

Digital Literature and Social Media

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Abstract

The current research aims to clarify the impact that social media platforms have had on literary works in the digital age, and to clarify the aesthetic values presented by digital literature in the era of the information revolution, in addition to determining whether social media platforms have contributed to presenting a new literature that is completely different from the previous literature. To achieve the research objectives, the current research relied on the descriptive method by reviewing previous studies, scientific research, and books closest to the research field. The study found that digital literature was able to bring about a qualitative shift in literary texts, which represented a response to the comprehensive technological changes and developments, which was characterized by interactivity, communication, and harmony. The results also confirmed that the digital elements that were added to digital literary works through social networks and the multiple interactive techniques they provided did not change the linguistic structure of the literary text; rather, they represented complementary elements that support the aesthetic aspects of the works without affecting their content and essence, as digital interactivity is considered a formal characteristic rather than a structural characteristic of literary works.

Keywords: Literature, digital literature, social media, interactive literature

1.Introduction

The digital development witnessed in various fields and aspects of life has contributed to the introduction of the world into the so-called digital age, which was accompanied by many changes and developments that necessarily affected human thought, paths, and interactive tools. Since intellectual growth is linked to literary development and progress, it was necessary to produce literary models that are compatible with the current digital age to serve as creative ideas and contemporary productions that suit the nature of the changes taking place.

Digital literature is one of the main elements that emerged from the technological developments in contemporary society, which includes the expression of literary texts using technological digital media, including social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and others (Rahlahla, 2019, p. 537), as these means are considered one of the most prominent things that characterize contemporary society and contributed to real breakthroughs in communication and interaction levels between different individuals around the world (Abdelraheem, 2013).

Social media has contributed to influencing the patterns and behaviors of individuals, as well as enhancing the levels of interaction between different groups due to the features it offers to individuals, including interactivity, immediacy, participation, and others (Al-Hussein, 2016, p. 325). (Zenai, 2017) emphasized that the human being has become an integral part of the technological world, and this has necessitated the need to assimilate it and realize the contents of the resulting change within the digital revolution.

In this regard, Gharaibeh (2023, p. 422) explained that digital media contributed to the development and evolution of interactive digital literature, and contributed to the need to realize literature through the presentation of interactive digital novels, as the digital transformation contributed to changing the publishing industry after literary works and printed books dominated the market for literary works. Rahahleh (2019, p. 539) added that digital literature has given writers and authors the ability to present literary works with distinctive musical, kinetic and audio additions through the use of digital communication platforms. Digital literature has also given writers and thinkers the ability to sense readers' reactions to literary works within a few moments due to the features provided by social media platforms that overcome the temporal and spatial boundaries between individuals and different groups and cultures.

Therefore, the current research aims to clarify the impact that social media platforms have had on literary works in the digital age, clarify the aesthetic values of digital literature in the era of the information revolution, and determine whether social media platforms have contributed to presenting a new literature that is completely different from the previous literature.

1.1 Research Problem

The phenomenon of individuals and societies' use of social networking sites and electronic communication has grown, which resulted in the emergence of a new generation that no longer cares about traditional concepts of communication and interaction called the “Internet generation” or the “network generation”; it has become noticeably biased towards social media, including Twitter, Facebook, What Sapp, Instagram and other communication networks that offer many advantages, including instant and interactive communication (Al-Hussein, 2016, p. 327).

However, there is a difference between the views presented by researchers and critics regarding digital creations and the impact of modern technology on literary texts; a group of critics pointed out that the connection of literature with modern technology and technological communication means resulted in the presentation of new literature with new styles that fit the spirit of the contemporary digital age and the virtual human being lives within the digital virtual society, as indicated by Mohammed Sanajleh and Mohammed Islaim. However, there are different views from what has been presented, which argued that modern technology and the presentation of literary texts using modern means of communication and the electronic techniques and tools it includes did not abolish literature and did not change the genres of literature, as technology did not bring literature to this stage and did not diminish the value of literary productions; rather, it gave them an aesthetic status that enhances the level of reader interaction with the literary text and created a state of effective communication between both writer and reader (audience) (Sanajleh, 2008; Salman, 2008; Nasrallah and Younis, 2015; Rahahahleh, 2019).

