

Conference Report
Power to Connect in a Changing World: International Conference on Language, Literature and Translation, April 22- 25, 2014

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In a changing and complex world, the Arab region is witnessing unprecedented transformation on all fronts. The politics may be worrying and the economic conditions unsettling, yet this region has endured many tragedies and traumas in the past and survived all forms of hardship, not the least of which are its climate and natural environment. However, the greatest challenge for this region is how to cope with an ever-changing world in an era of instantly accessible, synchronous communication. How can this region deal with the ever-changing discourse, the ever-changing culture, the ever-changing need for interaction with others? In this context, the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Jordan held its conference **Power to Connect in a Changing World: International Conference on Language, Literature and Translation** between the 22nd and the 25th of April, 2014. The conference was organized by the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Jordan in collaboration with the Association of Professors of English and Translation in Arab Universities (APETAU) and Voices in Asia (VIA).

This conference explored issues of interconnectedness in a context of change in language, thought, and culture, and what they entail for the study of linguistics, literature and translation.

More than 70 scholars from more than 27 countries discussed various topics including language policy and globalization, intercultural communication and language change, multiculturalism in contemporary English literature, the impact of Edward Said on East/West dialogue, Arab/British, Arab/American writers, translation during conflicts, technology and translation, computer-assisted language learning, and teaching language and culture.

The conference featured renowned keynote speakers:

1. Professor Ellen Broselow, from The State University of New York at Stony Brook, presented evidence that both misperception and misproduction play a role in the insertion of vowels in foreign forms. Then, she proposed criteria that allow us to distinguish production errors from perception errors in loanword adaptation and second language acquisition

2. Professor Mats Oscarson, from Gutenberg University, described some of the work undertaken by the Council of Europe to promote linguistic diversity and language learning in member states. He believes that the results achieved are likely to have facilitated communication between citizens, thereby increasing their opportunities to connect across cultural and national boundaries, much in keeping with the declared aims of both the Council of Europe and the European Union. He also exemplified, and commented on, some other research and development activities that reflect a European language education perspective and pointed further useful sources of information of this nature.

3. Professor Wail Hassan, from The University of Illinois, suggested some ways of thinking about the role that translation could play in reconfiguring the study of Arabic, comparative, and world literature in the twenty-first century.

4. Professor Shihdeh Fareh, from The University of Sharja, argued for integrating discourse grammar in language teaching, and provided evidence to support the role that discourse grammar plays in developing foreign language learners' communicative competence.

5. Professor Muhammad Shahin, from The University of Jordan, discussed Edward Said's discourse and Tayeb Saleh's practice of postcolonial "Writing Back". He highlighted Said's remark that Arabs should "write back" with the perspective of language being both narrative and action so that their practice becomes, in his idiom, the "special discourse" of action. He also stressed Said's call for the emergence of a new historical consciousness which can help Arabs abandon the futile practice of writing to themselves and embrace, instead, a more effective manner of articulation. He explained that Said's celebration of Tayeb Saleh's enterprise is because it represents as an example of this postcolonial strategy he adopted.

The conference concluded by making the following recommendations:

1. Holding the conference on a regular basis.
2. Organizing a book exhibition concurrently with the conference.
3. Encouraging long term academic collaboration between the participants and their institutions.

Selected refereed papers of the conference will be published in a special volume of **International Journal of Arabic-English Studies (IJAES)**, the journal of The Association of Professors of English & Translation at Arab Universities (APETAU).