A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING IN JORDAN

by

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING IN JORDAN

Fawwaz Al-Abed Al-Haq

Under the supervision of Professor Manindra K. Verma

This dissertation is an exploratory study of language conflict, language planning, and language-user attitudes toward Arabicization in the context of language policy in Jordan. It pursues three objectives:

1. To report on the language-planning activities carried out in Jordan.

2. To survey language and language-policy attitudes among groups of essential language users, by means of two questionnaires developed for this purpose. One was distributed to faculty members at the University of Jordan-Amman and the University of Yarmouk-Irbid, the other to students in the same schools. The questionnaires probe nine factors: (a) language use patterns; (b) language attitudes; (c) proficiency in Arabic and English; (d) attitudes and knowledge about variation in Arabic; (e) instrumentality of language; (f) students' achievement; (g) general standard of education if Arabicization were implemented in Jordan; (h) practical commitment to Arabicization; and (i) attitudes towards Arabicization. Correlations between
some of these factors are also investigated, in order to examine possible ambivalence in attitudes towards the major speech varieties in use in Jordan (English, Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Jordanian Arabic). This study seeks to show the effects of ambivalence, if any, on language policy, especially with regard to Arabicization.

3. The final objective is to relate the results of this study to the overall field of language planning.

In summary, the study has demonstrated the desire and commitment of faculty members and students alike to proceed with Arabicization—despite their awareness of the problems connected with variation in Arabic, the lack of technical terms in scientific fields, and the lack of reference materials; it was also felt that study of English should be retained, but not in such a way that it detracts from the use of Arabic as a scientific language. Finally, the review of literature of Language Planning in Jordan reveals that there is a lack of formal association between the Arabic Language Academy of Jordan and the Jordanian universities' authorities, such that there is no real incentive for universities to adopt the fruits of the Academy's labors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.............................................. ii

ABSTRACT......................................................... v

CHAPTER

I

INTRODUCTION.................................................. 1

Arabicization of University Scientific Instruction in Jordan................... 3

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY........................................ 8

PROBLEM STATEMENT.......................................... 10

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY................................ 11

Why an Attitudinal Survey of Arabicization Consumers?......................... 12

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.................................... 14

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY.................................... 17

II

THE SOCIO LINGUISTIC PROFILE OF JORDAN.................. 18

Introduction................................................. 18

Linguistic Variation......................................... 18

LINGUISTIC VARIATION IN ARABIC............................ 21

Historical Background....................................... 21

Approaches to Study the Arabic Problem........................................... 24

The first approach........................................... 25

The second approach......................................... 28

Models of the Variationist Approach............................................. 32

The General Characteristics of Arabic Varieties................................. 33

Variation in Jordanian Arabic.................................. 37

FOOTNOTES.................................................... 56

vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

III THE LITERATURE REVIEW. .......................... 59
  Theories, Dimensions, and Types of Language Planning .......................... 59
  Types of Language Planning .................................. 67
  Dimensions of Language Planning .................................. 68
  Language Planning Programs .................................. 71
  Arabicization as a Language-Planning Activity .......................... 75
  Language Planning in Jordan .................................. 78
  The Jordan Academy of Arabic .................................. 78
  Case Studies Carried Out in Jordan .................................. 84

IV METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES .......................... 99
  The Population .................................. 99
  Data Collection and Procedures .................................. 101
  Administration of the Survey Instrument .................................. 104
  Questionnaire Data Analysis .................................. 105

V RESULTS. ........................................... 106
  Students' Data ........................................... 106
    Language Use Patterns ........................................... 107
    Attitudes Toward Languages ........................................... 115
    Instrumentalism ........................................... 125
    Proficiency ........................................... 126
    Variation in Arabic ........................................... 129
    Attitudes Towards Arabicization ........................................... 135
    Personal Practical Commitment to Arabic and English ........................................... 140
    Relationships Between Variables ........................................... 142
    Self-Reported Proficiency and Attitudes Toward Arabicization ........................................... 142
    Language Attitudes and Reaction Toward Language Policy ........................................... 155
    Language Attitudes and Reactions Toward the General Standards of Education if all Science Subjects are Taught in Arabic ........................................... 162
    Language Attitudes and Attitudes Towards Implementation of Arabicization ........................................... 167
    Language Attitudes and Personal Commitment to Arabicization ........................................... 174
    The Relationship Between What Variety of Arabic to Choose to be a Vehicle of Arabicization and Language Instrumentality ........................................... 185
TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

| The Relationship Between What Variety of Arabic to Choose to be a Vehicle of Arabicization and CA Proficiency | 185 |
| The Relationship Between What Variety of Arabic to Choose for Arabicization and Arabic Variation | 187 |
| Relationships Between the Choice of Variety of Arabic for Arabicization and Language Attitudes | 188 |
| Relationships Between Language Instrumentality and Language Adequacy for Teaching | 194 |
| Faculty's Data | 200 |
| Language Use Patterns | 200 |
| Language Attitudes | 206 |
| Language Instrumentality | 212 |
| Self-Reported Language Proficiency of Faculty | 212 |
| Students' Achievement as Evaluated by Faculty Members | 214 |
| Attitudes of Faculty Members Towards Variation in Arabic | 215 |
| Practical Commitment of Faculty to Arabicization | 219 |
| Faculty Attitudes Toward Arabicization | 220 |
| Relationships Between Variables of Faculty Data | 227 |
| Language Attitudes and Language-Planning Attitudes | 227 |
| Relationships Between Language Attitudes and Commitment to Arabicization | 239 |
| Relationships Between Language Attitudes and Opinions on the Feasibility of Arabicization | 248 |
| Relationships Between Language Proficiency and Attitude Toward Arabicization | 254 |
| Relationships Between Language Proficiency and Personal Commitment | 260 |
| Relationships Between Instrumentality of Language and Attitudes Toward Arabicization | 263 |
TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Students' Data.</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Faculty Members' Data</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications to Language Planning</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Further Research</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| REFERENCES.                        | 282  |
| APPENDIX A.                        | 300  |