



Development and Innovation in the Visual Formation of the Virtual Arabic Novel (Virtual Female, From the First Click, Shadow Memory) as a Model

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Abstract: The sense of sight occupied a high position among all senses in the process of reception, which requires the mobilization of the largest possible number of formations that serve the text through sight. Thus, visual formation occupied an important place in the narrative of the virtual novel. Therefore, the current study sought to shed light on the aspects of development and innovation in the field of visual formation of the contemporary Arabic virtual novel.

Keywords: renewal, formation, visual, virtual novel.

Introduction:

This study explores the Arab novel, where its structure reflects the image of social media networks and expresses them as presenting a novelistic pattern and a new form of modern Arabic novels. The aim is to highlight the significant features of the evolution and innovation occurring in this novelistic pattern as a result of its utilization of social media networks and the images of relationships arising from them in all of its narrative components.

The recent decades of the twentieth century witnessed a massive revolution in the field of communications and information technology, significantly impacting the proliferation and diversity of social media networks, making them accessible to everyone. This contributed to facilitating the communication process among the users of these networks worldwide.

Considering social media platforms as tools for exchanging ideas and perspectives, potentially contributing to building diverse relationships and different human experiences among users of these platforms, writers have recognized the possibility of observing these human experiences in their new virtual realm. They present them to the reader as complete narrative material, influenced by their new environment, which is reflected in all the narrative components, such as place, time, characters, narration, and others.

These networks were able to extend their influence in the novelistic discourse on the levels of narration, storytelling, and narrative techniques, encompassing events, descriptions, dialogues, and fictional characters. They absorbed the characteristics of social media networks, leading the reader to encounter a new narrative structure, not only at the level of transmitted human experiences but also in the presentation of novel elements and their shaping in different ways within the body of the novel. Studying and examining its prominent features became inevitable for critics and scholars of modern literature, especially following the emergence of numerous Arabic novels that addressed these relationships. These novels carried digital content with a significant connection to social media networks, despite being printed novels. Among these works, the study will explore examples such as the novel "Virtual Female" by Dr. Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, the novel "Love at First Click" by Dr. Mariam Nouriman Noumar, and the novel "Memory of the Shadow" by Fathia bin Faraj.

This study, like others, encountered several challenges, with one of the most significant being the absence of previous studies addressing the evolution and innovation that occurred in modern Arabic novels with content related to social media networks. There are only a few general studies about the internet, not specifically focused on literature, encompassing areas such as media studies, sociology, and others. Some studies that delved into digital literature focused on the medium, its influences, and its branching links and interactive scope, without conducting comprehensive research on the features of evolution and innovation that occurred in contemporary narrative elements and techniques.

This lack of comprehensive exploration in the field made the integration of this topic and its application to the study sample a highly challenging task. It required considerable effort in collecting and synthesizing the gathered information relevant to the study's subject matter. It is worth noting that there is a study that addressed "The Impact of the Internet on Creative Forms and Reception in Arabic Literature.

Chapter One: Form and Visual Composition

Form is the structure or image, and "to form something" means to conceive, while its shape or formation refers to its image. For instance, a woman shapes her hair by arranging two locks from the front of her head to the right and left, then securing the rest of her tresses⁽¹⁾

Through the linguistic understanding of the terms "form" and "composition," we realize that they depend on the visual dimension. Form represents the fixed structure of an object, while composition refers to its appearance and alteration. Therefore, it is closely associated with the arts, particularly the art of drawing, serving as a description of it and an indication of its ever-changing nature. The Grand Treasury Dictionary provides examples of vocabulary extensively used in the field of arts, including "form," "body," "drawing," "engraving," and "decoration," all of which contribute to the concept of creation and formation, symbolizing the act of shaping and embellishing⁽²⁾

In critical usage, the term "form" refers to a predetermined pattern that cannot be deviated from, making it a fixed law imposed on the text. As Ernst Fischer states, it is "the assembly of material in a specific way, with a specific arrangement, and a specific state of relative stability." In this sense, "form" in critical discourse serves as a predetermined structure, outlining a set order and a particular state of stability ⁽³⁾. This represents precisely what ancient Arabic poetry adhered to, where form imposed its authority on content, constraining texts to the predetermined vertical structure with two defined hemistiches. Within the context of poetic renewal movements, several transformations occurred in the form, leading to free verse, the functional poem, and prose poetry. Poets found themselves facing a new reality, compelling them to respond to the poetic renewal movement, easing the dominance of form. They also sought to capitalize on technological advancements to enrich their creative texts. This was indeed realized with the emergence of visual formatting that "rebelled against the rigidity of fixed formal templates."⁽⁴⁾ This passage appears to be a statement that belongs to the visual culture, known as "a comprehensive system of symbols, shapes, relationships, contents, and formations carrying the experiences and cultural heritage of civilizations. It is characterized by its own name, being evolutionary, renewable, self-sustaining, and dynamic."⁽⁵⁾ Thus, poetry has evolved to be written in the manner preferred by the poet, depending on their emotional expressive state, without being confined to a specific pattern. Consequently, it can be said that visual formatting represents the

¹) "Muhammad Murtada al-Zubaidi (d. 1205 AH) - 'Taj al-'Arous min Jawahir al-Qamus,' edited by a group of editors, Dar al-Huda, Kuwait, Volume 20, Chapter (Shin with Laam) Material (Sh K L), page 270, Dr. Ta, publication year not specified."

²) Mariam Ghaban, "The Aesthetics of Visual Formatting in Arabic Novels (Examples from 1990 to 2010)," Literary Club in Jeddah, Jeddah, 1st edition, 2018, p. 27.

³ Iyad Hassan Abdullah: "The Art of Design - Philosophy, Theory, Application," Dar al-Thaqafah wal I'lam, Sharjah, 2008, Volume 1, p. 235.

