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Egyptian Arabic-English Code-Switching Strategies of Colour Naming: Case Study of two Egyptian vlogs

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Abstract. This paper examines language choices between Egyptian Arabic and English in the use of colour terms within the bilingual online video performances of two Egyptian vloggers. The informants are two young Egyptian women whose YouTube content focuses on lifestyle topics, including shopping hauls and product reviews. In this case study, four hours of YouTube recordings were subjected to close qualitative analysis to explore how colour names and shades are expressed linguistically. Instances of colour naming in both English and Arabic were identified, and their frequencies were compared. Out of a total of 261 tokens, 52 were in English, 173 were in Arabic, and 36 were classified as mixed tokens. Using a usage-based approach, the study investigates the distribution of colour terms across languages and examines strategies of code-switching (CS). Particular attention is given to the use of basic colour terms (BCT), following Berlin and Kay's (1969) theory. Finally, the linguistic choices of the two vloggers are compared to highlight similarities, differences, and potential patterns in their language use.

Keywords: *code-switching*, *colours*, *Egyptian Arabic–English*, *vlogs*, *usage-based*

Egipto arabų ir anglų kalbų pasirinkimo strategijos spalvų nominacijoje: dviejų Egipto vaizdo tinklaraščių atvejo analizė

Anotacija. Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjamas egiptiečių arabų ir anglų kalbos pasirinkimas spalvų pavadinimams nusakyti dvikalbiuose dviejų Egipto vaizdo tinklaraštininkų (angl. *vloger*) internetiniuose vaizdo įrašuose. Informantės – dvi jaunos egiptietės, kurių „YouTube“ turinys orientuotas į gyvenimo būdo temas, tarp jų ir filmuotas ir aprašytas pirkinių apžvalgas. Šiame atvejo tyrime keturios valandos „YouTube“ įrašų buvo analizuojamos taikant kokybinius metodus ir siekiant atskleisti, kaip kalba nusakomi spalvų pavadinimai ir atspalviai. Buvo nustatyta spalvų pavadinimų vartosena anglų ir arabų kalbomis ir palyginti vartosenos dažniai. Iš viso rastas 261 pavartojimo atvejis: 52 anglų kalba, 173 arabų kalba ir 36 priskirti mišriems atvejams. Remiantis vartosena grįstu požiūriu, tyrime nagrinėjama spalvų terminų pasiskirstymo kalbose specifika ir kodų kaitos strategijos. Remiantis Berlino ir Kay'aus (1969) teorija, ypatingas dėmesys

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skiriamas baziniams spalvų terminams. Galiausiai aptariami dviejų vaizdo tinklaraštininkų kalbiniai pasirinkimai, išryškinant jų panašumus, skirtumus ir galimas vartosenos tendencijas.

Raktažodžiai: *kodų kaita, spalvos, egiptiečių arabų–anglų kalba, vaizdo tinklaraščiai* (vlogai)*, vartosena gryna prieiga*

1. Introduction

This article examines the distribution of colour and shade names between English and Egyptian Arabic within otherwise predominantly monolingual Arabic speech. Fifteen YouTube videos, uploaded between 2023 and 2025 by two Egyptian lifestyle content creators, were analysed from a usage-based perspective. The starting point for this case study was the material collected for my earlier article on code-switching in this language pair in product review videos (Siereda 2024). A few examples of colour terms that appeared in that corpus were also incorporated into the present analysis. The present paper attempts to address an empirical gap in code-switching studies with a focus on colour naming in Arabic vlogs. Given that the usage-based approach was not yet employed in research on Semitic languages, the current article offers new perspectives on Arabic-English language contact.

Although previous studies have investigated code-switching between Egyptian Arabic and English in various social and media contexts (Kniaź and Zawrotna 2018; Mohamed 2016; Hamouda 2015; El Nahal 2023), there remains limited research on this phenomenon in vlogs, particularly with regard to the use of colour terms. While some studies have explored code-switching in vlogs involving other language pairs—such as Estonian–English (Verschik and Kask 2019), and Indonesian–English (Trisnayanti and Affini 2021; Umami and Ghasani 2021; Fitriana 2023)—to the best of my knowledge, no research has specifically examined the use of colour terminology in code-switching between Arabic and English in vlogs.

