endeavoured hard to replace the Arabic script with Latin script in abide to efface the cultural and civilization entity of these peoples, who are still part and parcel of the Arab and Islamic Ummah.

In view of the fact that Arabic language is, in the first place, a strategic issue touching the cultural and civilization security of the Ummah, and on account of all the previous considerations, the issue essentially requires profound and comprehensive vigilance. It requires a bigger and more dynamic action, more diligent and efficient work, the mobilization of live forces, and combining valiant efforts. These should take place within the context of coordination, complimentary, cooperation and joint Arabic action at the level of organizations, institutions, universities and specialized bodies. The Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, I believe, is shouldering a big responsibility, within its area of competence, with the view to enlarging the scope of Arabic teaching to speakers of other languages, particularly in African and Islamic countries, and within the Arabic and Islamic communities overseas. In this respect, the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is implementing many programs and activities, which confirm the presence of Arabic language at the Arabic and Islamic educational standards within the Islamic world and the Islamic African language.

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The Arabic Language is the firm tie holding the Arabic and Islamic peoples who contributed to the booming of the Arab and Islamic culture. In view of this consideration, the Arabic entente and the Islamic solidarity should rest on this strong base : the language of the Holy Qur'an, and the Arabic and Islamic culture.

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Hence the big importance of promoting the status of Arabic language, endeavouring to expand it, and teaching it to speakers of other languages within Islamic peoples, as these elements would safeguard the cultural and civilization security of the Arab and Islamic Ummah.

Arabic language is the receptacle of Islamic Culture. It is the ideal instrument of knowing the tenets of the true religion of Islam and understanding its rules, since it is the sole language in the world that is inextricably linked to religion. Arabic language is the language of Islam, for it is the language of the Holy Qur'an, the language of the Hadith of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the language of his pious followers, who made the history of Islam, conquered countries and spread the righteous religion there⁽⁴⁾. It is furthermore the language of the Arab and Islamic heritage whose big edifice was built by the unrivalled scholars and thinkers of the Ummah. Most of these men did not have Arabic as mother tongue. But this fact did not prevent them from writing books in Arabic, and from excelling in thought and creation of the Islamic civilization through the gems they have compiled.

On account of the organic link between Islam and the Arabic language, work on spreading Arabic language, promoting its status, enlarging the scope of its teaching within the Islamic countries, and within the non Islamic countries where Muslims live, has been part

(4) The religious preference of the origin of Arabic language, is uncontested by all Muslims, unlike what Sheikh Amin Khouri said in his university lectures, which were after his death compiled in a book entitled 'Problems of our linguistic life' pp. 65-66 included within his complete works, published by the Egyptian, general book authority, Cairo, 1987, and the quotations he quoted from Bnou Hazm book 'Perfect fundamental rules' does not rule out the question in principle and is no evidence to his view.

and parcel of servicing the Islamic creed, culture and civilization. The international Islamic action, in its official and popular channels, particularly in its cultural and educational aspects, has been associated with the spreading of Arabic language among speakers of other languages in particular. This would confirm the presence of the Islamic culture, promote the status of Islam, promotes the Islamic solidarity, and the cultural and civilization links and cement the links between Muslims with the view to assuming the collective responsibility Muslims shoulder regarding their religion, the language of their Qur'an, and their culture and regarding the role of their Ummah in the present and in the future.

The creation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference heralded the creation of an International Islamic body, which embodies the Idea of Islamic solidarity. The organization represents an effective way of servicing the Arab and Islamic culture, within a global, multi-disciplinary and multi-channelled framework. This framework lies in promoting the Islamic world in all aspects, in line with a developed form based on the rules and provisions of the international law. The Islamic organization immediately embarked on developing methods of international Islamic work, through the creation of new channels, which corroborated its march. This was concretised by setting up Islamic universities, centres, agencies and organizations, such as the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. This latter made the wide spreading and teaching of Arabic language, inside the Islamic world and outside, through modern teaching methods its prime concern. ISESCO is convinced that the responsibility of educational, scientific and cultural development it has undertaken with the view to developing the Islamic world

should have as main tools the modern teaching of Arabic on a wider scale, and that the dissemination of the Islamic culture, and the popularisation of Islamic Education should rest on reinforcing Arabic language and making it accessible to large portions of learners at all levels⁽⁵⁾.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in all its plans and since its creation in 1982 to the present time, has planned teaching Arabic language to speakers of other languages. The Islamic organization has made giant strides. The results were satisfying and the organization is still working in the field in collaboration with the Arab and Islamic organizations of common interest, availing itself of the previous expertise accumulated in this vital area.