⁴) Muhammad Najib Al-Talawi: "The Visual Poem in Arabic Poetry," General Organization for Books, 1st edition, Cairo, 2006, p. 291.

⁵) Mu'jab Al-Zahrani: "The Play of Erasure and Visual Formatting in the News of the Mad Leila," Fasoul Magazine, Issue 1, Volume 16, 1997, p. 229.

reception of the text in a state of aesthetic circulation, with profound possibilities that are challenging for the concept of form to comprehend within the boundaries, frameworks, stylistic constants, and semantic references⁽⁶⁾. The term "visual formatting" used in this study is a critical term that refers to the visual data carried by the text and the study of its impact on both its production and reception. Visual text formatting involves employing modern technology to shape the text and its typographic space using various linear formations, symbols, images, and geometric shapes. In this way, the text becomes a visual entity, perceivable and receivable solely through the sense of sight.

Defining semiotics with a specific concept is challenging, as it is a broad science encompassing "diverse fields of knowledge that almost include every human product."⁽⁷⁾ However, after careful consideration of the definitions provided for semiotics, which unanimously agree on the term "sign," we can clarify its field of interest. Semiotics is a science that deals with the study of signs in their various forms—linguistic and non-linguistic—and the meanings derived from them. Signs (signifiers) can take the form of images, words, sounds, and objects. However, they do not inherently acquire meaning; they become signs only when we attribute meaning to them and subject them to the principle of signification⁽⁸⁾. The conceptualizations of semiotics by founders such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce differ. Saussure's understanding of semiotics is confined within the realm of linguistics, where language, in his conception, serves as the sole instrument through which we comprehend the universe: "In his view, language is the only tool through which the reason of the cosmos is expressed."⁽⁹⁾

Furthermore, Saussure emphasizes the significance of language in his conceptualization, asserting that "nothing can be known without resorting to linguistic signs." According to him, the entire world and its entities exist in the mind in the form of linguistic content⁽¹⁰⁾. In his framework, the sign is dual, consisting of the signifier (the "dal") and the signified (the "madlul"). The signifier is the auditory image derived from a sonic entity or a graphic representation – in the case of writing. It is, therefore, a sequence of sounds intended by collective usage to stand in place of something else. The signified, on the other hand, is the "abstract image that language gives to the thing through designation and naming."⁽¹¹⁾

For example, the entire signifier (word) "lion" consists of an auditory image based on the perception of the sequence of sounds (A-S-D) and a concept. The signified is the sum of the perceived meanings of this image (animal, predator, king of the jungle, etc.).

Saussure asserts that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, not subject to logical or rational justification, but rather governed by the principle of convention – the community's use of it.

On the contrary, Peirce, in his philosophical view of semiotics, diverges from associating it solely with linguistics. According to him, semiotics is not confined to linguistics, and its study cannot be encapsulated within the linguistic domain. The entirety of human experience – with language being just one aspect of it – constitutes the subject of semiotics for Peirce⁽¹²⁾. Contrary to Saussure's binary view of the sign, Peirce considers that reducing the human experience to a binary principle is detrimental to the organization of this experience. According to Peirce, it would only lead to a momentary determination without any epistemic value. Therefore, the sign – a fundamental principle in organizing the human experience, and understanding its content – cannot be anything other than

⁶) Mariam Ghaban, "The Aesthetics of Visual Formatting in Arabic Novels," previous citation, p. 29.

⁷) Mariam Ghaban, "The Aesthetics of Visual Formatting in Arabic Novels," previous citation, p. 64.

⁸) Danya Chandler, "Foundations of Semiotics," translated by Talal Wahba, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 1st edition, 2008, p. 28, p. 45.

⁹) Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics (Concepts and Applications)*, Dar Al-Hiwar, Latakia, 2nd edition, 2005, p. 61.

¹⁰) Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics (Concepts and Applications)*, same reference as above, p. 64.

¹¹) Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics (Concepts and Applications)*, same reference as above, p. 760.

¹²) See: Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics and Interpretation*, "An Introduction to C.S. Peirce's Semiotics," Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, 2005, p. 77.

triadic in nature according to Peirce⁽¹³⁾. So, the sign, as a triadic unit, cannot be reduced to two elements. The sign is not considered a sign unless it encompasses all three elements (the representamen, the object, and the interpretant). It is a "representamen that refers to an object through an interpretant."⁽¹⁴⁾ The representamen (the representational element) is defined by Peirce as "something that stands for something else for someone, in some respect or capacity."⁽¹⁵⁾ Based on this foundation, the representamen is the form that the sign takes, and its primary function is to represent something else⁽¹⁶⁾.

The object, as defined by Peirce, is the knowledge that the sign presupposes in order to bring additional information related to this object. He clarifies this definition by stating: "If there is something that specifies information without having the slightest connection with what the person receiving it knows at the moment of its transmission, it will be truly strange information, for the tool carrying this information is not called a sign." Here, the tool carrying the information refers to the object.

According to this definition, the object is not considered separately from the action of the sign itself because it can only function when viewed as a sign. Additionally, the object must refer to prior knowledge possessed by both the sender and the receiver. This knowledge is determined through a series of preceding signs that are not realized within the specific context of the sign⁽¹⁷⁾.

Chapter Two: Applied Models

The sense of sight has occupied a prominent position among all the senses in the process of perception. This necessitates the utilization of various visual elements that serve the text through visual inspection. Therefore, visual representation has taken on significant importance, and visual representation encompasses a set of images, shapes, lines, dimensions, extensions, and spatial sizes that carry within their folds nuances of the embodied space on the narrative or poetic stage⁽¹⁸⁾. Thus, this does not refer to the narrative space shaped by language but rather signifies the writer's engineering of pages, writing sizes, and lengths. This constitutes the typographic space accompanied by various forms, representing a limited space unrelated to the location where the characters move. Instead, it is a space where - more precisely - the reader's eye moves, contributing to the formation of narrative writing as a form of print⁽¹⁹⁾.