El Nahal's (2023) study on short videos in the same language pair draws on YouTube material as well as content from other social media platforms. However, the analysis does not provide a clear conclusion about code-switching in vlogs; instead, it offers a broader examination of code-switching across three different short-form video platforms. It is important to note that short videos (reels), typical of platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, constitute a different genre from the longer recordings (vlogs) that are the focus of the current study.

This paper aims to contribute to the field of Arabic linguistics by offering new insights into code-switching in vlogging. Blogging has been identified in *The Oxford Handbook of Arabic Linguistics* as a form of expression in need of further research (Owens 2013: 25), encompassing a variety of linguistic styles. Within the last decade, not much attention was given to the linguistic side of Arabic blogs, which indicates another research gap, not covered by this article. Research on language used in blogs and vlogs in other language pairs provides a starting point for the present analysis. It should be noted that the popularity of the written form of blogging has visibly decreased over the last years, and it is currently the spoken discourse that attracts the most attention in online activities. Code-switching in vlogs seems to have been studied extensively by Indonesian researchers (Indonesian–English) in recent years; these papers, however, were mostly applying structural approaches to code-switching, which is not the focus of the current study. Vlogging, as an oral and visual form of blogging, aligns more closely with spoken language. However, it is worth noting that many vlogs are scripted and therefore may lack the spontaneity typically associated with unscripted spoken discourse. Nevertheless, since content creators are unlikely to anticipate that their speech will be analysed for linguistic research, this study avoids the influence of the observer's paradox.

The present paper seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What is the language distribution for colour items? What is the language distribution when naming specifically basic colour terms (BCT)?
2. Which colours are named in English and which ones in Egyptian Arabic? Is there a pattern of using any of them?

The paper is structured as follows. After this introduction, the theoretical background is presented, outlining the relevance of usage-based approaches with a focus on individual language use. This is followed by a review of literature on colour terminology in Arabic linguistics and a brief overview of the current linguistic situation in Egypt, particularly the role of English. The differences between colour names in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Egyptian Arabic (EA) are also explored. Next, the data and speakers are introduced, followed by a description of the methodology and presentation of results. Selected examples are analysed, and the findings are discussed, with limitations of the study clearly acknowledged. The paper concludes with a summary of the main insights.

Before moving to the theoretical section, a few clarifications on terminology are necessary. In this article, code-switching refers to instances where the speaker shifts from one language to another during speech. In the analytical sections, this primarily involves cases where the speaker names a colour in English instead of Arabic. Other types of switching (e.g., discourse markers) are excluded from the scope of analysis.

The Arabic variety under investigation is Egyptian Arabic, specifically the Cairene dialect. While it is unclear whether this is the primary dialect of both speakers or adopted for content creation, all references to "Arabic" in this paper pertain to Egyptian Arabic unless otherwise specified (see Section 2.4 for details).

Basic colour terms (BCTs), as mentioned in Research Question 1, refer to the eleven universal categories proposed by Berlin and Kay (1969). These are discussed in more detail in Section 2.2

The vloggers studied were not contacted for the research. Therefore, they are referred to as speakers (S1 and S2) or informants. Their videos are publicly available and do not include sensitive or personal content. For anonymization, their YouTube handles are not disclosed, and no direct links to the material are provided. Background information on the speakers is included in Section 4.

Colour items refer to all words or phrases describing colours and shades. The methodology for identifying and coding these tokens is described in Section 4.

2. Theoretical background of the study

2.1 Usage-based approach to code-switching

Being of an exploratory nature, this study adopts a usage-based (UB) approach to language analysis—a framework not widely applied in code-switching research involving Semitic languages. Prior work includes studies by Verschik and Kask (2019) on bilingual blogs and vlogs in Estonian–English, and by Gaskins et al. (2021) on early bilingualism in language pairs including Indo-European and Ugro–Finnic languages.

Usage-based linguistics aims to integrate language structure and usage, traditionally treated separately in structuralist and generative models. It treats language as a dynamic process where form and meaning evolve together (Diessel 2017). A speaker's linguistic repertoire is continuously shaped by exposure, memory, and entrenchment. As noted by Verschik (2019: 54), language change is often a result of a

mix of different factors that affect an individual's language choices. Introducing new lexical items into one's linguistic repertoire may originate from a conceptual gap correlated with the urge to name items that have not previously been named in a specific language.

