

Problems in Characterizing the Arabic Letter in Advertising Design

(Typography – calligraphy – lettering)

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Introduction

The advent of the digital age has contributed to the existence of a major problem in differentiating between the terms typography, calligraphy, and lettering. This problem is due to the possibility of using a computer in each of them separately, so it has become difficult for non-specialists in the field of typography to differentiate between these terms. For example, handwritten letters can be entered on a computer, refined, digitized, and converted into a font. That font looks like a font that was already created by hand. The lack of specialized Arabic studies that discuss this problem, motivated this research to study the intertwining and confusion between the related concepts in Characterizing the Arabic letter in ads design. This research represents the different functions of typography, calligraphy, and Arabic lettering according to the functional and aesthetic goals that the designer wants to achieve.

The researcher dealt with the three terms by studying the concept, the historical emergence, the used tools, the work stages, and the most famous artists, leading to the study of the function of each of them in the design. The researcher found essential differences between the three terms, starting from the historical origin to function and use. The designer's knowledge of the terms associated with the Arabic letter helps him achieve the functional and aesthetic goals of the design.

Keywords

Research Problem

The Great progress in the digital age caused a major problem in differentiating between the terms calligraphy, typography, and lettering. This problem is due to the possibility of using a computer in each of them separately, so it has become difficult for non–specialists in the field of typography to differentiate between these terms. The research problem can be formulated in the following questions:

- How can the concepts associated with the Arabic letter be disentangled, and differentiated between them, because of their importance in advertising design?
- How does the function of typography, calligraphy, and Arabic lettering differ in advertising design?

Research Objectives

- Shedding light on the problems associated with the terminology associated with the description of the Arabic letter in the advertising design.
- Studying the function of typography, calligraphy, and in advertising design.

Research hypotheses

The research assumes that the designer's knowledge of the terminology associated with the Arabic letter helps him achieve the functional and aesthetic goals of using letters in design.

Research Methodology

The research follows the descriptive and inductive methodology to ensure the validity of the research hypotheses.

The theoretical framework of the research:

First: Typography:

Concept: Typography is derived from the Greek words “typos” meaning “form” and “graphia” meaning writing. Typography includes fonts, type size, line length, letter, word spacing, and visual composition of letters in design.

Function and use: The function of typography has evolved to include the art of designing letters, whether it is a font design (type design), writings in a logo, or typographic elements within the design within any advertising media.



Figure (1) shows a school (Silkscreen) using typography



Figure (2) shows an Iranian poster for the 26th Tehran International Book Fair in typography

Second: Calligraphy:

Concept: Calligraphy means in Greek the art of writing letters, which is one of the visual arts associated with writing using any of the writing tools.

Function and use:

It was used in the past in writing the Qur'an and important documents. Recently, it is used in advertising design, printing, branding design, writings in newspapers, and magazines, and designs that are related to the Arab identity.



Figure (3) shows the logo of Al-Jazeera news channel using Diwani font



Figure (4) shows the logo of the official Saudi Tourism Account

Third: Arabic Lettering

Concept: The concept of free visual formation of the Arabic letter (Arabic Lettering) is related to breaking the base of the letter in order to distinguish the letters of a specific sentence or word from the rest of the words. Where the designer designs a specific set of letters, not the entire alphabet, and this is done either based on pre-prepared alphabets or a free formation linked to the designer's own vision.

Lettering can be studied from two different approaches:

- **First entrance:** (Art form- Letter Forming).
- **Second entrance:** The art of drawing letters (the **letter**).

Function and use:

First entrance: Creating forms that depend on Arabic lettering as a material for formation, in which the letter loses its structure. In this case, the letters are either legible and retain their verbal significance, or they are legible to a degree that is not clear to the viewer and this mostly appears in artworks. Sometimes we need to write the phrase or word again to confirm its clarity to the viewer when used in the field of advertisements.

Second entrance: It aims to break the rules of the letter in a different, expressive, and appropriate manner to the context in order to reach an integrated artistic and functional work. It can be used as a slogan in a poster, advertising campaign, movie posters,

logos, book covers, magazines, novels, headlines in magazines, books, and multimedia.



Figure (5) shows the cover of the book "The Most Beautiful Folk Tales" inspired by Mamluk calligraphy designed by Helmy El-Tuni

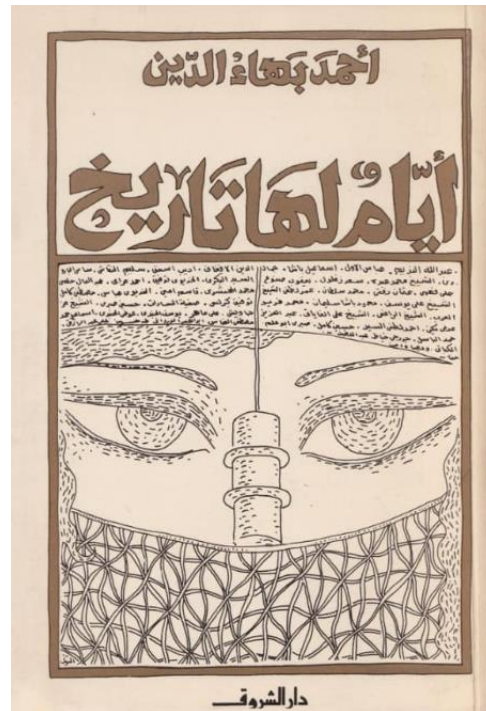


Figure (6) shows the cover of the book "Days Have a History", designed by Helmy El-Tuni, inspired by Mamluki calligraphy

Research results

- The need to distinguish between the interlocking concepts related to the Arabic letter in order to find out the importance and use of each of them in their appropriate place. This contributes to achieving the functional and aesthetic objectives in advertising and delivering the advertising message in an effective manner that suits the requirements of the modern era.
- The Arabic letters can be adapted to suit the needs of the advertisement in an effective way that combines the functional side and the artistic side.
- The need to focus on the capabilities inherent in the Arabic letter and adapt them to achieve optimal functional and aesthetic fit in the design of the advertisement.

Research Recommendations

- The need for more research into the problems associated with the Arabic letter in advertising design.

- The necessity of directing students and scholars of advertising specialization and training them on terms related to typography, calligraphy, and Arabic lettering. Which helps them to distinguish between them in order to come up with a distinct, and creative advertising design.
- The need to distinguish between the different methods related to the Arabic letter and how to use them in advertising design.
- Emphasizing that handwriting and its aesthetics are the reference for a good designer, which makes him combine the skills of antiquity and modernity.
- Increasing the enlightening role of the media on the culture of the Arabic letter, its aesthetics, and its rules. This encourages to return, and restore the aesthetics of Arabic calligraphy in all life aspects which includes the nameplate of the street, the house number, the nameplates of shops, and advertisements.