This textual space is the space occupied by the writing itself, considering it as typographic characters on the paper. It includes the design of the cover, the placement of margins, the organization of chapters, changes in printing fonts, and the formatting of titles⁽²⁰⁾. Therefore, the types of fonts, title formats, lines, and empty spaces constitute a part of the fabric of the textual space for any text.

If textual thresholds represent the first visual stimulus for reading, the typographic form and the various connotations it produces are equally important. The significance of linear evidence (writing) has been affirmed with the emergence of Gestalt theory, which attempted to establish perceptual data through visual stimuli. They argue that the world and images impose their structures on the observing self⁽²¹⁾.

¹³) See: Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics and Interpretation*, same reference as above, pp. 36-37.

¹⁴) Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics (Concepts and Applications)*, same reference as above, p. 91.

¹⁵) Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics and Interpretation*, same reference as above, p. 78.

¹⁶) See: Daniel Chandler, *Foundations of Semiotics*, same reference as above, p. 69.

¹⁷) Saïd Benkrad, *Semiotics and Interpretation*, same reference as above, pp. 81-82."

¹⁸) Qatous, Bassam: *Reading Strategy, Rooting and Critical Procedure*, 1st edition, Irbid, Jordan, Hammadah Foundation and Dar Al-Kindi, 1998, p. 36.

¹⁹) Hamid Lhmidani, *Structure of the Narrative Text*, Arab Cultural Center, 1st edition, Morocco, 1991, p. 13.

²⁰) Michel Butor, *Research in the New Novel*, translated by: Farid Antonius, 1st edition, Dar Oweidat, Beirut, 1971, p. 122.

²¹) Mohammed Al-Makri, *Form and Discourse (An Introduction to Phenomenological Analysis)*, 1st edition, Casablanca, Morocco, Arab Cultural Center, 1995, p. 18.

Hence, the typographic form has taken on a broader space in creative writings, representing a deeper interpretive dimension for the readers. The traditional form of font design is no longer merely about lines but has evolved into a new space for visually embodying meaning. Writing has become a semiotic subject, as it is a signifying structure that can be defined, regulated, and represents its relationships⁽²²⁾. This implies that writing, in this context, adheres to the principle of self-contained signification. It operates as a closed structure, intensified within itself, seeking to produce its meanings without resorting to an external logic governing it. Thus, we find that this writing space exhibits various aspects from one writer to another, from one creator to another. Some of the visual formatting features include:

Firstly: Iconic Expressive Symbols:

Previously, the literary text used to convey emotional states, such as joy, anger, love, and smiles, through vocabulary and words (within the dialogue texts) or the descriptive sentence (within the narrative text). However, with the advent of social forums, expression has evolved to involve symbols that consist of specific letters, shapes, brackets, and dots. These symbols form artificial icons through the keyboard, indicating universally recognized emotional meanings, such as a symbol denoting a smile or indicating sadness and distress⁽²³⁾. Then, with the emergence of social media networks, pre-made smiling and sad faces appeared, as well as others indicating confusion and astonishment, among other icons that denote emotional states. Upon examining conversations in social media communities, it becomes apparent that these communities are characterized by the use of symbols and a language unique to them, consisting of signs and symbols employed to express individuals' psychological states and facial expressions⁽²⁴⁾.

Therefore, expressive symbols are extensively utilized by the youth, primarily due to their convenience, distinguishing them from verbal symbols, as they offer time-saving, effort-saving, and an avenue for expressing all that we feel⁽²⁵⁾. They play an active role in bringing the interacting parties closer to reality, making the user feel like they are directly communicating with the person on the other end. Communication through facial expressions or the diverse array of facial symbols is closer to the concept of personal or face-to-face interaction in terms of embodiment on social media platforms. For instance, on Facebook, where the user's body and facial features are absent, this absence is compensated for by images representing symbols conveying their emotional state during communication, specifically images of facial expressions⁽²⁶⁾. Expressive faces stand out for their simplicity and attractiveness. They condense time and effort, providing an easy means of expressing emotions and thoughts that words may struggle to convey⁽²⁷⁾. In reality, these symbols come to fill a gap. In traditional writing, there is time for crafting expressions, making personal situations clear. A message written quickly on the network, lacking the usual courteous phrases, can easily appear dry or rude. However, a smiling symbol can easily soften the situation⁽²⁸⁾. These smiling faces or emotional icons were introduced to compensate for the network's lack of facial expressions and gestures. They serve as an auxiliary means to convey some basic facial expressions. However, their semiotic role is limited, and they may lead to a serious misunderstanding of the user's intention⁽²⁹⁾. Expressive symbols

²²) Mohammed Al-Makri, *Form and Discourse (An Introduction to Phenomenological Analysis)*, p. 87.

²³) Abdel Azim Suleiman, "The Internet and the Language of Dialogue and Chat," *Journal of Humanities*, Issue 12, Summer 2006, pp. 118-119.

²⁴) Hanan Al-Mazoughi, "The Virtual World and Its Impact on the Formation of Adolescents' Social Identity," *Journal of the College of Arts and Media*, Issue 1, 2015, p. 159.

²⁵) Khadija Zitouni and Fatima Al-Zahraa Hadbawi, "The Impact of Using Expressive Symbols on Social Media Language: Facebook as a Model," *Master's Thesis, Mohammed Boudiaf University, M'sila*, p. 58.

²⁶) Khadija Zitouni, Fatima Al-Zahraa Hadbawi, "The Impact of Using Expressive Symbols on Facebook Language: A Model," p. 59.

²⁷) Khadija Zitouni, Fatima Al-Zahraa Hadbawi, "The Impact of Using Expressive Symbols on Facebook Language: A Model," p. 62.