Accordingly, the current research problem is to clarify the impact that social media platforms have had on literary works in the digital age, and to clarify the aesthetic values that digital literature has presented in the era of the information revolution, in addition to determining whether social media platforms have contributed to presenting a new literature that is completely different from the previous literature. Therefore, the current research problem can be summarized in the following question: How have social media platforms affected on Arabic literature?

This question is followed by a set of questions, including:

1. What is the aesthetic value of digital literature in the era of the information revolution?
2. What are the most prominent Arab digital literary models that have been inspired by the use of modern technology in presenting literary works?
3. How have social media platforms contributed to the creation of contemporary interactive literature?
4. Have social media platforms contributed to presenting a “new literature” that is different in its structure and nature from traditional literature?

1.2 Importance of the research

The importance of the research is evident in the following points:

1.The current research derives its importance from the importance of the research variables it addresses, including social media and digital literature, as social media is considered one of the most important pillars of communication and interaction in the modern era, due to its direct contribution to enhancing the levels of communication, interaction and participation between different groups and from different cultures and nationalities.

As for digital literature, it is considered a new concept introduced to the modern literary and linguistic system, which resulted from the technical and technological developments that occurred, which necessitates the need to research the transformations and changes brought about by technology on this particular concept.

2.The current research contributes to presenting Arabic digital literary models that were inspired by the use of modern technology in the presentation of literary works and clarifying the impact of these technologies in an attempt to understand the relationship between modern technologies and literary structures.

3.The current research contributes to clarifying the aesthetic values that social media, with its various techniques and tools, have contributed to highlighting in literary texts.

2.The current research opens the way for further studies and research that can be conducted in the specific research area, thus expanding the frameworks and concepts associated with the relationship between social media and contemporary digital literature.

1.3 Research Objectives

The current research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1.Clarify the aesthetic value provided by digital literature in the era of the information revolution.
- 2.Presenting the most prominent Arabic digital literary models that have been inspired by the use of modern technology in presenting literary works.
- 3.Identify how social media platforms have contributed to the creation of contemporary interactive literature.
- 4.Reveal whether social media platforms have contributed to presenting a “new literature” that is different in structure and nature from traditional literature.

2.Research methodology

In order to achieve the research objectives, the current research will rely on the descriptive method by reviewing previous studies, scientific research, and books closest to the research field. This method is concerned with describing the phenomenon, clarifying the related elements to it and describing it accurately, thus it is considered the most appropriate for the purpose of achieving the research objectives of the current research

3 .Theoretical framework

3.1 Digital Literature: Concept and Characteristics

There are many synonyms for the term “digital literature”, as a range of terms and concepts have emerged that are synonymous or interchangeable with this concept, including “interactive literature”, “digital literature”, “computer literature”, “electronic literature”, or “virtual literature”, all of which can be considered the same concept of digital literature (Adimi, 2024, p. 136).

Digital literature is defined as literature that relies on the binary digital format, which includes supporting texts with images, sounds and movements that reflect the content of the words; that is, the reader is not satisfied with just reading the text orally; rather, he can combine the audible, readable and visual aspects within one framework that reflects the digital nature of digital literature (Al-Hussein, 2016, p. 269).

Al-Breki (2007, p. 11) defined it as a type of literature that presents a new image that combines modern technology and ancient literature through the use of modern technology in order to present literary material, present and review it, which means that the literary material or literary text cannot be obtained digitally without relying on electronic media. Hamdawi (2016, p. 13) also defined it as literature capable of achieving the communicative function in a technical manner that achieves textual links using various interactive media.