The scientific methodology adopted by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages, renewing languages of Islamic peoples and reviving its mission, through its rewriting in the Arabic script, revolves on the following three axes:

- **The first axis:** Planning education curricula and designing Arabic teaching textbooks for non-native speakers of Arabic.
- **The second axis:** Training Arabic and Islamic Education teachers, and organizing training sessions for them.
- **The third axis:** Writing the languages of Islamic peoples in Arabic script⁽⁶⁾.

(5) Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajiri, Civilizational edification of the Islamic World, Volume II, p. 45, Rabat, 1997.

(6) In ISESCO we use the expression (Quranic script) to avoid the sensitivities that some African countries have towards the expression (Arabic script) for reasons of their own, and for causes we respect.

In this connection we are interested in expounding this third axis, as it is the basis of this research.

One of the pillars of ISESCO's action aimed at expanding Arabic language teaching to various fields with the view to spreading the language of the Holy Qur'an to all Islamic countries, lies in the fact that the Arabic language has been so current and widespread in many African and Asian countries before the colonial era, which devastated most of the essential cultural components of the Islamic world, to the extent that some of the national languages in Africa and Asia have written in Arabic script⁽⁷⁾. This matter emphasised the infiltration of the Arabic and Cultural presence in those regions. As the European colonialism came, it tried from the outset to eradicate the cultural and civilization entity of the Islamic peoples speaking those national languages, by replacing the Arabic writing of those languages with Latin. The result of this strong colonial invasion was that Arabic script became estranged in those Islamic regions. Needless to say that this was one of the secret and mischievous colonial plans.

Aware of these backgrounds ISESCO set an ambitious plan of restoring Arabic identity to numerous languages of African-Islamic countries, which were victim of European colonialism, by rewriting the national languages of those people in Arabic script. The process was carried out through an exacting technological, technical, and learning process, which ISESCO successfully managed to achieve

(7) Dr. Brahim Aniss in his book 'language, nationalism and universality' p. 169, Dar Al-Maarif, Cairo 1970 mentioned that the Swahili language, which had an outstanding position, as a language of science and education in Kenya and its neighbouring countries used to be written in Arabic characters. Its Vocabulary increased enormously, thanks to the numerous words borrowed from Arabic. This was before replacing the Arabic script with the Latin script at early seventies of the previous century.

the first part of. This success is represented by standardizing (creating standard Arabic letters for) the writing of twenty-one Islamic languages spoken by the Islamic African peoples.

Talking about African languages is a very strenuous task for researchers. The number of African languages reaches about five hundred languages spoken by two hundred million African citizens living in sub-Saharan equatorial regions⁽⁸⁾.

In their literatures transcribed in African languages, these languages share in many cases the characteristic of writing the introduction, conclusion and comments in Arabic language. They also use various Arabic words which became prevalent in African languages and follow the model of Arabic meter, sentence structure, and sometimes even fall within the linguistic constraints of Arabic.⁽⁹⁾

The African languages ,whose writing has been standardized using Arabic script, by following a sound system in conformity with the features of these languages, which have been originally written in Arabic script before being affected by European colonialism, are:

1. Tamasheq
2. Pular / Fulfude
3. Haoussa
4. Soinke/ Sarakolé

(8) Ibrahim Aniiss, *Language Between Nationalism and Universality*, pp. 164-165, Dar Al Maarif , Cairo, 1970.

(9) Dr. Taher Ahmed Maki, *An introduction to Islamic comparative Literature*, p. 265, First edition published by Ainun Lidiraassat walbuhut linssania walijtimaia- Cairo 1994.

5. Mandingue
6. Sosso
7. Knouri
8. Songhoy/Zarma
9. Wolof
10. Yoruba
11. Swahili
12. Dinke
13. Comorian
14. Oromo
15. Loughanda
16. Loughbara
17. Tajrini
18. Nobia
19. Somalian
20. Zagawia
21. Alamba/Woday

The Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization put the following objectives for this civilization project:

First: Refining the Arabic script, developing it phonetically and technically, and adapting it to writing the various languages of Islamic peoples in an accurately scientific manner.