²⁸) See: David Crystal, "Language and the Global Information Network," translated by Ahmad Shafeeq Al-Khatib, *National Center for Translation*, 2010, p. 55.

²⁹) See: David Crystal, "Language and the Global Information Network," p. 52.

possess several characteristics, contributing to their widespread use in communication among the youth on Facebook. Among these characteristics is their embodiment of meanings, ideas, and emotions. They not only convey meaning but also reinforce messages, impart expressive features onto the text, and transcend direct linguistic meanings⁽³⁰⁾.

These expressive symbols can assist in specific situations by encouraging openness and reducing the sender's need for introductions, explanations, and details. Arabic novels have benefited from these expressive symbols in various areas, particularly concerning visual representation. They come to form a decorative element, mitigating the intensity of the narrative and preventing monotony for the recipient, in addition to their other roles. When examining the novel "Antha Aftariya" (Virtual Female), we find that the novelist specified the means of communication as text messages (SMS), messenger (referring to the messaging box), and chat room. It's as if he aims to enhance our emotions as we follow the protagonists, challenging traditional narrative tools. Perhaps in his use of digital iconic symbols and their technological impact, he shapes the role of the recipient⁽³¹⁾.

Expressive symbols occupied a space within the textual landscape of the novel "Antha Aftariya" (Virtual Female), adding aesthetic value alongside their expressive and semantic significance. In many instances, they served as substitutes for text, especially in dialogues, offering an alternative in the textual space. Expressive symbols in the novel "Antha Aftariya" appeared in two forms:

1. Iconic Form.
2. Textual Form.

In the iconic form, which this chapter specifically examines within the textual and visual context, expressive symbols in the novel "Antha Aftariya" manifested in the following manner: "I sent her an expressive image that you usually receive from a friend, with a caption underneath it: 'In Europe, they prefer tall women because they are attractive. In Asia, they prefer short women because they are playful. In the Arab world, they prefer employed women even if they suffer from polio...!' Accompanied by a manufactured smiley face, a yellow expressive face, and next to it, I sent..."⁽³²⁾.

It is noticeable that the icon represents a state of "smiling," which aligns with the humor of the message sent by one of the individuals. The smile in the response message is fitting with the nature of the message and, in the roles it played, had a visual impact contributing to visual representation and breaking the monotony of the written dialogue. This can be illustrated in a passage from the novel "Antha Aftariya" (Hypothetical women) when Mazen posted: "Even feelings are bought nowadays. Isn't waiting and yearning the bill of love! I sent him a message saying: Do you think you paid it alone? Painful if that's the case... He replied: I'm not selfish or narcissistic, but I'm not sure about the extent of participation." He teased and left a yellow expressive face at the end of the message, with his tongue sticking out⁽³³⁾.

An indication of teasing.

In the novel "Love at First Click," expressive symbols appeared, as exemplified by:

- He writes to her: "Damn you, are you flirting with me...?"
- She smiles⁽³⁴⁾.

And as examples of that also:

- "She sends him a smiling emoji..."

³⁰) See: Zitouni, Khadija, and Hadbawi, Fatima Al-Zahraa, "The Impact of Using Expressive Symbols on Social Media Language: Facebook as a Model," p. 33.

³¹) Khadija Zitouni, Fatima Al-Zahraa Hadbawi, Diana Al-Rahil, "The Game of Narration and Language Prowess in 'Antha Aftariya' by Fadi Al-Mawaj," Al-Dustour Newspaper, Jordan, 24/2/2017.

³²) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khadir, "Virtual Female," 1st edition, Oman, Dar Al-Fada'at, 2016, p. 56.

³³) Al-Khadir, Fadi Al-Mawaj, "Virtual Female," pp. 86-87.

³⁴) Nomaar, Maryam Nareeman, "Love at First Click," 1st edition, Beirut, Dar Al-Farabi, 2016, p. 39.

then two red blushing emojis..."⁽³⁵⁾ .

Expressive symbols appeared in another part of the novel:

"Once, he sent her a red rose, and mistakenly, she replied with a sad emoji. Then, she corrected the situation and wrote, 'I mean with a smiling emoji'⁽³⁶⁾.

In the novel "Memory of the Shadow," expressive symbols appeared, as exemplified by:

"I welcome my guests, observe them, and scrutinize their expressions. I express nothing to them except a welcoming smile"⁽³⁷⁾.

The researcher discerns the significant impact that expressive symbols have in the realm of visual representation. It forms a clear and distinct aspect of the evolution and innovation that accompanied the emergence of social media networks, transferring from them to Arabic novels. It has become an integral part of the visual representation features in these novels.

Secondly: Whiteness of Lines (Ellipsis Points):

This is the shortest in length, the deepest in implication, and the most prevalent form of whiteness in our narrative texts. It allows for the exploration of meaning in moments of silence and deepens the question and perspective. It is the whiteness that permeates the writing itself to express things omitted or left unspoken within the lines⁽³⁸⁾.

**From here, we find that the deployment of whiteness by the narrative self is a deliberate act at the level of the text body, exercising its multiple functions. Whiteness of lines takes various forms, appearing as consecutive dots in one or more lines or leaving a non-dotted space with a line break between two different expressions. The ellipsis points serve various roles, including linguistic economy, abbreviation, and condensation. They entice the recipient to search for the concealed, attempt to fill in the gaps, and postpone the meaning to confirm the recipient's role in continuation and harmony. Moreover, they play a clear visual role, opening up a new visual horizon. The use of ellipsis points has proliferated, particularly on social media networks, turning texts into a collection of points, whether for deletion or non-deletion, making it a distinctive feature. Arab novels expressing social media influences have been influenced by such features in deletion and white spaces, and meticulously crafted novels are filled with this characteristic. An example of this can be found in the novel "Antha Aftariya" (hypothetical women)

"Zahra, the voice of the jailer:

A visit to the prisoner, Rabia..."⁽³⁹⁾ .