According to Malal (2021, p. 4098), digital literature is the product of the developments brought about by modern technology. Hamdawi (2016) added that digital literature relies on the computer in writing, presenting and presenting the literary text so that it employs the creative element in all these stages, and that digital literature contributes to presenting texts in innovative and different forms, making the literary text the result of the relationship between the creative text and the possibilities offered by the various social communication media. On the other hand, Melhem (2013) argued that the technical medium has contributed to the modern aesthetics of literary texts by providing many opportunities and ways to formulate the literary text and present it in a distinctive manner, thus succeeding in creating a relationship between the word and the presentational

element, which can be considered essential elements to ensure the success of the literary work and give it a distinctive characteristic

This means that digital literature emerged and developed in a new way due to the technological changes that included all areas of life and relied on the use of modern technology in the virtual space, and this does not mean that this type of literature necessarily eliminates traditional classical literature; on the contrary, it is considered an extension of classical literature based on the oral and written presentation of literary material through traditional media such as newspapers, books, magazines and others (Adimi, 2019, p. 31).

Previous studies have unanimously agreed that there are many features that distinguish digital literature from traditional literature, which can be explained as follows (Al-Breki, 2007; Al-Hussein, 2016; Adimi, 2024):

- 1.Digital literature contributes to presenting the literary text in a creative and interactive manner, as it provides the ability for individuals to refer to it whenever needed without temporal and spatial restrictions.
- 2.Digital literature gives the reader a sense of ownership of the text and the ability to control it directly, thus giving special importance to the recipient who has been neglected in many cases in traditional texts.
- 3.The recipient can start at any point in the literary text.
- 4.Digital literature allows readers to communicate, interact, and dialog directly with each other through websites that display literary texts, which contributes to enabling others to discuss the texts, exchange views, and offer different interpretations of the same literary text.
- 5.The multiplicity of ways to communicate through digital literature, as a result of the multiplicity of modern means of available communication, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and other interactive means of communication.
- 6.Digital literature provides an opportunity for recipients to provide feedback related to literary texts, in most cases, the reader is given the opportunity at the end of the text to provide his opinion of the literary work, which is communicated directly to the writer, which enables him to store the views of the literary work and try to take into account all the observations and criticisms provided by readers in subsequent literary works.
- 7.Digital literature allows to motivate writers to work and produce, as the writer feels that there is an audience waiting for him to present everything new, as every writer has a platform through social media platforms such as Facebook, which he can use to present everything new and innovative for him.
- 8.Digital literature enables the literary stock to reach the audience very quickly, even almost instantaneously through interactive platforms, which enable the writer to know the value of his literary product through the comments received from the audience (readers and followers).

Through the above, digital literature can be defined as a new type of literature that emerged as a result of the technological development and seeks to present a new image of literature that necessarily depends on the combination of literature and technology, as access to it is linked to the use of a modern interactive medium, so that this type of literature is characterized by interactivity, communication, exchange of views between readers, and the ability to provide feedback to the writer based on the interactive conditions that can be provided through the reader.

3.2 Social Media: Origin and Concept

The history of the emergence of social networking sites dates back to 1995, when the first social networking site known as “classmates.com” appeared, which targeted American school students, as this site resulted in the division of American society into states and regions, so that all of them share this site. This site was followed by the emergence of another site in 1997 known as “SixDegrees.com”, which represented the beginning of the global openness between different countries, allowing individuals to communicate without concern for their ethnic and religious backgrounds and scientific affiliations, as this site included enabling individuals to create their profiles and send messages among themselves (Abdulkarim, 2016). This was

followed by the emergence of many different social networking sites between 1997 and 2000, all of which were based on websites.

After that, the second phase of the emergence of social networking sites known as “Web 2” began, which was directly related to the development of the services provided by the networks, primarily “friendster.com”, which allowed individuals around the world to form friendships and relationships. This was followed by the emergence of many sites such as skyrock.com, Myspace.com in 2003, and linkedin.com. After that, social media sites continued to develop and grow and witnessed a significant increase in the levels of demand for their use (Mohammed, 2017).