Second: Safeguarding the civilization heritage of the Islamic peoples and developing their languages and cultures with the view to keeping pace with the scientific and technological revolution and with the developments in communication and telecommunications.

Third: Securing mutual linkage among the languages of the African peoples by means of adopting a common standard Arabic Script, being a bond connecting them with the language of the Qur'an and further securing communication and exchange among these languages.

Fourth: Reducing the influence of foreign languages, which are alien to the Islamic-African peoples, and freeing them gradually from the foreign, political, cultural, intellectual and economic dominance.

Fifth: Fighting illiteracy pervading Islamic peoples through the development of their languages and writing these languages from the cultural perspective going in line with the Islamic identity and pursuant to the educational method based on using, in the learning process, of the national language seen as the efficient method and the shortest and less expensive way of attaining this objective.

In the implementation of this project, the Islamic organization adopted the following methodology:

- Determining the frequency of the distinctive features of non-Arabic sounds in the African languages in question in order to design machines for printing these non-Arabic languages in Arabic script.

- Checking the characters adopted on the basis of a scientifically accurate analysis of symbols, and original sound forms of languages, and examining them on various levels with a view to finding the distinctive sound features of the language in question.
- Setting up writing symbols in the light of various practical, historical, pedagogical and aesthetic factors.
- Renewing the distinctive sound features and the transcription symbols (characters) of special glottal stops.

This is an extremely important, influential and beneficial work of civilization, which mainly serves the cause of the large-scale dissemination of language and achieves one of the strategic objectives of development, culture, and civilization building in the Islamic world. It is an exacting and ongoing project, which will not stop till Arabic language script is restored to the Islamic languages, which were originally written in those characters before falling victim to the cultural conspiracy of colonialism. The work requires combined efforts. Hence the strong cooperation and coordination in the implementation of the project between ISESCO and many Islamic and Arab organizations, specifically the Islamic Development Bank, which has cultural and educational mission to discharge along with its main financial and economic mission.

This important work of civilization and culture has been corroborated by the work of manufacturing a typing machine, that prints, in Arabic characters, the Islamic languages, whose writing has been standardized, by ISESCO in cooperation with the Institute for Arabization studies and research. This is a very important innovation which brings a new contribution to Arabic typography, in addition to the new creation invented by the Islamic organization

by creating Arabic lithographic characters for the manual printing of books, newspapers, magazines and documents in these Islamic-African languages.

These sustained and serene efforts made within the framework of a well planned program and sound scientific methodology are likely to enlarge the scope of Arabic script, which is the prelude to Arabic language teaching, and to enthusiasm for Arabic among its non native speakers.

If the implementation of the second phase of this program in middle Asia, went as planned, one of the main cultural and civilization objectives, ISESCO is working for, would have been achieved.

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Alongside this action, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization compiled three Arabic - African bilingual dictionaries following the methodology devised for this project. These come as follows:

1. An Arabic-Fulani Dictionary
2. An Arabic-Haoussa Dictionary
3. An Arabic-Comorien Dictionary

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization equally published three specialized books introducing the African-Islamic languages, covered by the project, from the phonetic and historical aspects.

1. Guidebook to the History of Haoussa Language
2. Guidebook to the History of Swahili language
3. The phonetics of Languages of Islamic Peoples in Africa (Haoussa, Fulani, Swahili)

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This effort has been sustained by publishing a series of books for teaching the languages of Islamic-African peoples and for literacy among these peoples. These books are :

1. Teaching Fulfude in Qur'anic Script
2. Literacy Curriculum in Haoussa language written in Qur'anic Script
3. Literacy Curriculum in Fulani language written in Qur'anic Script
4. Literacy Curriculum in Comorien language written in Qur'anic Script

In the same vein, the Islamic organization published two books on the Islamic languages in the Central Asian region:

1. Writing Turkish Languages in Arabic Script
2. Writing Azerbaijani Languages in Arabic Script

The Islamic organization has previously published two documentation books on the Arab-Islamic language, literature, and culture in Somalia:

1. Arabic Language in Somalia
2. Modern Somali Literature

Work is still going on in compiling other African-Arabic dictionaries, which, thanks to Allah, will be published, successively to cover the twenty-one African languages included in the project of ISESCO.

These dictionaries relied on the scientific method adopted in (Dictionary Compiling for non native Speakers of Arabic), benefited from the experience of the Arab League Organization for Education, Culture and Science, in the methodological design of

dictionary compiling, in terms of lexical contents, resources, language corpus, and category of learners on the basis of the premise of achieving dictionary educational objectives.