It's as if the ellipsis points are an expression of temporal extent and auditory emptiness, representing a characteristic of writing in social media networks. They serve as an indicator of innovation in visual representation and textual space. This is evident in the same novel:

➤ "Saba..."

➤ **Rabia!!"(Spring)**⁽⁴⁰⁾.

The ellipsis (...) often suggests longer speech, or a complex and sometimes inexplicable statement, and occasionally it doesn't represent language at all, but rather a mere gesture. In another instance from the novel "Antha Aftariya," the novelist frequently follows many sentences or paragraphs with ellipsis points, as seen in the end of a paragraph:

³⁵) Nomaar, Maryam Nareeman, "Love at First Click," p. 46.

³⁶) Maryam Nareeman Nomaar, "Love at First Click," p. 84.

³⁷) Fathiya Ben Faraj, "Memory of the Shadow," 1st edition, Dar Fada'at for Publishing and Distribution, Tunisia, 2016, p. 26.

³⁸) Hamid Lahmoudani, "The Structure of Narrative Text," p. 58.

³⁹) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, "Virtual Female," p. 126.

⁴⁰) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, "Virtual Female," p. 266.

"I preferred to leave my mark before your eyes. Should I leave it to chance to act? I am one of those who don't look at their schedules when it comes to the need of one soul to touch another soul, wiping away the dust of isolation..."⁽⁴¹⁾.

And at the end of the message: "The important thing is that my disappointment is not linked to a scratch on my image in the frame of your eyes..."⁽⁴²⁾.

Ellipsis points appeared in the title of the novel "Love at First Click...", allowing the reader to open the door of imagination. Another example is:

"So, which one will you choose, O virtual being..."⁽⁴³⁾.

"We find it also in the novel 'Memory of the Shadow' as follows:

"They left no matter untried with me, even rape, they repeated it with me, but its impact was much lighter than what had passed..."⁽⁴⁴⁾.

"If (the whiteness of lines) existed in Arabic novels before, it has now transitioned to form a clear presence and an indication of social media networks in Arabic literature. Drawing these connotations from the requirements of networks that necessitate linguistic economy, brevity, and conciseness, it adapts to the conditions of sitting in front of a computer screen and the rapid fatigue that requires abbreviation. The Arab novelist turned his attention to this feature, moving it from networks to the novel."

"Thirdly: Diversity in Fonts

Linear formation is considered one of the prominent aspects in contemporary discourse, whether it be poetic or narrative, as it has evolved alongside its development. It was a crucial pillar, providing discourse with its visual form and the associated values of formation, expression, and symbolism. This has led contemporary writers to excel in structuring their texts with visual models, guiding them towards emotional engagement and mental interaction. This is particularly true after recognizing the significance of linear structure. Contemporary writing relies on the reader's ability to perceive the text by considering the shapes and sizes of letters and the spaces between them. In other words, the visual element controls the recipient's perception and the communication process with the creator, especially as it deviates from the conventional norms. Consequently, the reader's attention is divided between understanding the form of writing and comprehending the meaning conveyed in the discourse."⁽⁴⁵⁾.

"The novelist employed four types of fonts in 'Virtual Female.' He chose 'Arabic Typesetting' for the narrative, 'Deco Type Nasch variants' for internal monologues, 'Arabic Typesetting (Bold)' for messages and external dialogues, and 'Traditional Arabic' for memoirs. These strategies contributed to diversification and visual shaping, adding a new dimension to the textual or written space. Surely, this diversity in fonts has its reasons and causes. When examining the novel's narrative style, it is identified as belonging to novels rooted in poetic language that uses imagery as a tool to convey a substantial amount of emotion to the reader. It often serves as an incentive for the reader to be drawn towards exploring the visual structures and the aesthetics of the descriptive language used in it, deviating from following the narrative thread. The novelist intensifies diversity in visual language, especially in monologues and dialogues, making font variation a tool that enables the reader to trace the narrative thread and connect events in the novel. An example of this diversity is when the novelist uses different fonts to facilitate the reader's understanding of the novel, identify the speaker in the narrative, and this diversity is evident in 'Virtual Female,' as he diversified the fonts as follows:"

"The font used for narration:

Her anger grew with each poem that left its signature on the margin of her text; comments from her friends that meant nothing to you compared to the significance of this text, casting feelings of betrayal upon you. Here, the novelist shifts to internal dialogue (monologue):

⁴¹) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, "Virtual Female," p. 11.

⁴²) Ghadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, "Virtual Female," p. 35.

"Many times, a person you expected to be the keeper of your happiness disappoints you, and the disappointment is a spiritual blow that strikes us, causing the soul to plummet to the depths like a stone thrown into a well..."

Returning to the narrative:

She seized the opportunity for a conversation to rebuke her, wanting to extinguish the fire of the heart ignited by the fuel of her words, transforming it into coldness and peace.

Your reprimand was received with the evasion of a woman.

The character begins external dialogue and messages, using this font:"

"It is madness to think that I write my texts with a specific intention! Never, this is not my way⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Considering the interest of many users on social networking sites in ensuring that the topics they publish achieve higher rates of likes, followers, and engagement, we find that Arabic novels, especially those addressing universal human themes, have emerged to captivate readers on one hand and form material that many of these users can benefit from in what they intend to publish on the other hand. Whether through emulation, incorporation, or selective extraction, the novelist has noticed this and made diversification in writing styles - be it in types or sizes - a new function aimed at attracting readers to some texts that the novelist wishes to highlight and promote."