Backus's theory of entrenchment (Backus 2012) suggests that frequently used items become cognitively entrenched, though this does not necessarily generalize across communities. Once a linguistic item is routinely accessed, it becomes automatic for the speaker. This aligns with exemplar theory (Gradoville 2023), which posits that linguistic representations are reinforced through repeated exposure to similar stimuli.

Given this paper's focus on individual language use, a usage-based approach is especially appropriate. Language change—especially contact-induced change—originates in individual repertoires. Unlike structural approaches, which emphasise community norms, UB approaches focus on personal linguistic experience. There is no strict division between matrix and embedded languages (Myers-Scotton 1993), nor a rigid distinction between borrowing and code-switching. Items are treated as contextualized speech acts, not categorised into lexical vs. functional types.

While UB frameworks are increasingly used in fields such as second language acquisition and bilingualism (Gaskins et al. 2022; Baird 2022, 2024), their application to adult speech in social media remains limited. Notable exceptions include studies on Dutch–Turkish code-switching (Backus and Demircay 2021) and Japanese–Estonian-English informal writing (Kilp 2021).

Another example of a study concerned with code-switching in vlogs is Kask's research on Estonian lifestyle vlogs (Kask 2021), where colour terms were often borrowed or code-switched into English. It is suggested that semantic specificity may influence language choices, and since colour names are semantically rich and cognitively salient, they make them prime candidates for switching (Backus 2012, Backus & Demirçay 2021; Kask 2021).

2.2 Literature review on colours in Arabic linguistics

Berlin and Kay (1969) introduced the idea of basic colour terms (BCT) that are supposed to exist in all of the modern languages, and their development is divided into VII stages. Both English and Arabic have the same 11 basic colour terms.

The eleven universal colour categories proposed by Berlin and Kay (1969) were confirmed to exist in Arabic in a study conducted in Saudi Arabia on a control group of young students (Al-Rasheed 2014). According to the results, the eleven basic colours in Arabic correspond to the terms suggested by Berlin and Kay and are as follows: white, black (stage I), red (stage II), green, yellow (stage III and IV), blue (stage V), brown (stage VI), grey, pink, orange, purple (stage VII). Al-Rasheed gives all the colour names in non-standardised transliteration of standard Arabic; therefore, it is likely that the study was conducted without taking into consideration possible dialectal variations among the speakers.

The first five of the eleven elements (white, black, red, green, yellow) are to be found in the Old Arabic basic colour system (Fischer 1965), which suggests that the Pre-Islamic (before VII NE) Arabic was at stage IV of the basic colour terms development scheme proposed by Berlin and Kay.

Borg (2007) explores the colour names used in spoken varieties of Arabic, considering both urban and nomadic communities. His evidence confirms the presence of eleven basic colour terms (cf. Berlin and Kay 1969) in urban varieties of contemporary spoken Arabic, as well as points out fewer numbers of them in the semi-nomadic communities. Differences in colour naming between urban and nomadic speakers were also attested in a study conducted by Al-Jehani (1990) in Saudi Arabia. Not only did the number of colours in use vary between them, but semi-nomadic and urban communities were also using different

colour names to describe the same shades. Al-Jehani provides evidence for a richer repertoire of colour names among women than men and among urban communities than nomadic ones. At the same time, the linguistic repertoires of every group were affected by their lifestyle and everyday environment.

2.3 Basic colours in Arabic and their realisation in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic

The article is concerned with the Egyptian dialect of Arabic; therefore, an insight into the differences between Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and its Egyptian dialect[1] is essential. Firstly, it should be noted that due to the popularity of Egyptian cinema and music throughout the decades—particularly in the 20th century—Egyptian (Cairene) dialect is widely understood and spoken around the Arab world. Secondly, it is also very often the choice of L2 Arabic learners and educational institutions offering Arabic as L2 to acquire the knowledge of this spoken variety. It is important to stress that neither MSA nor Classical Arabic (CA; the language of the Qur'an; MSA is considered to be its modernised and grammatically simplified version) is the mother tongue of any Arabic speaker; it is always the dialect that is acquired first, at home and in various informal social situations.