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One of the plain truths, which has been confirmed and corroborated throughout time, is that Islam has strongly influenced the non-Arabic speaking Islamic peoples. Apart from these peoples' adoption of Arabic script in writing, an Arabic imprint has marked their languages. The languages of the Islamic peoples in general have been markedly influenced by the numerous borrowing of lexical items and words.

The Arabic script has been the only medium of religion, commerce and social dealings of Muslims from the first Middle African region to the last. It has been used by the Malawi immigrants in the Far African south.

From all the preceding facts we come to the conclusion that Arabic script spread out with the spreading of the Islamic civilization⁽¹⁰⁾.

The Arabic script was one of the strong factors whereby the Islamic African peoples have resisted colonialism for long times before becoming weak and falling preys to colonialism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. One of the requirements for these peoples gathering the sinews of power, is bringing them back to the sphere of their cultural identity and civilization origins, by rewriting their languages in the Arabic script.

(10) Abdelfattah 'ibadah (The expansion of Arabic Calligraphy in the oriental world and western world) page 98 Library of Azhar Faculties, Cairo, second edition published by Dar Al 'ad Al Arabi, Cairo, with no date of publication.

I thought it convenient, in this respect, to quote an expression of the French orientalist Jacque Berc, a member of the Arab language academy in Cairo who has lived for a long time, in the countries of the Arab Maghreb, particularly in the Kingdom of Morocco. Jacque Berc said: “ The Arabic language is the super power, which has resisted French colonialism in Morocco. It is more specifically the classical standard Arabic, which prevented Morocco from fusion into France. Classical Arabic has also developed the Algerian authenticity .It has been one of the factors of survival of the Arabic peoples”⁽¹¹⁾.

Rewriting the Islamic-African languages in Arabic letters is one of the responsibilities undertaken by the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in the name of The Islamic world. While honored with this noble mission, this organization lends its hands to all the enthusiasts for the future and culture of the Ummah for the fruitful cooperation and constructive complementarities.

(11) Anouar Al-Joundi (The Landmark of Islam), first volume page 590, the Islamic Office, second edition, Beirut, 1980.

**The Arabic Language :
A Matter of Existence**

Safeguarding the Arabic language, working for its expansion and giving it more power among the Arab societies and the Arab Islamic communities overseas is not simply an educational and a learning enterprise, a cultural or literary activity, or a mandate of the Ministries of education or the specialized institutions, bodies and organizations. This work stands at the very core of shoring up the constituents of the Arabic identity, safeguarding the elements of the Arab and Islamic entity, and protecting the specificities of Arab and Islamic societies and the pillars of the Arabic culture and the Arab and Islamic civilization. A work of this magnitude and importance, fits within the plan for the making of the future, and the building of its landmarks. The Arabic language is one of the cornerstones of the cultural, civilization, and cultural security of the Arab and Islamic Ummah, both in the present and in the future. It is a pillar of strength of the national, pan-Arabic, and Islamic sovereignty. It is not merely a language but a banner for this sovereignty that each state of the Arab-Islamic community is keen on.

I have followed on the pages of the newspaper Al Ahram what the elite of Egyptian citizens and its prominent figures wrote on the reality of the Arabic language, its looming threats and the proposed means of promoting its status. I also read there on the obstacles and inhibitions preventing the Arabic language from discharging its noble mission, performing its major role and its basic function in everyday life. I wrote a letter to Professor. Dr.Moufid Chihab, The State Minister of Higher Education and scientific Research to commend his valuable thoughts, his apposite views and his scientific solutions for dealing with the Arabic language weakness rampant among its speakers and writers, and at the level of its general current usage, all contained in one of the very important articles he published in Al-Ahram newspaper on the

