

Abstract

Iman M Mahfouz

Arabic Transliteration of English in Egyptian Tweets: An Exploratory Study

With the advent of the Internet as a medium of online communication, Arab users started adopting the transliteration of Arabic language in Roman characters. This was partly caused by the unavailability of Arabic keyboards in laptops and mobile phones, particularly those not especially tailored for the Arab market. In recent years, however, the opposite phenomenon has emerged, that of transliterating English words in Arabic characters. Using a sample of around 210,000 tweets written in Egypt gathered automatically during February and March 2016, the present study attempts to explore this recent trend, with the aim of determining which English words are more likely to be transliterated in Arabic tweets, as well as shed some light on the implications of this recently emerging phenomenon. The paper also points out some of the difficulties involved in the automatic retrieval of Arabic tweets.