As the focus point of this article is specifically colour names, the general differences between Standard Arabic and its Egyptian variety will be mentioned briefly. While most colour names will be similar in MSA and ECA (Egyptian Colloquial Arabic), a few differences need to be discussed. Similar to other spoken varieties of Arabic, Egyptian dialects dispose of a different phonological system than their written standardised version. To start with, there are no interdental consonants in ECA (ḏ → d, z; ṯ → t, s; ẓ → ḍ, z). Moreover, the pronunciation will differ due to changes in the vowel distribution in Arabic vernaculars, and the realisation of the voiceless uvular ق [qāf] as the glottal stop ء [ʔ] in Cairene Arabic, hence ʾaswad → iswid ("black"), ʾazraq → ʾazraʾ ("blue"). There are ten vowels in Egyptian Arabic: a, e, o, u, i, and their long counterparts, written with a long dash above (ā, ē, ō, ū, ī), whereas MSA only has six in its repertoire: a, u, i, and their long counterparts (ā, ū, ī). In contrast to MSA, ECA does not have a case system; the negation differs depending on the regional variety, and so do the tense and aspect inflectional markers, and the definite/indefinite system. However, as mentioned above, most of the changes emerging in the material under analysis will be slight and relatively easy to understand for L2 Arabic speakers, as well as for speakers of various Arabic dialects.

Table 1. Eleven basic colour terms in stage VII according to Berlin and Kay categories in Modern Standard Arabic, Egyptian Colloquial Arabic and English.

Modern Standard Arabic	Egyptian Colloquial Arabic	English
ʾabyaḍ	ʾabyaḍ	white
ʾaswad	iswid	black
ʾaḥmar	ʾaḥmar	red
ʾaḫḍar	ʾaḫḍar	green
ʾaṣfar	ʾaṣfar	yellow
ʾazraq	ʾazraʾ	blue
bunnī	bunnī	brown
ramādī, raṣāṣī	ramādī	grey
wardī	zahrī	pink
burtuqālī	burtʾānī	orange
banafsağī	banafsigī	purple

[1] While there are multiple spoken variations of Arabic in Egypt, this article focuses on the capital's dialect which is considered a "high" variety within the country's linguistic landscape and is also used by the speakers, however, it is not clear whether this is their L1 spoken variety. For more about the use of Cairene Arabic by its non-native speakers in Egypt and abroad see Bassiouney and Muehlhaeusler (2018).

It is worth noting that the first six basic colour terms (white, black, red, green, yellow, blue) follow the traditional Arabic CVCCVC pattern, while the remaining five (brown, grey, pink, orange, purple) are examples of nisba adjectives—formed by adding the suffix -ī to a noun. The "traditional" colours are characterized by fixed morphological patterns for masculine and feminine forms in both singular and plural, and they are represented in the dataset accordingly. In contrast, nisba adjectives function like regular adjectives, meaning the only morphological change they undergo is the addition of the feminine suffix -a(h) when required by grammatical agreement.

2.4 Egyptian Arabic–English language contact. Role of English in Egypt

English was first introduced in Egypt during British imperial rule (1882-1956), and although it may have been set aside during the pan-Arabism period, it regained its status during El-Sadat's presidency, and its role as a high variety in the country continues to this day. The level of active knowledge of English in Egyptian society varies due to several factors, including origin, place of residence, social status, and family language policy. Presently, it seems to be a trend among middle and upper-class Egyptian families to send their children to private schools where English is the primary language. This trend has been observed already in the 1990s by Haeri (1997), who stresses the difference between public education provided in Arabic by the state and private institutions with foreign languages of instruction (mostly English and French), which also translates to the stratification of the Egyptian society. Haeri (1997, 2001) also observes the paradox of being considered more privileged after acquiring a foreign language (i.e. English) than the country's official language. Graduates from private educational institutions would often continue their education at English-speaking universities in Egypt (e.g. American University of Cairo) or abroad.

As mentioned by Bassiouney and Muehlhaeusler (2018), basic knowledge of English is also noticeable among the lowest social classes, who often lack the privilege of private education. While the proficiency level in English differs among certain social classes, the language used by Egyptians on a daily basis contains direct borrowings from English that are preferred over the existing Arabic words, such as *already*, *fresh*, and *flavour*. It is enough to say that the knowledge of single word items does not prove language proficiency as such, and rather shows a global phenomenon than providing information on an individual's knowledge.

3. Data, speakers and method

3.1 Data and speakers

The material collected for this study comes from two speakers, both young Egyptian women, and consists of publicly available YouTube videos. Both speakers live in Egypt and speak Arabic as L1, which is clear from their videos. They were not contacted during the analysis and are most probably not aware that their content is the subject of this study, which excludes the risk of the so-called observer's paradox. Their intended audience is Arabic-speaking (or at least Arabic-understanding) women, especially those living in or around Cairo, as they refer to specific places and provide directions to locations in some of their videos.

