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EFFECT OF RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE ON EGYPTIAN VLOGGING DISCOURSE (ON MATERIALS OF "MAḎĀ LAW" AND "SALAM KATANANI'S" VLOGS)

Summary. In the last decade, the vlogging or videoblogging discourse gained a significant influence on the public opinion. Vlogs cover different topics, including social, political, cultural sphere, etc. Unlike officially recognized journalists, vloggers are not responsible for the credibility of their posts. The language of Arabic video blogs reflects the linguistic and sociocultural attitudes of speakers towards their verbal self-expression in the online communication. As Russia's aggression against Ukraine affected the online discourse globally, including the Arabic content, it requires an in-depth investigation. This study deals with linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic peculiarities of the Egyptian vlogging discourse, in particular, based on the materials of vlogs "Maḏā law" ("What if", over 2 million followers) and "Salam Katanani" (over 500,000 followers).

Both vlogs are oriented over the informative and entertaining materials about history, psychology, human body, social problems, and so forth. In the given vlogs, the content creators perform the identity of a young educated Egyptian woman. Their language code involves Egyptian Arabic, MSA, youth slang, with the frequent insertion of English words or the full switching to English. In videos posted between January and June of 2022, we observed the topics of outcomes of a possible nuclear blast, nuclear war, biological weapon use, etc. The Russian war against Ukraine was mentioned only once in the hypothetical scenario before it actually happened. Then, neither Ukraine, nor Russian actions were mentioned in the studied materials. It is noted that both vloggers preserve the positive emotional expressivity (with verbal and non-verbal means) in the investigated content to create a positive perception of their performance.

Key words: Arabic language, Egyptian vlogging, online discourse, Russia's war against Ukraine, youth slang.

Formulation of the problem. In the last decade, the vlogging or videoblogging discourse gained a significant influence on the public opinion. A video blog is a video record of news, opinions, experiences shared on the social media platforms. Vlogs cover different topics, including social, political, cultural sphere, etc.

Vlogs commonly address recent news, other entertainment, educational, political, comic-ironic content on the social media. The mass trend now is the combination of information and entertainment or knowledge and entertainment in the vlogs [1, p. 89].

Vlogging inherited the ability of other media genres to remind people of what they have already known, thought and experienced. It also helps bridge the gap between I and You, point to the unity of We, generate empathy or provocatively play on the otherness [1, p. 88]. For that reason, vlogging has become popular among ordinary online users, as well as among politicians, professional journalists, and others. Blogs and vlogs designed for a mass audience, in turn, can be divided into professional journalistic and amateur [2, p. 120].

Despite the fact that vlogs contain some features of mass media, it is difficult to classify them as the traditional media [2, p. 120]. Their specific traits involve the amateur nature, the frequent use of network slang, and more importantly, vlogging is not subject to legislation. Thus, the information spread by vloggers requires the discernment from its recipients.

Being at the crossroads of media, mass media, art, and the entertainment industry, video blogging discourse contains unique language features as this kind of communication reflects a complex type of the online user identity.

The emergence of new media, which cannot be fully covered by the censorship to this day, led to the active use of colloquial Arabic varieties in the online discourse. Arabic online discourse enabled the sociolinguistic research of various aspects of the Arabic language, as colloquial varieties are de facto not included in the official register. In addition, the use of these varieties reflects the naturally developing language under the influence of the Internet technologies. In the Arab social media language, we observe a multitude of linguistic and sociocultural attitudes of speakers towards their verbal self-expression [3, p. 133].

Egypt is one of the biggest Arab countries with the population of over 100 million people and the significant social media impact[1]. The Egyptian media content is popular all over the Arab world, and the exact origins of all followers of a particular blogger are difficult to be defined given the diversity of nationalities participating in the online communication. It is assumed that the analysed materials are addressed to all Arabic speaking recipients. Hence, the influence of these vlogs on the public opinion can be considerable. Given the fact that the effect of Russian aggression against Ukraine on the Arabic online discourse is currently understudied, this topic sparks a particular interest for the investigation of linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and other features of the Egyptian vlogging.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recent studies on the Arab vlogging refer to the sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discursive and other interdisciplinary aspects of this phenomenon. For instance, B. I. Ghasani and E. A. Umami (2021) analysing the code switching and code mixing in Arabic vlogs argue that the switching was used for particular purposes, such as to preserve the casualness of communication or to obtain the "right" expressivity,

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[1] Over 50 million Egyptians use different social media platforms, according to the 2022 statistics. URL: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-egypt (Last accessed 27.08.2023).

and so forth [4]. Z. Q. Al-Oraibi and Z. F. Himood in the paper "Codeswitching in Social Media Influencers' Speech: "Iraqi Youtubers": A Case Study" (2022) indicated that code switching occurs more frequently in the female discourse than in the male one. Code switching serves to persuade the audience, to show the vlogger's knowledge, to show off, etc. [5]. The results of the provided studies are relevant for the herein research since we observe multiple cases of switching from Arabic to English.

