

Exploring the Hurdles and Flaws in Localizing English User Interface into Arabic on Social Media Platforms

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Introduction

- » Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram are global tools for communication.
- » Social media interfaces remain largely English-based, creating accessibility challenges for Arabic users
- » Translation and localization issues in Arabic versions of these platforms

Disclaimer

The analysis in this study examines the hurdles and challenges in translating and localizing social media user interfaces.

This focus is not intended to criticize or diminish the valuable contributions and innovations of platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

Rather, it aims to provide a constructive and critical perspective to improve usability, clarity, and accessibility for Arabic-speaking users, enhancing user experience while recognizing the platforms' achievements.



Aim of study

Identify linguistic and cultural challenges in English–Arabic UI localization.

Propose some suggested translations that enhance accuracy and user experience (UX).

Test the acceptability of the proposed translations among users and experts.

Key Concepts



Localization

The process of adapting a product, service, or digital content (such as a website, app, or software interface) to make it linguistically, culturally, and technically appropriate for a specific target audience or region.

User Interface (UI)

The interactive surface through which users communicate with a digital system.

Language Adaptation

Translating and adjusting expressions, idioms, or tone to sound natural in the target language.

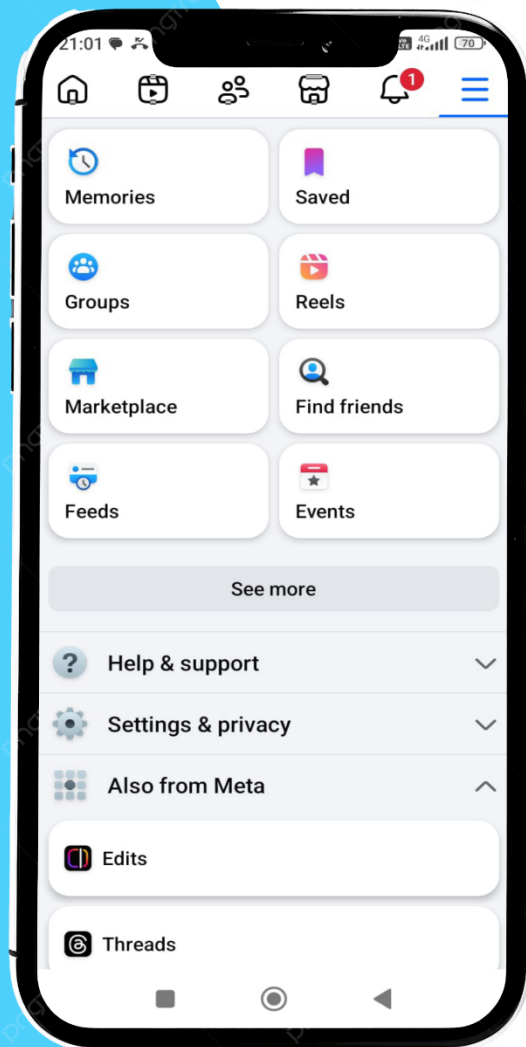
Graphic (visual) Adaptation

Modifying interface elements to fit the direction, length, and structure of the target language (e.g., Arabic right-to-left orientation).

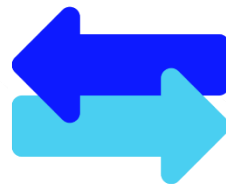


Linguistic & Graphic Adaptation

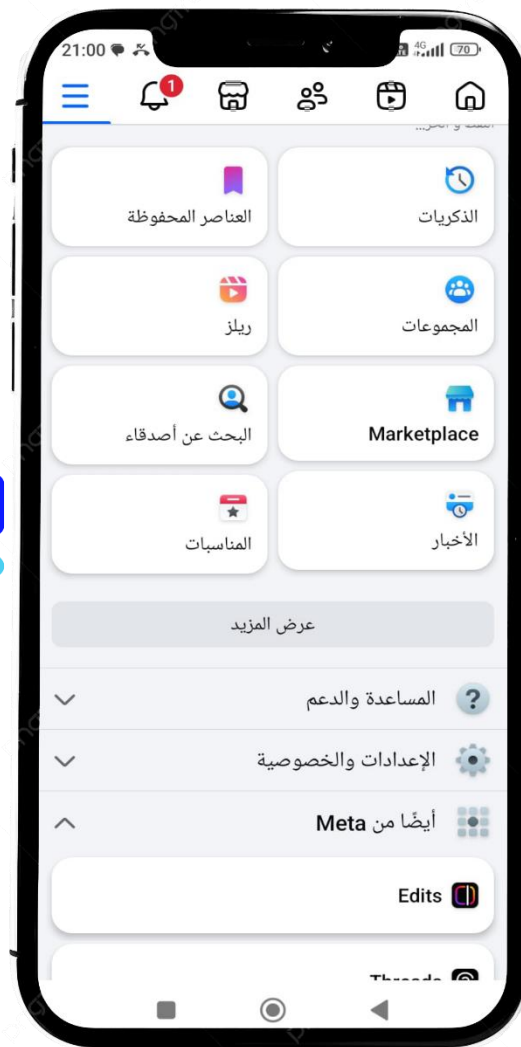
English



left-to-right



Arabic



right-to-left



Methodology

Data Collection

Data Analysis

Lexical

Semantic

Morphological

Semantic



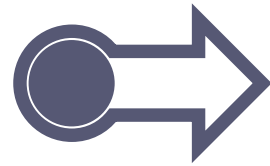
LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES

Transliteration

Avatar /ævətɑ:/  /æfətɑ:/ أفاتار

- **conceptual problem**
- **Phonetic problem**

LINGUSITC CHALLENGES

 Transliteration

Reels



ريلز

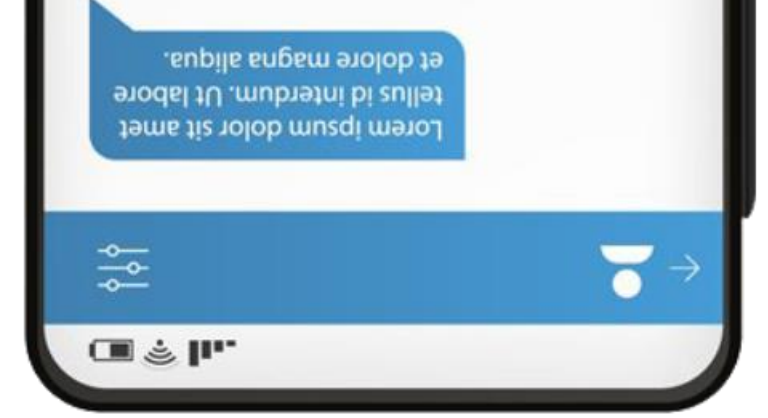
“مقاطع قصيرة”

Morphosyntactic Challenges

Typing... ➔ /'jəktʊb/ يَكْتُب ...

ASP.

PER NUM GEN TNS



Pr. C.

Gender-neutral

Pr. S/C ✗ ASP.

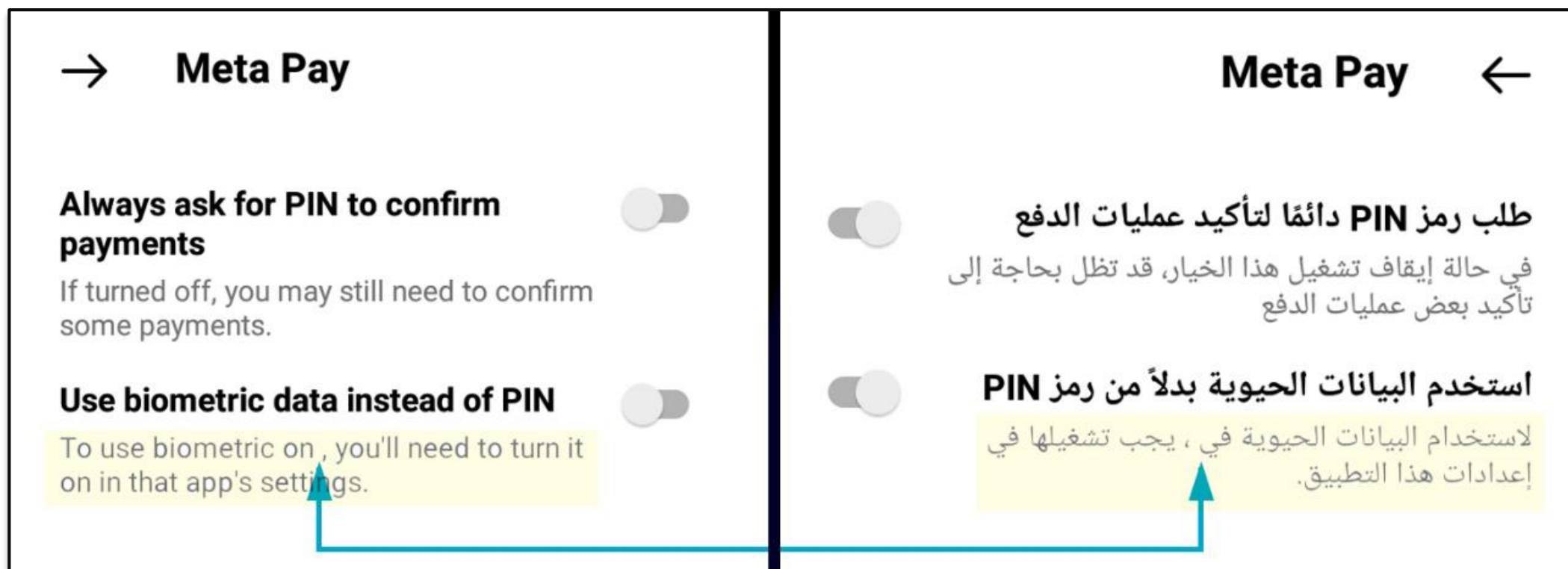
Masculine

جارِ الكتابة ...