third of April 1999 under the heading of (Arabic Languages....and our duties towards it). I have also expressed in that letter the opinion that I shared his views on the necessity of taking a well planned action, and making concerted efforts to safeguard the Arabic language. I said : (Since your honourable Ministry was-legally-the caretaker of the Arabic language academy and the Minister of Higher Education presiding over annual conferences, I am appealing to your excellency to take the effort likely to compel the competent authorities to heed the linguistic decisions and recommendations of the Arabic language academy, particularly the government mass media, and the faculties and universities, by respecting the Arabic language, seeking correctness and shunning written or spoken errors. This is more so because as long as language commends respect in the Egyptian mass media, this respect will extend to the various Arabic mass media, in view of the wide spread cultural and information radiance of Egypt.). Dr Moufid Chihab gave, as usual, a friendly reply in which he said: (...I avail myself of this opportunity to convey to your excellency once again my gratitude for your noble feeling, your kind interest, and your earnest follow up of the efforts exerted with the view to safeguarding our authentic language which is also the language of the Qur'an on account of its extreme importance in the makeup of the Arabic human being, its consideration as a mainstay of the Arabic identity, and as a token of our civilization existence as well as for the role it plays in building the human intellect and emotion, in the formation and building of the values of nations, and in consolidating their unity and cohesion.)

Then came the great symposium on Arabic language, organized by the Ministry of Higher Education at the university of Cairo within the framework of the activities of the Supreme

Council of Universities, which has been chaired by the State Minister of Higher Education and Research, which confirmed the content of the letter Dr. Moufid Shihab sent me. This symposium was a kind of prospecting of the future; an exploration of the problems suffered by the Arabic language as well as a delimitation of language and an attempt at its description. The symposium is also a scientific and academic effort to put language issue within its comprehensive framework.

The previous article of Professor Dr. Moufid Chihab had a perceptible influence within the academic and information circles. I had the opportunity of reading in (Al-Ahram) a group of articles and reactions showing an almost complete agreement on the necessity of making a calculated move to rehabilitate Arabic language in Egypt, and the other Arab countries. However, the excellent Article published on the tenth of July 1999 by professor Dr. Shawki Daif, President of the language Academy of Egypt, in Al-ahram, under the title of (The Arabic language Academy and Higher Education Arabizing) was very outstanding, exhaustive and convincing. Like the profound, and strong articles professor Dr. Shawki Daif used to write, despite their scarcity lately, the article gave answers to many questions. The honorable writer was very successful in diagnosing the illness of Arabic language and in the realistic method of dealing with the issue in a way to restore to the Arabic language its status, consideration and value within the life of the Arab and Muslim individuals.

In fact the causes leading to the declining standard of linguistic performance, contained in the article, is capable of moving and prompting us to remedy the situation before it exacerbates and becomes non-curable. Professor Dr. Shawki Daif was judicious in

attributing the decline of Arabic language, within the educational institutions, to teaching scientific subjects in languages other than Arabic. This intricate problem is one of the difficulties of higher education in the Arab world. Professor Dr. Shawki Daif was very accurate, sincere and very judicious when he said:(. there is no doubt that the students of scientific faculties feel shame for their Arabic language as they are learning their sciences in foreign languages and find no place for Arabic among these languages, a matter which make them feel that it is underdeveloped. There is no developed nation in the world teaching sciences in a foreign language, except Egypt and some Arab countries. Syria is the only Arabic country teaching western sciences in Arabic within its universities since 1920 with no defect or weakness and its scientist take part in international conferences. The hope of Arabizing university education is one of the long awaited expectations of the Ummah.)

Certainly the article of Professor Dr. Shawki Daif provides a diagnosis of the main original causes of language problem in the Arab world. The Article did not confine itself to the diagnosis of the illness. It also stressed the need for the quick and final cure when he attributed the responsibility of safeguarding the soundness of Arabic to government information bodies and state arena.

The language issue should go beyond the scope of appealing to, calling for or asking the competent authorities to discharge their duty towards their language, to issue responsible decisions, and pass binding laws that considers language error not merely as a defect, an insult, or a deficiency but as a breach of law. This is the same thing done in some European states, particularly in France, where the law adopted by the National Assembly(the parliament) making respect the French language, safeguarding its soundness and purity and keeping its reverence and repute unaffected, very

binding. Various conferences, commissions and symposia have lately issued many decisions and recommendations on safeguarding the Arabic language and sticking to its use, currency and expansion. However these decisions and recommendations have not been implemented or some of them have been implemented in a way of limited effect.