On the other hand, E. Moussa investigated various elements of the Egyptian online influencer identity. Interestingly, the results of this study indicate that the motive of self-representing was to deliver a specific message to the audience. For instance, if a vlogger mainly posts the entertaining content he or she can "hide" some idea "between the lines" [6, p. 137].

Even though the language of vlogging is actively investigated in the Arab world and beyond, the problem of impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on the Egyptian online discourse requires a special attention of scholars from different areas, including linguistics.

The purpose of the article. Russia's aggression against Ukraine affected the online discourse globally, including the Arab content. Even before the invasion, this topic was actively discussed in the media. The online discourse has been influenced by the manipulative narratives of Russian propaganda. Hence, it requires an in-depth interdisciplinary analysis. The purpose of this investigation is to determine the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on the Egyptian vlogging discourse (in particular, on the materials of female vlogs "Maḏā law" and "Salam Katanani") given its linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic peculiarities.

In order to achieve this goal, we set the following tasks:

– to consider the extralinguistic features of vlogs (channel of transmission, preferable themes, etc.);

– to determine linguistic and sociolinguistic peculiarities of their language code;

– to analyse verbal and non-verbal means of the emotional expressivity;

– to define the vlogger's communicative goals afforded through the video posts about war.

The main material of the study. "Maḏā law" channel ("What if") has over 2 million followers on Facebook and Youtube. Its creator, Eman Sobhy, represents the generation "Zoomers". This vlog can be considered professional. It is designed for the purposes of both entertainment and knowledge. Eman Sobhy creates videos regrading various hypothetic situations about the Arab and world history, society, culture, etc.

On the other hand, Salam Katanani is a representative of the generation "Millennials". This professional blog has about 500,000 followers on Facebook and Youtube. Salam Katanani's vlogs are aimed at sharing scientific facts, raising awareness about the scientifically proven information. Similar to the channel "Maḏā law", her content is designed as the entertaining series. The creator dispels myths, talks about facts, discusses stereotypes, etc. The popular themes of Salam Katanani's vlogs concern human body, psychology, society, history, culture, etc.

The language code of online vlogging is diverse. Vloggers tend to utilize multiple Arabic varieties including youth slang (when appealing to the audience, showing the identity of a young Egyptian, stressing 'we'), Egyptian Arabic (predominantly), MSA (in quotes, and for the additional expressivity). Also, we frequently observe the code switching from Arabic to English or other languages occasionally.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine undoubtedly affected the Egyptian vloggers' discourse, since the topic of war was raised several times in their content. The pre-war themes reflect the increasing concern in the Arab society. In Eman Sobhy's vlog, there were posted videos with the following plots:

– maḏā law amrīkā maḥtallatš al-'irāq "What if America had not occupied Iraq"

– maḏā law intahat il-ḥarb fī l-yaman "What if the war in Yemen ended"

– **maḏā law būtīn a'lana l-ḥarb 'alā ūkrāniyā** "What if putin declared war against Ukraine"

It is evident, that only one post directly addressed the approaching war (**maḏā law būtīn a'lana l-ḥarb 'alā ūkrāniyā** "What if putin declared war against Ukraine") [7]. It should be noted that the topic of military conflicts was not among the frequently discussed subjects in the content of "Maḏā law" series. However, vloggers mostly refer to the wars in the Arab region since this topic is more relevant for the Arab society.

In the first months after the Russian invasion, both vloggers discuss the possible outcomes of a nuclear war, the consequences of war zone expansion, and other existential threats for the humankind. Their posts cover such topics:

– al-asliḥa al-biyūlūjiyya "Biological weapon" [8];

– sīnāryū l-ḥarb in-nawawiyy "Nuclear war scenario";

– maḏā law ḥaṣala l-infigār an-nawawiyy "What if a nuclear blast happened" [9];

– maḏā law al-'irāq maḥārabatš al-kuweit "What if Iraq had not invaded Iraq";

– maḏā law al-ḥarb al-'ālamiyya at-tāniya maḥaṣalatš "What if the WWII had not happened";

– maḏā law al-ḥarb al-'ālamiyya at-tālita "What if the third world war…" [10].