The researcher observes that intentional diversification in the lines of the novel serves an enticing function, tempting readers to delve into the narrative content due to its diversity and lack of adherence to a fixed pattern that remains unchanged. The allure lies in encouraging continued reading, as each type of line compels the reader towards the narrative style it presents. For instance, the style of quotations and dialogues entices the reader to follow and makes the boundaries of the distinct line an opportunity to penetrate emotions. This is because the clarity of its beginnings and endings forms a cohesive structure of logical and emotional discourse, addressing both the mind and the heart. Furthermore, the novelist has deliberately chosen several sections or expressions in the novel that deviate – in size or type – from the rest of the lines used, serving as a signal that the selected text is worthy of publication on online social networking sites. It may achieve popularity and dissemination due to its aesthetic content and robust narrative style.

Fourth: The Use of Bold Font:

The application of bolding on individual words, lines, or paragraphs serves specific symbolic roles. The author aims to achieve functions such as drawing attention, directing focus, or forming a symbolic key that allows tracing a thread within the narrative or text. It also imparts necessary importance to certain words or phrases, considering them as having special intensifying value. The use of this technique has been evident in the researched novels. Examples include the novel "Virtual Female," where the novelist opted to make the first word of each narrative event at the top of the page bolded in dark black. Instances of this include words such as "ksera" (broken)⁽⁴⁷⁾, "bukhta" (with steps)⁽⁴⁸⁾, "areet" (naked)⁽⁴⁹⁾, "istaath" (replaced)⁽⁵⁰⁾, and so forth.

In the novel "Love at First Click," the novelist employed the use of bold font in several instances. An example of this is when the author wrote, "He decided to set aside colors, leaving the paper blank, and went to the window of his room to contemplate the cityscape before entering his other life. That wall would ask him again: What are you thinking, and how do you feel?"⁽⁵¹⁾. From the same novel, the following passage is also found: "He remembered, while drawing her one day, saying to her: 'Meaning has a beautiful melody, and in front of all languages, I hear you each time in a language different from

⁴⁶) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, Virtual Female, p. 43.

⁴⁷) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, Virtual Female, p. 13.

⁴⁸) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, Virtual Female, p. 23.

⁴⁹) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, Virtual Female, p. 130.

⁵⁰) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, Virtual Female, p. 208.

⁵¹) Maryam Noreiman Noumar, Love at First Click, p. 27.

the other."⁽⁵²⁾. The parallel texts in the beginnings of the chapters are highlighted in bold font as seen in: "Nothing Matters (⁵³)," "Love at First Click (⁵⁴)," "Somnophobia (⁵⁵)" ... and so forth.

Fifth: Vertical Writing:

The novelists deliberately employed vertical writing, meaning "utilizing the page in a partial manner concerning the layout, such as placing the writing to the right, in the center, or on the left, and consisting of short lines." This is a characteristic reminiscent of social media networks and their conversations through chat rooms, which have allowed users the freedom to innovate in textual forms⁽⁵⁶⁾. The text exhibits variation in its body and orientation. It transitions from the natural form represented by linear writing that starts from the right and ends on the left, to an innovative form prompted by specific motivations—vertical writing. This reflects an emotional state, a particular music, and a linguistic rhythm conveyed by the upward movement from the top to the bottom of the page through sentences of varying lengths. It seems to harmonize with the emotional flow, stretching at times and fading away at others.

This style has become prevalent in writing, especially in free verse poetry, where poets exploit a portion of the page, and the lengths of lines in free verse vary based on the emotional flow that concludes each line.

Returning to the novel "Virtual Female," we find that the novelist has employed this type of writing, approaching the language and form of poetic expression. A narrative passage that leaned towards this writing style is as follows:

The "Sheen" is a lip,

The "Noon" is a throat,

The "Fa'a" is a mouth,

We used to learn until we were engulfed in it, unable to resist, and we do not surrender⁽⁵⁷⁾.

It is also mentioned:

"I was also your captive,

Half for you,

And my other half for you."⁽⁵⁸⁾

This type of writing appears in the novel "Love at First Click" as follows:

"In assumption, she confesses her love... I love him!

And in reality, she denies it...

I don't love him!"⁽⁵⁹⁾

And in the novel "Memory of the Shadow":

"I love beauty for the sake of your name."

"I love the sands for the sake of lines,

And I love men for the sake of your sex."⁽⁶⁰⁾

⁵²) Maryam Noreiman Noumar, Love at First Click, p. 46.

⁵³) Maryam Noreiman Noumar, Love at First Click, p. 15.

⁵⁴) Maryam Noreiman Noumar, Love at First Click, p. 21.

⁵⁵) Maryam Noreiman Noumar, Love at First Click, p. 63.

⁵⁶) Hamid Lhamaidani, Narrative Text Structure, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁷) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, Virtual Female, p. 130.

⁵⁸) Mariam Nureiman Numar, Love at First Click, p. 284.

⁵⁹) Mariam Nureiman Numar, Love at First Click, p. 48.

⁶⁰) Fatiha bin Faraj, Memory of the Shadow, p. 84.

The narrative segment visually opens with very short sentences, closer to the form of free verse poetry. This usage aims to capture the reader's attention and implicitly invites them to engage in the act of reading when intrigued by these short and sometimes truncated sentences.

From this, we can conclude that the pages of the novel "Virtual Female" feature diverse forms of written expression. The lines of the novel are not of equal lengths but rather varied. However, it is noteworthy that the novelist tends to favor short sentences over long ones, emphasizing the profound implications carried by this type of structure. This approach draws the narrative closer to visual poetry.

The researcher observes that the factor contributing to the brevity of sentences is the descriptive element that appeared in the novel's articulations. This description interacts with the narrative in an alternating and intertwining movement, providing the narrative with a distinct aesthetic that distances it from monotony and prevents the reader from experiencing boredom. As description is a prominent feature of the studied novels, it is natural for sentences to be concise. This is because description relies on nominal sentences, while narration depends on verbal sentences. Consequently, nominal sentences tend to be shorter compared to verbal sentences, which require a subject, a verb, and an object, sometimes supplemented with elements like conditions and distinctions.