In view of the fact that Arabic language is, in the first place, a strategic issue touching the cultural and civilization security of the Ummah, and on account of all the previous considerations the issue essentially requires profound and comprehensive vigilance. It requires a bigger and more dynamic action, more diligent and efficient work, the mobilization of live forces, and combining valiant efforts. These should take place within the context of coordination, complementarity, cooperation and joint Arabic action at the level of organizations, institutions, universities and specialized bodies. The Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, i believe, is shouldering a big responsibility, within its area of competence, with the view to enlarging the scope of Arabic teaching to speakers of other languages, particularly in African and Islamic countries, and within the Arabic and Islamic communities overseas. In this respect, the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is particularly implementing many programs and activities, which confirm the presence of Arabic language at the Arabic and Islamic educational levels within the Islamic world and the Islamic African language.

Notwithstanding the fact that the work done by the two Arabic and Islamic organizations, in the area of servicing the Arabic language, satisfies some of the requirements of safeguarding the Arabic language and its large expansion, the role of the concerned Ministries, and the specialized universities, organizations, institutions, bodies and associations, should be integrated in this respect. This role should also coordinate and

sustain the material and moral support needed to achieve a comprehensive language boom, where language recovers its vital function within the everyday life and regains its full sovereignty.

The matter needs, first and foremost, a political will, which believes in the civilization mission of the Arabic language and safeguards the cultural identity of the Ummah through the safeguarding of its language. This would shore up the big Arabic and Islamic entity, and reinforce its pillars.

The Arabic Language is the strong bond holding the Arabic and Islamic peoples who contributed to the booming of the Arab and Islamic culture. In view of this consideration, the Arabic entente and the Islamic solidarity should rest on this strong base of the language of the Holy Qur'an, and the Arabic and Islamic culture. Hence the big importance of promoting the status of Arabic language, endeavouring to expand it, and teaching it to speakers of other languages within Islamic peoples, since these elements would safeguard the cultural and civilization security of the Arab and Islamic Ummah.

From this perspective, it becomes clear that Arabic language is a matter of existence, an entity base and a mainstay of the Arab-Islamic system having as background reference the joint Islamic action represented by the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is therefore one of the issues heavily weighing on the present and future of the Ummah.

Truly the role of Egypt in the area of the renewal of the Arabic language mission and reinforcing its existence within the Arabic and Islamic societies is of highly significant importance. Reforming the Arabic language in Egypt would, through its leading educational institutions and the influential and wide expanding mass media, strongly and effectively contribute to the promotion of the status of Arabic within all the Arab and Islamic countries.

Outlook of the Arabic language

In cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank, the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization held, a symposium on (the outlook of the Arabic language) from 1 to 3 November 2002. I presided over the opening session of this symposium and delivered the following speech, which I thought convenient to publish on account of its importance for the future of Arabic language:

“I am delighted to welcome you all to this International Symposium held by the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank. It is a pleasure for me, at the outset of my speech, to commend the constructive cooperation between the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Islamic Development Bank. On this occasion I would like to convey my thanks and appreciation to my brother, Dr.Ahmed Mohammad Ali, President of the Islamic Development Bank, for his kind cooperation which gave birth to this conference, whose desired objectives we pray Allah to achieve.

There is no denying the fact that the Arabic language is going through some problems in the present time. These problems are generally ascribed to old factors and to new ones. These problems are in all circumstances resolvable, thanks to the lights shed on it by the enthusiasts for the language of their Glorious Qur’an and the receptacle of their great civilization. We should always be optimistic about the future of this language, on the basis of comparing it with the status it had in the nineteenth century, where it reached its rock bottoms in terms of style and terminology. It was almost devoid of creative generation or derivation. It was overloaded with rhetorical embellishers, which its users thought that they are, thanks to these embellishers, renewing with the

booming era of Arabic. However since the beginning of the twentieth century, Arabic managed to recover from weakness and became the medium of communication and one of the international languages adopted within the international bodies and conferences, which is thought in various world universities.

The causes of the problems suffered by the Arabic language are mainly attributed on one hand to the expansion of the role of foreign languages at the expense of Arabic language and to the adherence to the colloquial dialects on the other. These represent a threat to the Arabic languages, since any elimination to the standard Arabic in favor of any other language or colloquial dialects weakens Arabic and dwarfs its status. The causes represent therefore a threat to the Arab Islamic culture and contribute to the weakening of the Ummah, and loss of its identity and heritage. If learning a foreign language is an imperative necessity for keeping abreast of the fresh innovations of the era of modern technology, mastering the Arabic language is the basic requisite of creation in all areas, of contributing to the progress of our Arab Islamic Ummah, and renewing with its glory and its civilization.