Social networking sites are defined as new methods in the digital world that allow individuals to communicate within the virtual community and share experiences and knowledge among them (Mansour, 2022). Hassan (2021) also defined it as a unit of electronic networks that enables individuals to create their own websites and personal pages, and allows them to communicate and interact regardless of place or time. (Gomez and Luna, 2024) explained that social networking sites allow the employment of communication techniques that enhance the levels of interaction between individuals, including voice, image, movement, and others.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of social networks and their important role in transforming the world into a small village capable of exchanging experiences, knowledge and ideas (Mohammed, 2017; Hassan, 2021; Mansour, 2022), as this reality allows users the ability to communicate and interact within the virtual community and present views on different and diverse issues that enhance users' experiences and knowledge of these issues. These sites also allow individuals to create friendships and diverse relationships without regard to race, gender, or color, and enable them to communicate with individuals and groups that are closest to them by joining groups that share specific common factors.

Social media sites can be divided according to their content and substance into the following (Hassan, 2021, p. 779):

- 1.Sites that allow people to chat asynchronously, which are sites that enable people to communicate at non-identical times such as Yahoo, Email.
- 2.Sites that enable individuals to create their own blogs that others can browse, utilize, and use, such as Twitter, WordPress, and Blogger.
- 3.Social sites that allow individuals to make friendships, relationships, and exchange files, photos, and texts in various forms, such as Facebook, Myspace, Instagram, and others.

Through the above, social media sites can be defined as social networks that allow individuals to communicate, interact, exchange views, and share images, texts, and files in a quick and direct manner without time and space restrictions. Social media sites are also a place where individuals can exchange ideas, experiences, and knowledge, thus contributing to expanding the intellectual framework of individuals and groups and benefiting from each other's experiences.

3.3 The aesthetic value that digital literature offers to the reader (audience)

Digital literature has introduced many aesthetic elements to literary texts, which is necessarily related to the technologies and possibilities offered by social media to its users, including multiple audio media, which gave the literary text an aesthetically creative aspect. The first attempt to exploit audio media in literary aspects was through the poet Isidore Isou in 1953, when he recorded the literary text without relying on writing, which represented the beginning of many subsequent audio recordings, as they were called “audible poems”, which were associated with video and audio recording devices. These audible poems were the first step in employing more electronic media in the process of recording literary texts (Al-Hussein, 2016, p. 272).

Digital literature also progressed in the means it relied on in presenting and submitting literary texts, as it first invested in the inclusion of sound and image elements, and then used second techniques including montage and decoration , in addition to the use of artificial intelligence techniques in many cases, and in this way the literary text became presented using various methods based on music, adding colors, visual images, and other technological techniques (Rahlalah, 2019, p. 538). Al-Hussein (2016, p. 273) pointed out that the first Arabic digital texts were used by the Iraqi poet Mushtaq Abbas, who relied on links, technical connections, and the technique of transcription through parallel texts.

Al-Baghdadi (2018, p. 13) and Al-Gharaibeh (2023, p. 431) pointed out that some of the most prominent digital elements that have been integrated with literary texts are:

1. **Hypertext:** It is represented by links, images and videos, enabling the reader to navigate between pages and interact with the content directly.
2. **Animated images:** These images add vitality to the texts when displaying the electronic text, so that it improves the reader's experience and adds a kind of interactivity to it.
3. **Video:** Video contributes to adding vitality and interactivity to electronic texts in a way that reflects positively on the reader's experience.

Digital literature has been able to employ communicative media within texts and literary works and allow these communicative media to blend with the texts and obtain aesthetic arts. For example, painting was integrated with digital texts to acquire aesthetic elements, and music was integrated with poetry to emphasize the emotional intimacy between them, as many poetic passages were materialized by introducing music into them, such as the materialization of many musical passages by Beethoven, including the “Symphony of Destiny”, which began with strong musical strokes that alerted the listener to the inevitability of destiny that humans could not face or try to stop (Al-Hussein, 2016, pp. 274-275).