Table 2. Token distribution between the speakers.

	S1	S2	Total
Number of recordings	9	6	15
Video length	2:00:16	2:01:10	4:01:26
Colour tokens	150	111	261
English colour tokens	118	55	173
Arabic colour tokens	21	31	52
Mixed colour tokens	11	25	36

15 recordings with the total length of 4:01:26 were analysed, 9 (2:00:16) and 6 (2:01:10) from S1 and S2 respectively. As a result, 261 tokens naming colours were attested, 150 and 111 for speakers 1 and 2, respectively. From those, 173 were in given (Egyptian) Arabic, 52 in English, and 36 in a mix of Arabic and English. A total of 32 colour names were detected.

3.2 Method

Fifteen videos, totalling 4:01:26 in length, were analysed for the purpose of this study, and the colour items were identified. One token indicates one colour name (also called colour item later in sections 4 and 5) and can consist of one or more words (multi-word colour names being, for example, *vintage red*, *bunnī ʕala orange*). Tokens were not divided into simple (one-word) and complex (multi-word) colour names. All tokens were coded and divided into three categories: English, Arabic[2], English-Arabic. 52, 173 and 36 different tokens, respectively, were attested in each category, with a total of 32 different colours named in the collected material.

4. Analysis of the results

261 tokens naming colour items were found, out of which 173 were identified as Arabic, 52 as English and 36 tokens as mixed. Each occurrence of a colour item was counted as a separate token. The total of 32 different colours was named. Tokens were divided into three categories: Arabic, English and mixed. The first two categories indicate monolingual tokens in either Arabic or English, while the third category covers tokens consisting of at least two elements from the two languages – for example, a definite article from L1 and a colour name from L2 (*il-grey*, *il-mauve*). Both speakers were rather consistent in using one language for one colour, although some colour names appeared in both English and Arabic (e.g. red – *ʾaḥmar,* burgundy – *nbītī)*.

It was noticed that most colours were given only in one of the two languages, i.e. one colour was usually attached to one language. This may be an important point when it comes to frequency, which is related to the individual's memory that influences their language use (cf. Hakimov, Backus 2021; Diessel 2017). Black and white, which according to Berlin and Kay's scheme are the most basic ones (stage I of the basic colour terms development scheme), were always given in Arabic, and black appeared in both standard and dialectal versions (*ʾaswad*, *iswid*). "White" appeared in English only as part of the more specific *el-off white* colour. It could be assumed that a fashion blogger would use the same language for the same category of colours, such as neutral colours. The material, however, shows that such an

[2] Unless specified otherwise, all mentions of Arabic in this and next section refer to Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA).

assumption would be incorrect in this case. In example (1), S1 mentions "basic colours", naming black in Arabic using the MSA and not ECA pronunciation (*ʾaswad*) and *grey* in English.

(1) *ʔahamm ḥāga yikūn lawnuh asāsī yaʕani mumkin tigibū* ***ʔaswad, grey****…*
most important thing be-PRES-3SG-MASC colour.his basic mean-PRES-3SG-MASC maybe pick-PRES-2PL black grey
'most importantly, its colour should be a basic one, so you can pick up black, grey…'

In example (2), S2 refers to a colour first as *mauve*, then as *banafsīgī ṣarīḥ* (light purple), which suggests semantic specificity as switching motivation, as English offers one word to precisely describe the colour in question. This reason for code-switching was earlier suggested in research on other language pairs (see Kask 2021; Backus & Demirçay 2021; Verschik 2019; Backus 2012). The variety of specific colour terms differs between English and Arabic, and the knowledge of both languages enables the speaker to choose the most appropriate term from both repertoires.