The inclination towards concise and condensed nominal sentences is justified due to the nature of these novels, which explore a digital or virtual world represented by social media networks. This world is characterized by brevity, condensation, and speed according to various requirements, including adherence to writing rules on platforms like Facebook, where posts should be short, and the status is brief. Similarly, Twitter necessitates the reduction of characters.

Since these novels address platforms like Facebook, they adhere to the linguistic usage in this virtual world. This usage demands brevity and conciseness because writing on screens—whether on a mobile or phone screen—requires compression. People typically write while sitting or standing, unlike writing with a pen and paper, which doesn't necessitate such compression and doesn't induce the same fatigue and exhaustion caused by screen-based writing.

Fifth: Typographical Richness

David Crystal, in his discussion of the language used in chat rooms, notes that what distinguishes this language is its typographical richness. This richness allows users a wide range of formatting options that far exceed the choices available in other mediums⁽⁶¹⁾. It is exemplified in the following:

Repetition of Letters:

There is another pattern of online communication characterized by spaces between letters, the use of uppercase letters, symbols, and repetition of letters, such as (aaaahhhh), or the repetition of punctuation marks like (no more!!!!, hiiii, oooops, sooo). This repetition of punctuation marks is one aspect of the influence of the internet on the English language, aiming to achieve specific communicative goals⁽⁶²⁾. Or to express a certain emotional state. All these features have become distinctive elements for communication across the blue space. There is also feedback with features of speech such as (Um M M M)⁽⁶³⁾.

Both fragmentation, multiplicity, and repetition are features accompanying the writing in the post-computer and internet era, including social media networks.

In the novel "Virtual Female," the repetition of letters appears as a visual formatting feature when she inquires about the magazines "World of Knowledge" and "World of Thought." Surprised, she asked

⁶¹) Iman Younis, *The Impact of the Internet on the Forms of Creativity and Reception in Arabic Literature*, Tel Aviv University, 2011, pp. 74-75.

⁶²) Issa Odeh Barhoma, *Transformations of the Arabic Letter on the Network (Internet) between the Symbolism of Cultural Identity and the Challenges of Globalization*, *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume (45), Number (1), 2018, p. 140.

⁶³) Issa Odeh Barhoma, *Transformations of the Arabic Letter on the Network (Internet) between the Symbolism of Cultural Identity and the Challenges of Globalization*, p. 182.

him about them, and he replied, "I meant my series 'World of Knowledge' and 'World of Thought,' which owe much to the Arab intellectual in shaping vast areas of his awareness and culture and are bestsellers in Kuwait." She responded with an emphatic "Ahaaaa."⁽⁶⁴⁾

In this word, the multiple occurrences of the letter "A" at the end are noticeable, reflecting compliance with the feature of letter repetition as one of the characteristics of writing in this blue space or as one of its distinctive features. It is worth noting that this repetition of the letter "A" after "Ha" (Ahaaa) carries a significance related to a state of reception, taking on a visual formatting function, and serving as a substitute for physical presence.

In the novel "Love at First Click," letter repetition is evident as follows:

"Sending him an engagement ring... Hahaha."⁽⁶⁵⁾

"Ummm, approximately, oh creature!!"⁽⁶⁶⁾

"He mocks her, hehehehehe"⁽⁶⁷⁾.

In the novel "Memory of the Shadow," as an example, not an exhaustive list:

"Assss ... Don't worry, it's me"⁽⁶⁸⁾.

2. Repetition of Punctuation Marks and Their Diversification:

Punctuation marks are not merely formal symbols confined to the surface structure of writing. They are "specific conventional signs between parts of speech, sentences, or words to clarify the positions of pauses and facilitate the process of understanding and comprehension" ⁽⁶⁹⁾. Punctuation marks have become essential for communication and the production of meaning hidden in the deep structure, from a structural and compositional perspective. From a phonetic perspective, they serve as spaces for silence, which may vary depending on the punctuation mark used, especially since punctuation marks "do not stand out as auditory cues (during reading), but their effect stands out as controlling intonation only" ⁽⁷⁰⁾.

By observing the space of social media networks, it becomes clear that there is a trend towards using punctuation marks minimally, especially in some email messages and chat groups ⁽⁷¹⁾. This is evident in the following ways:

A. Repetition of Question Marks and Exclamation Marks:

This is evident in the novel "Virtual Female" as follows:

✓ "Saba...

✓ Rabee' !!!" ⁽⁷²⁾.

The repetition of the exclamation mark serves as one of the visual formatting features in the novel.

Similarly, in the novel "Shadow's Memory," it appears as follows:

✓ "Did they turn me into another woman bleeding her memory in fragments???" ⁽⁷³⁾.

Here, we observe the use of question marks for the same purpose.

⁶⁴) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khudair, Virtual Female, p. 21.

⁶⁵) Mariam Nureiman Numar, Love at First Click, p. 38.

⁶⁶) Mariam Nureiman Numar, Love at First Click, p. 43.

⁶⁷) Mariam Nureiman Numar, Love at First Click, p. 94.

⁶⁸) Fatiha bin Faraj, Memory of the Shadow, p. 295.

⁶⁹) Omar Awkan, "Dalail al-Imla' wa Asrar al-Tarqim" (Indicators of Spelling and Secrets of Punctuation), 1st edition, East Africa, Tripoli, 2002, p. 103.

⁷⁰) Muhammad Al-Makari, "Al-Shakl wal-Khitab (Mudkhal li-Tahlil Zahiratay)", p. 240.

⁷¹) David Crystal, "Al-Lughah wa Shabakat al-Ma'limat al-'Alamiyah", p. 120-121.

⁷²) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khadir, "Untha Aftasiyah" (Virtual Female), p. 266.