Just as interactive social media has helped to generate digital literature, it is necessarily capable of enhancing the level of literary perception through the production of new interactive novels. Today, through the wide development of electronic applications through social media, digital literature is able to meet different literary tastes. On the other hand, digital literature has been able to bring about changes in the elements of literary production, including introducing new types of poetry and prose, and emphasizing brevity and omission in new literary works (Adfimi, 2024, p. 138).

3.4 The role of social media in creating interactive digital literature: Digital Literary Models

The communicative elements of individuals have witnessed many developments throughout history and civilizations. In the mythological era, communication between individuals was carried out in a naive manner without relying on any scientific or literary successors between individuals.

Then the theological age, came which was governed by a set of human perceptions and behaviors based on teleological systems, and then came the systems that were dominated by human rationalism that emerged due to scientific developments, until the current era (the technical age), which relies mainly on modern technique and technology, which resulted in a radical change in the communicative processes that take place between individuals to paralyze the communicative processes that take place between both man and machine (computer), where the machine became the direct alternative to digital culture in its traditional form, which resulted in modern digital literature (Zenai, 2017).

Technical and technological developments have contributed to the emergence of new concepts of literature based on the communicative elements of modern media, which resulted in a modern description of the digital nature of digital literature that affects all elements of the literary process, including the author, text and reader, which formed a creative triad that enabled the formation of literature in a digital form that is in line with the technical characteristics and style of digital writing based on modern social media (Malal, 2021, pp. 4098-4099). (Yadav, 2019) emphasized that digital literature uses technology to highlight creativity and innovation in presenting stories and modern trends of contemporary literary practices.

The following is a review of the most prominent social media that contributed to the creation of digital literature in the modern era (Yadav, 2019):

1. **Twitter:** Launched in 2006, Twitter is a social networking site that allows to share literary sentences through tweets that are interacted with by the audience (followers).
2. **E-books:** These are books in digital form that contain a collection of texts and images that are displayed on an electronic device or screen in an electronic way similar to the traditional way. The industry of buying and selling e-books first started in the late 1990s. In 2006, the Kindle was introduced, which allows for seamless and easy e-reading by providing hundreds of

titles. These books provide the reader with the ability to bookmark, backlit screen, and the ability to flip and scroll smoothly and easily.

3.YouTube: YouTube is currently one of the largest social media sites, with billions of daily active followers, with one billion hours of content watched every day from around the world. This site allows the user to share and publish articles and literary materials easily and smoothly, and allows the user to see the literary content in the appropriate sound and image, with the possibility of reviewing the content at a convenient time for the reader, in addition to the possibility of communication between people and exchanging views on literary texts.

4.Online journals and journal databases: Online journal databases host a wide range of journals and books in various disciplines, including literary disciplines, where users can access research papers for free or for a subscription fee. These journals allow writers and authors to publish their literary works quickly and easily through various electronic media, and readers can browse and follow these research papers, articles, and literary texts easily and quickly.

Thus, the interconnectedness between the literary and technological aspects has made it necessary for writers to utilize technology to present creative literary texts, as many pioneers of digital literature have emerged within digital Arabic literature, for example:

- The novel “Shadows of the Lover (The Secret History of Kamosh)” by the Jordanian writer Mohammed Sanajleh, which utilized multiple digital arts when presenting the literary text, including the use of links, sound, movement, music, and others (Kram, 2016).

- The poem “The Infinity of the Firewall” by Mushtaq Abbas Maan, in which the writer relied on the technique of discovery in textual structures to add an interactive and participatory element to the poem that is compatible with digital literary trajectories. In the poem, the author employs a range of technological techniques in the textual structures, including Hypertext, which gives the digital text visual and auditory elements that distinguish it from the verbal poetic text only, as this technique allows the reader to see moving and static panels and hear interactive music while reading written texts (Younis, 2012, p. 35).

This technology also provides the reader with the freedom to choose and navigate using the available links and icons without being restricted to a specific path (Malal, 2021, p. 4100).