(2) *kull ḥāga en-nahārda min il-lōn il-****mauve*** *rağm ʔin ʔanā miš baḥibbuh bas ʔanā baḥibb id-daraga min* ***banifsīgī banifsīgī ṣarīḥ*** *ʔanā baḥibb il-ʔalwān iṣ-ṣarīḥa*
every thing today from colour-DEF mauve-DEF despite that I like-PRES-1SG but I like-PRES-1SG shade-DEF from purple purple light I like-PRES-1SG colour-PL-DEF light-PL-DEF
'everything today is in mauve colour even though I don't like it, but I like this shade of purple, light purple, I love light colours'

To some of the English items (examples 3-5), the Arabic definite article *el-/-il* was attached; therefore, these were considered mixed English-Arabic, even if the actual colour name was given in English. Attaching the Arabic definite article may suggest that the colour name is entrenched in the speaker's linguistic repertoire, and naming the colour in English appears to be their first choice. While there had been no previous studies showing the addition of the article as either entrenchment or conventionality, these examples indicate a visible pattern in both speakers' speech. This pattern reveals specific preferences for using well-known English colour names in certain contexts and simultaneously modifying them by adding the Arabic definite article.

(3) *minha ʾalwān kitīra ʾanā gibt il-****grey*** *wi-n-****nbītī***
from her colour-PL many-FEM I pick-PAST-1SG grey-DEF and burgundy-DEF
'they come in many colours, I picked up the grey one and the burgundy one'

(4) *il-lōn ʔilli huwa il-****burgundy***
colour-DEF that he burgundy-DEF
'the burgundy colour'

(5) *yaʾnī buṣū el-lōn el-****gold*** *shaklu ʿāmil izzay*
mean-PRES-3SG-MASC look-IMP-2PL colour-DEF gold-DEF shape.his do-PRES.PART.ACT-MASC how
'so look, the golden colour is like this'

In (6), it is not clear whether the speaker uses the English colour term *beige* or the Arabic بيج [bēž], which would be pronounced similarly. The same example shows rare usage of MSA colour term *ʾaswad* ["black"] which is mostly referred to as dialectal *iswid*.

(6) *fa-laʾīt minnu il-****beige*** *da wa-l-ʾ****abyaḍ*** *wa-l-ʾ****aswad***
so meet-PAST-1SG from him beige-DEF this-MASC and white-DEF and black-DEF
'from this one I encountered the beige one, the white one and the black one'

In (7), the English noun ***undertone*** is attached to the Arabic definite article *-il,* which shows the adaptability of English nouns (not only colours but colour-related in this case) into Arabic sentence structure.

(7) *lōn bašritak ʔaw lōn il-**undertone***
colour skin.your-POSS-2SG or colour undertone-DEF
the colour of your skin or one tone lighter (undertone)

While my previous study (Siereda 2024), which involved the use of colour names, suggested a tendency to use English for more complex colour terms and Arabic for basic ones, the analysis of the current material appears to contradict this pattern. Both speakers employ more advanced and specific colour terms in both Arabic (e.g., *el-hāfān* – "havana brown", *ganzārī* – "bluish green", "dark teal", *nbītī* – "burgundy", *ʾaṣfar kanarī* – "canary yellow") and English (e.g., *lavender*, *mauve*, *burgundy*, *vintage red*).

Another aspect of the analysis involves hybrid Arabic-English multi-word expressions, such as ***peach** šwayy* ("slightly peach"), ***bunnī** ʿala **orange*** (lit. "brown to orange", i.e., "brownish orange"), and *ʿala **grey*** ("greyish"), where Arabic appears to serve a specifying function. In these examples, the Arabic preposition *ʿala* functions similarly to the English suffix "-ish". However, it remains unclear why the initial element is rendered in Arabic while the second is expressed in English.

While these are undoubtedly interesting observations, it should be noted that both studies are of an exploratory case-study nature and should rather be considered as pilot studies, inviting the conduct of broader research in this area. Therefore, it is not possible to draw a general conclusion regarding language choices in a bigger group based solely on the above examples.

5. Discussion and concluding remarks

5.1 Discussion

Out of 261 tokens naming colours that occur in the 4:01:26 of the material, 173 (66.28%) were given in (Egyptian) Arabic, 52 (19.92%) in English, and 36 (13.79%) were marked as mixed forms consisting of at least two words in both languages. This answers the first part of the first research question and shows the prevalence of Arabic colour names in the analysed material.

The above results summarise the recordings of both speakers (S1 and S2) combined. When considered separately, S1 named colours and shades 150 times throughout 2:00:16, out of which 111 (78,67%) occurrences were in Arabic, 21 (18,92%) in English and 11 (7,34%) in a mixed form.

In her content under analysis, S2 used colour names 111 times, 55 (49.55%) of which were in Arabic, 31 (27.93%) in English and 25 (22,52%) in a mixed form.