Interestingly, both creators avoid discussing Russia's war against Ukraine or Ukraine itself. War crimes are never mentioned as well. Vloggers also avoided the expression of their personal opinions.

From a pragmatic point of view, the analysed video content enabled the achievement of the following goals:

– sharing information with the followers;

– raising awareness on the subject of military conflicts and weapons;

– reducing the stress caused by the unpredictable outcomes of war;

– appealing to the humanity;

– attracting more followers or positive reactions from the old ones, etc.

In the studied materials we discovered the implicit attitudes toward Russia's war against Ukraine.

1) "Hidden fear" attitude towards Russia

Talking about the biggest nuclear arsenal in the world, Salam Katanani uses a hyperbolized expression الي ماسكها حبيبنا بوووتين، '… the one who has it is our dear friend putin' [10]. The latter is accompanied with a humorous videoclip of putin repeating the well-known Russian word хорошо [ḫārāšō] "good / well".

Similarly, Eman Sobhi uses this lexeme ḫārāšō describing the outcomes of a nuclear blast: خاراشو يابو حميد "kharasho (good), Abu Hmid"[9]. If Salam Katanini's use of the mentioned lexical unit

was afforded by the humorous goal, Eman Sobhi's case indicates to the desire of "softening" of communication, creating a friendly ambience in the face of a hidden threat of a nuclear war.

2) Passive aggressive narrative elements in the description of Ukrainians:

حرب نووي على أوكرانيا؟ خليني أخذك جولة. يستيقظ المواطن بتقوم بتوقع قنبلة نووية عليه... شو رح يصير لو روسيا شنت سعيدا ببياض بشرته وزراق عيونه وقبل أن يحتسي قهوته المتحضرة الأوكراني ... [10]

"What happens if russia starts a nuclear war against Ukraine? Let me take you on a tour. A Ukrainian is waking up **happy with his white skin and blue eyes** and before he could drink his civilised coffee a nuclear bomb falls down on him…"

The above phrase **sa'īd bi-bayāḍ bašrati-h wa zarāq 'uyūni-h** "happy with his white skin and blue eyes" reflects the narrative spread in the social media as a reaction to the unequal treatment which Arab refugees faced in comparison with Ukrainians crossing the European Union borders.

3) Repeating the Russian narrative about "one nation":

شعب واحد وثقافة واحدة وتاريخ مشترك **وبالمناسبة ده الحقيقي** [7] بوتين بيقول ان أوكرانيا وروسيا

'putin says Ukraine and Russia are one nation, one culture, they have common history, **and, by the way, that is true**'

Discussing the reasons for the upcoming Russian invasion of Ukraine, Eman Sobhi not only quoted Putin's pre-war pseudo-historical statements but also added the "confirmation" with the words **wa bi-l-munāsaba da l-ḥa'ī'iy** "and, by the way, that is true". The vlogger did not provide any facts as if the latter was a generally recognized truth.

4) Calling for peace (implicitly) [9]:

كلنا في مركب واحد "We all are in the same boat" ستنتهي الحرب وسيتصافح القادة ويموت الشعب

"The war will end and the leaders will shake hands. The ordinary people are those who die."

Indirectly expressed sympathy with the victim of military aggression, i.e. Ukraine, reflects a hidden call for the peace talks. Additionally, this attitude demonstrates that Ukraine is considered a part of the western political games, not an independent actor. M. Darvish's quote is utilized to emphasize the philosophical value of message provided in the video.

5) Showing small countries as victims of "big power" [9]:

الدول الكبيرة بتستخدم الدول الصغيرة دايما علشان تحقق مصالحها

"**Big countries always use small countries** to achieve their own interests"

The abovementioned positions are interconnected in the studied vlogs. They mirrored Russian propaganda narrative about the confrontation between Russia and the collective west.

