A common language

Elias Muhanna on the future of Arabic and the myth surrounding its predicted decline r4
Spanning 20 volumes, finishing touches to the greatest named Ibn Manzur, who served in an African judge and chancery official. Some scholars and advocacy groups may believe that the language did not be surpassed in size and scope by another dictionary for 500 years. Ibn Manzur was driven by a belief that Arabic's position as the ultimate language of social prestige, literary eloquence, and religious knowledge was under threat. In almost every respect, Modern Standard Arabic is the same language as Classical Arabic, to the extent that an educated person today would have no trouble comprehending the preface to Ibn Manzur's dictionary. As it turns out, most young people in the Middle East today are not very interested in reading Arabic, and, if they are, most are reading what they can get on Facebook. Arabic, after all, the language of 500 million people, a language of literature and for students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Lebanese students "don't think in Arabic," while the government of Qatar has students "don't think in Arabic," the prime minister, believes that most Leb.
Arabic has never been so alive. It has never been used by so many people in so many different situations.

The communication revolution is making it possible for us to be connected not only via formal Arabic but through satellite television, where one wit flies in the face of 1,200 years of standardization? Perhaps, but as forecast, the fate of Modern Standard Arabic will now depend on the protective vigilance of its traditional champions than on the daily demands placed upon it by hundreds of millions of speakers, readers, and writers. It may, in time, begin to lose and increasingly different from the language preserved in the pages of Ibn Manzur’s Lisan al’Arab. Would it not, though, be a sad day if we were to lose this precious view of Arabic as a single language being revised by modern circumstance?

Traditionally, the use of hubs (standard Arabic) has been confined to the classroom, but revolutions in communications are leading to a new universal form of the language. Getty Images

Friday, August 13, 2010

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