It was noticed that S1, whose preference for Arabic in naming colours is visibly stronger than S2's, uses it to name more specific colour names, such as *zaytī fātiḥ* (light olive), *ganzārī* (dark teal) or *nbītī* (dark red, burgundy), while S2 shows to be more creative with mixed forms, such as *il-**orange**āt* (oranges; different shades of orange colour), *daraga ʿala **banana*** (banana-like shade) or *ʿala **mauve*** (mauve-like, mauve-ish). In the above-mentioned examples, S2 uses Arabic to narrow down the definition of a colour primarily given in English, which allows her to achieve semantic precision. As the topics of the analysed videos (lifestyle, beauty, fashion) are likely to have been introduced to the speakers in English, there may exist a lexical gap in their linguistic repertoires that is covered fully or partially by foreign items matching exactly the concept in mind during the speech act. Mixed forms attested in

the material show the speakers' striving for semantic precision while using tools from both languages available to them.

To answer the second part of the first research question, it should be noted that while there was no strong pattern attested in the use of BCTs, a tendency to use Arabic when it comes to the first six basic colour terms (black, white, red, green, yellow, blue) which are built using the grammatical pattern CVCCVC, and English when naming the other five basic colour terms (brown, grey, pink, purple orange) which are constructed as nisba adjectives in Arabic, was observed. It is noteworthy that only the first two basic colour terms (black and white) are given consistently in Arabic, and the other terms appear in both languages; however, the first six BCTs are more likely to appear in English only as part of a longer colour name, such as *il-**baby blue*** or ***vintage red***.

Both basic and advanced, simple and complex colour names are given in both languages, which seems to contradict the primary observation on this matter that I made in my previous study (Siereda 2024: 10) that basic colours would predominantly be given in Arabic and the more specific ones – in English, and it also provides an answer to the second research question of this study. While most colours are consistently assigned to one language by both speakers (one colour – one language), some appear in two language versions throughout the material.

Both speakers demonstrate a certain level of consistency in using one language to name one colour or taking from both languages to create a hybrid form (definite article from L1 + colour name from L2). This could mean that each colour is entrenched in one of the two linguistic repertoires, and their activation is based on a choice, i.e. the speakers clearly show their preferences for using English or Arabic when naming specific colours, and the mixed forms could be a manifestation of an advanced entrenchment level of a foreign item in the individual linguistic repertoire.

The above observations confirm the dynamic nature of speakers' individual linguistic repertoires which seem to be shaped by both internal and external factors and could be explored thoroughly by applying a usage-based approach.

5.2 Limitations of the study

It is important to emphasise that the present study addresses a relatively narrow range of topics—specifically, lifestyle content such as shopping hauls and product reviews. As a result, the findings should not be interpreted as indicative of broader patterns of language change across Egyptian society. Moreover, the dataset is limited to two speakers with similar profiles, allowing for comparative insights between them but not enabling generalisations about the language behaviour of young Egyptian women as a whole. Future research involving a larger and more diverse sample would be necessary to gain a deeper understanding of computer-mediated oral communication and language use in this context, particularly concerning this specific language pair.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, a preference for Arabic basic colour terms that follow the traditional CVC-CVC grammatical pattern (i.e., white, black, red, green, yellow, blue) was observed. These six colours correspond to the same stages, I-V, of Berlin and Kay's basic colour theory. However, no consistent preference was found for advanced colour terms. It can be inferred that colour terms first acquired—or exclusively known—in English are typically used by default, without an active search for Arabic equivalents, particularly when such equivalents are uncommon in the speakers' sociolinguistic envi-

ronment. This would align with both Gradoville's reflections on exemplar theory (Gradoville 2023) and Backus's theory of entrenchment (Backus 2012, Backus & Demirçay 2021). Given that exposure to colour terms in both languages does not appear to be directly linked to language proficiency, the speakers' level of English proficiency was not examined in this study.

As this study analyses only a limited sample within the selected material category, further research is needed to expand the current understanding and to allow for more generalisable conclusions about language choice in the use of colour terms among young Egyptian content creators engaged in vlogging or other forms of internet-mediated performance.

Abbreviations

ACT – active
BCT – basic colour terms
DEF – definite article
ECA – Egyptian Colloquial Arabic
FEM – feminine
MASC – masculine
MSA – Modern Standard Arabic
S – speaker (S1, S2)
PART – participle
PL – plural
POSS – possessive
PRES – present tense
SG – singular
UB – usage-based

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