Thanks to Islam the Arabic language spread to Asia, Africa and Europe and many languages borrowed a great deal of its lexical items. The expansion of the Arabic language did not stop at that limit, it is now booming in most of world countries, through the expansion of Islam there, and Muslims are now aspiring to learn the language of the Qur'an with the view to knowing and being well-versed in their religion.

Based on what has been previously said, there is now an enthusiasm for learning the Arabic language either among Muslims who do not speak Arabic, the language of the Holy Qur'an and the

receptacle of the Islamic culture or among researchers who became aware of the value of the Arabic language seen as the language which hosted a great and rich civilization of big gift. This civilization is to be credited with tendering great services to the human civilizations throughout ages. It supplied those civilizations with the crops of science and knowledge, enriched their assets. Thus it became the key to the civilization riches. This has made it the focus of interest for scientific centers worldwide.

Aware of the importance of Arabic language and its leading role in the life of the Islamic Ummah, the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization since its foundation devoted its attention to its expansion, its teaching development, and to deepening the awareness of the importance of its role.

Since its creation in 1982, ISESCO included , in its successive action plans, many programs and activities seeking to provide the adequate educational curricula, training Arabic teachers to teaching methods, through the adoption of modern methods and techniques. These programs have been implemented in various Member States, and among the Islamic minorities and communities overseas.

The concern of the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has not been limited to the foregoing, it also created in 1998 ISESCO's Educational Center in Chad and it set up in 1998 a Department for Islamic studies and Arabic Language in Moscow state university. The department offers educational, cultural and academic services for students from Russia and from the recently independent states of the ex-Soviet Union.

The implementation of an ambitious civilization program concerned with rewriting the languages of the Islamic peoples in the standardized Qur'anic script falls within this framework. Up to

now the writing of seventeen African languages has been standardized. These languages were originally written in Arabic script before the colonial era , where the European colonialism replaced Arabic script with Latin script. This is a highly significant achievement of the Islamic organization, which is bracing itself at this stage to embark on implementing the second part of this program by standardizing the writing of the languages of Islamic peoples in Asia , within the framework of the cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank , the World Islamic Call Society, and the center for Arabization studies and research.

Within the context of concern to teach Arabic to non native speakers of Arabic, The Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization published a number of books and studies on teaching Arabic to its non native speakers, either in Arabic or in some of the languages of Islamic peoples. Some of these studies have been translated into European languages.

The achievements of the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in expanding the Arabic language and Islamic civilization, are numerous and divers, but the context does not allow for their enumeration. What we mentioned is only a drop in the sea. A cogent and crystal clear evidence for the Islamic Organization concern for the Arabic language, its expansion, and for the dissemination of the Islamic religious faith lays in holding this symposium in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank, to look into the reality and outlook of the Arabic language, with the view of diagnosing the illnesses blocking its development and expansion.

Thus the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is stepping up efforts to adopt the adequate measures

for keeping the Arabic language alive and productive within the life of the Ummah, with the view to building the Islamic entity, and activating the role of the Arabic Language in shaping the Islamic Future, in the age of globalization and conflict of civilizations, which we are striving to transform into an era of dialogue and coexistence among civilizations.”

**Recommendations of the
International Symposium
On
“Arabic Language ... Where to ?”**

Considering the fact that language transforms individuals from a human group into a cohesive cultural community, and considering the noble link of Arabic language to the Islamic religious faith and the Arab Islamic heritage, the linguistic and cultural homogeneity should become a strategic objective for Arab speakers from all races, and a trustworthy guardian of the very constituents of the Arab and Islamic identity.

Based on these premises, participants in the symposium on the outlook of Arabic Language issued the following recommendations:

First: Promoting trust in Arabic language and having feelings of pride for it with the view to safeguarding the entity of the Ummah, consolidating its identity and shoring up its existence. Considering any neglect of the Arabic and Qur'anic script as a neglect of identity. Having esteem for and taking care of the Arabic Islamic heritage, and highlighting its role in the human civilization through concrete examples are also relevant to these.

Second: Expanding the dissemination of language through various means. Valuing and supporting all the efforts made in that direction at the level of states, organizations, academies and individuals. Giving opportunity for additional concern to the wide spreading of Arabic as a language, a culture and a civilization. Enhancing the link between the parties concerned with this role at the national, regional and international levels with the view to developing the expansion of the Arabic language and the Islamic culture in terms of quantity and quality.

