“Arabizi” as Used by Undergraduate Students in Some Jordanian Universities: 
A Sociolinguistic Study

A Thesis
Submitted to the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Academic Research in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Masters Degree in Linguistics, at the Department of English Language and Literature

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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2012
Dedication

To my supervisor Professor Lutfi Abullhaija

To my parents

To my brothers and sisters

To all my colleagues and friends

I dedicate this work
Acknowledgement

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Professor Lutfi Abullhaij’a for his tremendous efforts. I would like to thank him for his valuable advice, encouraging enthusiasm, and patience throughout the process of writing this thesis.

I am very pleased to thank my examination committee members. I would like to thank Professor Mahmud Wardat for his helpful and constructive comments. I would also like to thank Professor Mahmoud Kanakri for reading and refining this work.

I am very grateful for my colleagues and friends for their encouragement.
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Consonants

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<th>&quot;Arabizi&quot; Possibilities</th>
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Vowels

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ي</td>
<td>i, ii, e</td>
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This table is based upon Yaghan's (2008) table of characters and their "Arabizi" counterparts.
Abstract

(Supervisor: Professor Lutfi Abullhaij’a)

This study attempts to describe the “Arabizi” as it is used by undergraduate students in some Jordanian universities. It tends to examine the justifications for the usage of “Arabizi” among Jordanian students in the selected universities. It also accounts for "Arabic Romanisation" since it was supposed to be the first attempt that introduced the Latin alphabet into the Arabic writing system. The study presents the undergraduates' attitudes towards the Standard Arabic writing system and towards “Arabizi”. The study also investigates when and where “Arabizi” is used. The sample of the study consists of 503 male and female Jordanian undergraduates who are enrolled in academic programmes at five Jordanian universities: Yarmouk University, Jordan University of Science and Technology, University of Jordan, Al Balqa Applied University, and The Hashemite University during the academic year 2011/2012. All the students who participated in the questionnaire are undergraduates.
In order to answer the study questions, the researcher used a questionnaire. Moreover, the study examined the "Romanisation" process of Arabic and tried to figure the relationship between “Arabizi” and "Arabic Romanisation".

The study found that the sample is against “Arabizi” and favors the standard writing system. “Arabizi” is not an interesting or practical style of writing. It is used only when it has a function; it is used between the students to chat with each other in some social websites like Twitter or Facebook. The sample refuses the presence of “Arabizi” in academic contexts. "Romanisation" of Arabic has no relationship with “Arabizi” except that they use the Latin alphabet. “Arabizi” does not reflect the necessity for a simplification of the standard orthography. The sample admires and respects the standard orthography.

The study recommends that “Arabizi” be observed by linguists and educational institutions more carefully. It is also interesting to try to account for the “Arabizi” phenomenon as it is used among the Arab youth in different Arab countries.

**Keywords:** “Arabizi”, writing system, grapheme, phoneme, technology, social websites.
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Background

Arabic is a Semitic language that is written from right to left. Holes (2004) indicates that the Arabic writing system is a “cursive” one; the Arabic letters are rounded and joined together. Holes (2004:393) writes that “the written Arabic word consists of consonants and long vowels only”. Arabic has also diacritics that represent the short vowels. In fact, the Arabic writing system is "sacred" in the Arab world during the long ages since it is the writing system in which The Glorious Quran is written.

To begin with, it is worth to shed light on writing and its systems. Writing has always been an important issue studied by many linguists. Pyles and Algeo (1982:9) indicate that writing is "more real than speech". As a result, the writing system of any language has always been a vital area that has attracted many linguists. The present research studies “Arabizi” which is a significant phenomenon related to the Arabic writing system on the basis of this assumption.