/dʒa:rin akkɪ'ta:ba/



Exclusive Reliance on AI-Powered Translation



Imperative vs. Declarative language

Facebook: found under Setting & privacy → Your time on Facebook



“Get More Sleep”

Imperative

“الحصول على قدر اكبر من النوم”

Declarative

“خذ قسط وافر من النوم”



Untranslated Terms

i) Brand Recognition

Google, Meta, Google Drive

ii) Acronym and Technical Terms

IP, Wi-Fi, QR



Findings

1

Ineffectiveness of Transliteration



2

Over-reliance on machine translation



3

Morphosyntactic Challenges



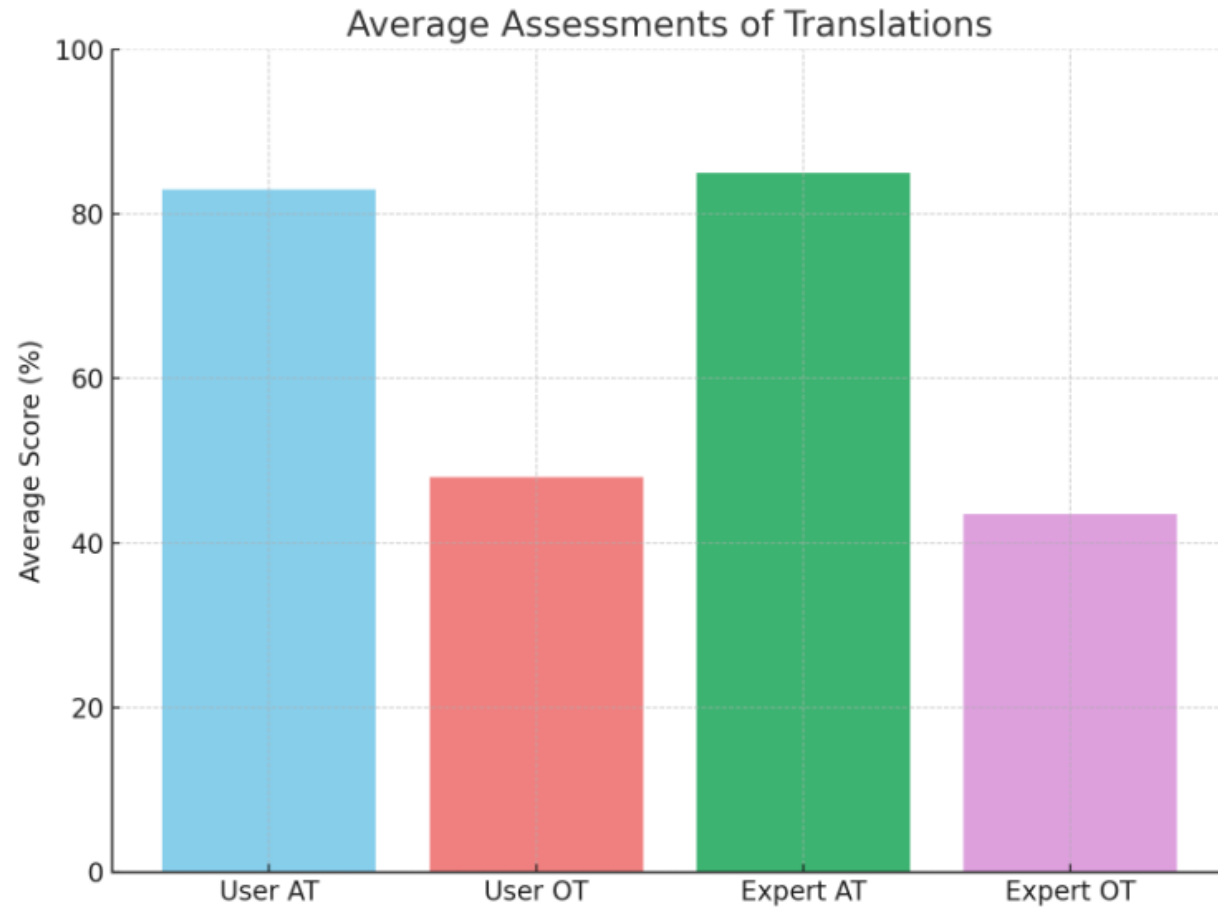
4

Untranslated Brand-related terms



Findings

Suggested alternative translations



Recommendations



Human Supervision

Emphasizing the role of human expertise in translation processes to ensure precise and culturally appropriate content.

Iterative Improvement

Encouraging a dynamic translation process that allows for constant improvements based on user feedback, ensuring continuous refinement of translated content.

User-Centric Approach

Prioritizing translations that correspond with user expectations and preferences, ultimately enhancing user satisfaction and engagement

Learning-Oriented Translation Practice

Encouraging a dynamic translation process that allows for constant improvements based on user feedback, ensuring continuous refinement of translated content.



Thank You

For Your Attention