When the reader enters the poem, the first thing he sees is an image of a clock that includes a set of Roman numerals that represent the key through which the reader can enter the poem, so that the name of the poem appears on the right of the screen when clicking on the middle of the clock, while the name of the poet appears on the left of the screen, as these moments are accompanied by musical clips that expand the reader's contemplative side and push him to build data that match the threshold of the poem.

Reflecting on these two Arabic digital works confirms that the writers have made a great effort in formulating the literary text (content) and the strength of its linguistic structure before employing digital technologies in it. This means that they were interested in the literary aspect before paying attention to the technical aspect in terms of links, sound, movement, music, etc., and that their introduction of the technical aspect was a complementary element to the creative aesthetic aspects while preserving the linguistic connotations and literary suggestions that are the main source of strength for these two works. The evidence for this is that the technical complementary elements that were added to these two works can be deleted without affecting the linguistic structure of the two literary works, or modifications can be made to them without affecting the structure and content of the literary work as well. Even the writer Muhammad Sanajla printed his novel (Shadows of the Lover) in paper form after making some modifications to it (Rahahla, 2019, 541). This confirms that the linguistic element is the most important in literary works, and that these contemporary technologies came to complement these works and add to them a creative aesthetic aspect that represents the response of writers and authors to contemporary developments and changes to achieve the required cohesion between the technical element and the distinctive literary aspect (Nasrallah and Younis, 2015).

From the above, it is noted that digital literature is much faster than the literature of ancient times in terms of spread and creativity, as it was able to overcome the barriers of time and place, and enabled writers to publish thousands of new literary creations that are circulated through various platforms on the Internet, thus enabling them to reach the potential audience very

quickly, in addition to the possibility of obtaining reactions and special comments from readers in the form of likes, shares and comments that reach the writer directly.

Conclusion

The current research addressed the topic of digital literature, which is considered one of the contemporary productions in the Arab literary arena, which results from the use of modern technology in a way that provides the reader with many interactive features using movement, images and sound, resulting in an interactive creative text that carries a special aesthetic that can be used between different types of genres and literary works, including digital novels, digital plays, digital poems and others.

Digital literature has been able to bring about a qualitative shift in literary texts that represented a response to comprehensive technological changes and developments, which was characterized by interactivity, communication, harmony and many other features. The digital literary field is a fertile field that is still witnessing many developments and changes. It is a field that is capable of continuous growth and renewal according to the surrounding changes. Through the current research, a set of results can be concluded:

1. Digital literature responded to the social need resulting from technical changes and technological developments.
2. Digital literature is considered an extension of traditional literature.
3. Digital literature has transcended the boundaries of cultural practices and contributed to motivating writers to open up their minds and keep pace with everything new, which is likely to be reflected in contemporary literary and poetic works, acquiring the features of contemporary technical development.
4. Social media have represented tools that facilitated the publication of literary works and their delivery to their followers.
5. The digital elements that were added to digital literary works through social networks and the multiple interactive technologies they provide did not change the linguistic structure of the literary text; rather, they represented complementary elements that support the aesthetic aspects of the works without affecting their content and essence, as digital interactivity is considered a formal characteristic and not a structural characteristic of literary works.
6. Digital literature contributes to creating a harmonious interactive and communicative relationship between the writer, the reader and the text, as the nature of this relationship can be controlled through the various interactive media available through social media.

Therefore, social media has represented a means for writers and literary figures to spread Arabic literature in an unconventional way, as these communication networks have forced writers to adapt to them as they are a product of the technological revolution, but - according to the researcher's point of view - they have not contributed to the production of a new literature; rather, they have represented a renewal in the methods of presenting texts and literary works, and they are certainly consistent with the technological changes and developments, as digital literature has not abandoned the known literary genres and has not changed the literary structures; rather, it has given literary texts new features that are compatible with modern technologies, meaning that digital literature has formed a functional relationship with modern technology.

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