Since both vloggers are oriented over the entertaining content, they tend to preserve positive emotional expressivity in their discourse even concerning such serious topics as wars, conflicts, weapons, etc. We observe the use of various verbal and non-verbal tools of emotional expressivity, such as sarcasm, hyperboles, metaphors, unexpected switching to English or the insertion of loanwords, and other. For instance, a sarcastic comment can be accompanied with a certain intonation:

حسب الرغبة، وشو الرغبة يا حزرك؟ **بالزااابط**. نمحي مدن كاملة [10]

"As you like. And what do you think we like? **Exaaactly**. We destroy entire cities". A special stress on the word **bi-z-zabt**

"exactly" helps emphasize the previous comment. Another example is represented with the aphoristic expression **wa min al-ḥubb mā qatal** "love can kill". It was used by Eman Sobhy to describe the possible outcome of Putin's threats to stop the NATO's expansion:

ومن الحب ما قتل "putin loves Ukraine, and **love can kill**" [7] بوتين بحب أوكرانيا

Since both content creators frequently spoke the youth slang, they tended to use English loanwords or switched to English. For instance: – نواصل إلى أسوء جزء

al-very very bad news – "we are reaching the worst part – a **very very bad news**"; أهم **unique feature** "the main **unique feature**", **al-secret ingredient** كان الجدري "pox was the **secret ingredient**", and other. We also mentioned the insertion of a Russian lexeme **ẖārāšō** "well" that serves as an additional tool creating the positive expressivity of the message for the Arab recipients.

Conclusions. The results of the herein research showed that the studied Egyptian vlogging discourse was affected by the news of Russia's invasion of Ukraine as vloggers raised the topic of existential threats, such as the danger of nuclear and biological weapon, the potential world war, etc. The Russian war against Ukraine was directly addressed only once in the hypothetical context. However, neither Ukraine nor Russia's actions were directly discussed after the invasion. It is noted as well, that Russian propaganda narratives are implicitly reflected in the analysed materials. From the sociolinguistic perspective, content creators mainly utilized the spoken variety of Arabic (the youth slang) and English. Vloggers also preserved the positive expressivity of their speech in order to maintain the entertaining element of their content and to avoid the negative influence on the follower's opinion.

This study implies the further research of the sociolinguistic aspects of Arabic online discourse, including code-switching in the informal communication, as well as changes in Arabic under the influence of youth slang, contacts with English and French; determining trends in the development of the Arabic language varieties, etc.

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Кучеренко А. О. Вплив війни росії проти України на єгипетський дискурс відеоблогів (на матеріалах влогів "Maḏā law" та "Салям Катанані")

Анотація. В останнє десятиліття дискурс влогів або відеоблогів набув значного впливу на громадську думку. Влоги охоплюють різноманітні теми, в тому числі соціальні, політичні, культурні тощо. На відміну від офіційно визнаних журналістів, відеоблогери не несуть відповідальності за достовірність своїх публікацій. Мова арабських відеоблогів відображає мовне та соціокультурне ставлення носіїв до свого вербального самовираження в онлайн-комунікації. Оскільки агресія Росії проти України вплинула на онлайн-дискурс у всьому світі, включно з арабським контентом, це потребує ретельного вивчення. У цьому дослідженні розглядаються лінгвістичні, соціолінгвістичні та прагматичні особливості єгипетського дискурсу відеоблогів, зокрема, на основі матеріалів влогів «Maḏā law» («Що, якщо», понад 2 млн підписників) та «Salam Katanani» (понад 500 тис. підписників).

Обидва відеоблоги орієнтовані на пізнавальні та розважальні матеріали про історію, психологію, людське тіло, соціальні проблеми тощо. У наведених влогах автори контенту репрезентують себе в ролі молодої освіченої єгиптянки. Їхній мовний код охоплює єгипетський різновид арабської мови, сучасну стандартну арабську мову, молодіжний сленг з частими вкрапленнями англійських слів або повним перемиканням на англійську мову. У відеороликах, опублікованих у січні–червні 2022 року, ми спостерігали теми наслідків можливого ядерного вибуху, ядерної війни, застосування біологічної зброї тощо. Війна Росії проти України була згадана лише один раз у гіпотетичному сценарії до того, як вона сталася. Потім в досліджуваних матеріалах не згадувалися ані Україна, ані дії Росії. Зазначається, що обидві відеоблогерки зберігають позитивну емоційну експресивність (вербальними та невербальними засобами) у досліджуваному контенті, щоб створити позитивне сприйняття своїх виступів.

Ключові слова: арабська мова, єгипетський відеоблог, онлайн-дискурс, війна Росії проти України, молодіжний сленг.