⁷³) Fathia Ben Faraj, "Thakirat Al-Zill" (Memory of the Shadow), p. 310.

It seems that social media users are adopting a new way of using traditional punctuation marks, relying on repetition. This includes the repetition of traditional punctuation marks such as ellipsis (...) and commas (,,,), as well as the repetition of question marks like (????). Additionally, new symbols that were not part of the traditional punctuation system are being employed, such as (#) and others.

The repetition of punctuation marks extends to expressive questioning, as seen in examples like "What are you saying ?!?!?" and "Possible !!!!".

B. Variation in Question Marks and Punctuation:

As observed in the novel "Virtual Female," for instance:

" – Rabea (spring) !! " (⁷⁴).

" The world of knowledge and the world of thought ??? ... " (⁷⁵).

The variation in question marks and punctuation seems to serve the purposes that network users believe they achieve when using them. This is evident in expressing states of astonishment, shock, and contemplation, as using these marks has become a characteristic of the era. Carefully crafted novels employ this pattern of repetition and variation.

Examples include:

"This time is strange; how did it manage to turn the wall, which used to conceal our secrets, into an exhibition of our feelings and images?! " (⁷⁶).

In the novel "Love at First Click," it is presented as:

"And the dreams of young people trembled in their chests... ??? (⁷⁷).

And saying:

" He desires to tell her that a piece of him accidentally fell between her posts and comments, which he can't retrieve... he desires to tell her that she resembles him in something he doesn't know, and that he needs her !!!! " (⁷⁸).

"A man is like a piece of sugar; when touched by the surface of water, it dissolves and disappears forever...!!! " (⁷⁹).

The researcher discerns that Arab novels have adopted visual formatting features in two aspects: the conventional visual formatting and another aspect that has emerged as a result of social media networks. In conventional visual formatting, repetition is evident in the repetition of punctuation marks, letters, and consecutive dots within the white spaces between lines, as well as the use of familiar punctuation marks. The visual formatting resulting from social media networks includes typographic richness, manifested in word segmentation and the presence of non-linguistic symbols within the punctuation structure (such as hashtags, underscores, and others).

Social media networks have contributed to the emergence of a punctuation format represented by hashtags on one side and the repetition of question marks and exclamation marks on the other. The exclamation mark, in the narrative context, serves various emotional functions, affirming a constant state of emotion and astonishment as an inevitable result of the peculiar behaviors in this virtual world. Its presence highlights the element of surprise in notifications, situations, and character fluctuations, reflecting on their behavior through reactions with heart icons, likes, and others.

⁷⁴) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khadir, "Virtual Female," p. 266.

⁷⁵) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khadir, "Virtual Female," p. 20.

⁷⁶) Fadi Al-Mawaj Al-Khadir, "Virtual Female," p. 34.

⁷⁷) Maryam Noreman Noumar, "Love at First Click," p. 21.

⁷⁸) Maryam Noreman Noumar, "Love at First Click," p. 30

⁷⁹) Maryam Noreman Noumar, "Love at First Click," p. 30

The visual formatting features have taken various forms, sometimes appearing individually, at times repeated, and occasionally following after a question mark. This variety serves to transition the emotional state from surprise to a questioning tone tinged with amazement. It aims to simulate the strangeness that prompts perpetual questioning and legitimate inquiries in the realms of curiosity and wonder. Perhaps this adaptation is influenced by the space of social media networks, characterized by strangeness, volatility, and surprises. These punctuation marks emphasize the significance of perplexity, anxiety, and anticipation.

Conclusion

The study has yielded a series of results, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Iconic expressive symbols emerged as a renewing element, serving both as a supplementary and alternative factor to fulfill essential functions related to clarifying intended meanings. These symbols compensate for the absence of physical cues typically available in face-to-face communication. For instance, smiling and laughing faces convey one aspect, while angry, annoyed, or sad faces convey another. These symbols have become a parallel text, serving the function of expression and condensing many words and sentences.
2. Features such as diversity in fonts, the use of dark colors, vertical writing, and typographic richness were identified as characteristics of evolution and innovation in the analyzed narratives. These features distinguish them from traditional narratives, introducing a new dimension to the textual space.
3. Social media networks have introduced another type of character to Arabic narratives, namely the virtual persona. This character is temporary, its presence linked to the online network, lacking physical presence and often devoid of real features. It does not occupy a geographical space, assuming various ages, genders, and characteristics. Its data often does not align with real personal information, existing and living dually or multiply under network conditions. Its impact is evident through its written words and visible interactions on the screen.
4. Characters are no longer presented in the traditional manner through the author/narrator; instead, they are presented through two new methods. The first method, "static data method," involves the virtual character presenting itself through its online account, including information such as marital status, date of birth, place of residence, personal preferences, and psychological state. The second method, "interaction and status change method," reflects something about the character through changes in its status. Some characters undergo changes in their conditions based on their emotions and circumstances. The status (feeling tired, feeling optimistic, feeling sad) becomes a facet of character presentation, and the images displayed on the electronic page's wall indirectly provide features and information about the character's life.
5. Social media networks have given rise to a distinct lexicon, comprising the vocabulary associated with these platforms. They have impacted Arabic narratives at the levels of narrative elements, structure, and techniques. Additionally, language itself has been susceptible to the influence of these networks, leading to the emergence of what is known as "Arabizi," where Arabic words are written using letters, numbers, or symbols from English or French. The use of colloquial language has also become prevalent on social media networks.
6. Social media networks have influenced narrative styles, as storytelling has adapted and been significantly impacted by the technologies provided by these platforms. Narrative shifts occur based on the functionalities offered by social networks, such as "likes," comments, sharing, tagging, blocking, and others. Narratives are no longer continuous and extended; instead, they have become fragmented, relying on the segmentation of narrative sections based on the capabilities of social networks.

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