Third: The Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in collaboration with the Arab League for Education, Culture and Science (ALECSO), and

the Arabic language academies should develop a strategy for expanding the teaching of Arabic language and elaborate a comprehensive plan for giving attention to Arabic in educational curricula and their teaching materials and the helping method for its expansion at all levels. These sides should however attempt gathering the material and moral support of the Arabic and Islamic states, and financing parties concerned with effecting the programs of this project.

Fourth: Stressing the inclusion of the following elements in any action plan :

1. Excellent curricula and elaborate teaching devices for the various educational stages, for non specialists and non native speakers of Arabic, which take into consideration individual contexts, satisfies learner needs and make the best of the potentials and the technologies of the modern era.
2. Instructing the organizations, states and language academies to encourage the organization of national and regional competitions for the writing teaching materials, programs and curricula and bestowing honors upon the authors of valuable works. Making a continual assessment to develop authorship action in this area, while taking into consideration the improvement of this operation and comparing it to similar book writings for servicing other live languages, with the view to benefiting from their experiences and drawing upon the expertise of their authors.

3. These written books should take into consideration the psychological, educational, cultural, and linguistic aspects of the receiver, in order to match his age, environment, cultural background and his intellectual capacities while working for the enhancement of his skills through scientific and educational methods.
 4. Relying on the results of modern linguistic studies in designing curricula and writing teaching material and giving consideration to the actual and expected problems while benefiting from previous research and studies in this area.
 5. Setting up a library for the books of Arabic teaching, methods, devices and strategies at all standards. Tasking the Nationalist library with their collection and with the distribution of their copies to the competent parties. Putting in this library any books containing a similar experience and experiences of other languages in servicing their languages. Giving this library the chance of becoming a research center where specialists can develop their research and studies and have access to references, with the view to securing a better future and making a continual assessment in the service of Arabic language teaching.
- Fifth:** The excellent, scientific, moral and professional preparing of the Arabic language teacher. Honoring him and giving him material and moral incentives for making beneficial performances. He should also be provided with job care likely to make him discharge his duty of servicing the Arabic language culture and civilization.

This preparation should include anything which would develop his potentials and skills and give him the potential of effective influence in this vital field. Giving him a professional training in line with the modern technologies in the areas of teaching, communication, education, and psychology while being keen on authentic training in the sciences of Arabic language, and literature, Islamic Education.

Sixth : The need to relay, in the teaching Arabic language, on the modern Audio- visual media, language laboratories, listening equipments, video cassettes, visual slides, CDs, using satellite technology for spreading language through distance learning programs and benefiting from other experiences in all areas with the view to knowing the strategies, ways, methods and techniques of learning.

Seventh : Giving concern with the written, and audio-visual programs of teaching Arabic to non Arabic speakers. Examining their needs and objectives of learning the Arabic language and Arab Islamic culture. Reviewing the cultural content of books and curricula for teaching Arabic to this category, to enrich its needs and achieve its objectives which are not contradicting the values of Islamic culture and its spiritual, faith and Sharia dimensions.

Ninth: Giving concern to the learner centered learning process, which takes into account individual circumstances, and special categories.

Eight: Wide spreading Arabic language within countries whose official language was Arabic, such as sub-Saharan countries and Arab communities overseas

and sustain this work by material and moral means with the view of making it compete with other languages and cultures by strong and influential means.

Tenth: Giving language academies led by the union of Arab academies more competence and efficiency, with the view of contributing to designing educational and scientific plans and strategies for teaching the Arabic language to all categories, closing the ties between language academies to create a synergy between language academies in this area, making the Arab and Islamic relevant organizations partners in its financing, and enhancing it with expertise and constructive ideas.

Eleventh: Working with diligence and dynamism in spreading the decisions of the academies of language on the widest possible scale, making use in this process of the various media of publication, information, and communication and enhancing them through research, studies, conferences, symposia, and seminars so as not to make it pent-up within the walls of its originating place. The objective is to make this decisions contribute to language ease and development in away responding to the needs of the modern time and the conditions of its humans.

Twelfth: The need to appoint a specialized linguistic reviser or adviser in all services issuing literatures for circulation and publication and trying to publicize this practice in Public administrations. This need can be confirmed from the status of the various mass media .

Thirteen Promoting the Arabic book all means and encouraging the creation of national associations for safeguarding and defending the Arabic language, and commending the Association for defending Arabic language in Algiers and the United Arab Emirates.