

Writing skill difficulties for 'beginner' learners of the Arabic Language

Fatima Omari*, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, The University of Jordan, 11942, Amman, Jordan

Suggested Citation:

Omari, F. (2017). Writing skill difficulties for 'beginner' learners of the Arabic Language. *Global Journal of Psychology Research: New Trends and Issues*. 7(2), 81-85.

Received January 10, 2017; revised March 22, 2017; accepted June 17, 2017.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Tulay Bozkurt, Istanbul Kultur University, Turkey.

©2017 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

This field study on a group of non-native Arabic learners studying at the Language Center at the University of Jordan from beginner to intermediate levels, aims to highlight the main difficulties facing the students in the course of learning how to write Arabic correctly and how to distinguish between the sounds of letters and short vowels. The attempt to turn the pronounced sound into a written letter is something that occurs mostly while writing the points and vowels. If we go back to the syntactic khalilian ideas, we find that points are semi-letters and this can be achieved easily by non-speakers of Arabic. However, it's difficult for beginners to distinguish between the long and the short points in the single word, and secondly, in the sentence. A student who did not learn the written form of the word may confuse the word "جالس" with "جالس", while others may think it to be "جالس". Others may confuse the word "جالس" with "جليس", "جليس" or "جليس". The reason why beginners make such mistakes is that during the early stages of teaching the sound of the short vowel is often accentuated. This results in students often exaggerating the short vowel point by giving it a bigger dimension and expressing it with a long vowel. When learners hear words in a fast-pronounced context; they think that the long vowels are short vowels, such as the word "كتاب" they think it "كتيب" and "كتيب" or as "كتيب", or may think the word "قلم" as "قلمن", "قلمن", "قلام", "قلام" or "قلامون". This research emphasizes on the importance of teaching writing as one of the four skills upon which the language is acquired as well as the other skills; listening, reading, and conversation. Writing is a productive skill indicates the student has learned the best representation at the level of all that is true to the language and all that is below that in the lexicon and grammar, spelling and sound levels.

Keywords: Arabic, writing, unnative speakers, difficulties.

*ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Fatima Omari, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, The University of Jordan, 11942, Amman, Jordan

E-mail address: omari.fatema@yahoo.com / Tel.: +96 279 959 9009.

1. Introduction

The reason why beginners make the identified mistakes, i.e. to distinguish between the long and the short points in the single word, and secondly, in the sentence, is that during the early stages of teaching the sound of the short vowel is often accentuated. This results in students often exaggerating the short vowel point and by giving it a bigger dimension and expressing it with a long vowel. When learners hear words in a fast-pronounced context; they think that the long vowels are short vowels such as the word "كتاب" they think it "كَيْب" and "كَيْبَة" or as "كَيْبَة".

Although there are challenges in teaching Arabic in line with the current writing system, there must be an appreciation that such challenges exist in most, if not all, writing systems and these challenges can of course be overcome during the learning process. Therefore we do not agree with the previous stated and new calls to create a new writing system for the Arabic language.

The current writing system is related to cultural heritage and seeks to maintain the holy text. There is no requirement for amendments, as it is comprehensive in its current form. For learners of Arabic, a comprehensive understanding of the writing system is related to learning methods, and every student who learns a new language will face some obstacles that are related to the different language systems. Such obstacles may be overcome by training and practicing. Practical experience proves that learners rid themselves of many of these problems after passing the early stages in learning Arabic (Ibn, Abu & Mohammad, 1982).

2. Definition:

The goal of this teaching is to turn the written letter into a pronounced one; i.e. reading. It is not easy to read Arabic word texts which are not fully vowel-pointed, especially those Arabic texts that are not pointed in the two levels: the syntactical and the morphological. Although most Arabs are unable to present a faultless reading without syntactical and morphological pointing, educated / cultured people or specialists, swing between the wrong and the right. It is not surprising that the non-speaker of Arabic is not being educated to read a text correctly without vowel points.

3. Writing consumption

During the initial learning phase, it is better to teach students to present complete Arabic texts, and this is what Mahmoud Taimour found, as he considered writing without vowel points an incomplete writing. Students of Arabic have to deal with complete written texts in the first instance in order to allow them to develop the ability to read texts that are not fully vowel pointed at the later stage of the learning process (with the exception of those vowel points which save readers from making mistakes).

At the beginning stages of teaching words are presented as the following way:

مَسْجِدَ اِمْرَأَةً اِبْنَتِ In order to prevent any different pronunciation, but these points fade gradually when these words become a part of learner's fixed lingual construction. After this point it is not important to present them pointed in this detailed way. Nevertheless, this retraction in morphological pointing is accompanied with an advancement in the syntactic pointing system. We almost always need to point the new word, and to point the final letter of any new words to enable the general meaning of the sentence to be understood in its specific context (Alahneh, 2000).

There is always a need for a full vowel-point when learning new vocabulary whatever the student's level, in order to get rid of any other obstacles in the pronunciation and meaning level. After this, students develop the ability to write Arabic according to the syntactical placement of the words; since some letters are removed in some verbs and nouns in specific conditions, and in the

sentence structure for example: The letter ي is removed from the noun which is ended with a vowel if it is¹ (munawan) in the (raf' wajr) such as: هذا الأمر داعٍ إلى مساعٍ حثيثةٍ

In this example, the ي has been omitted in the word داعٍ

While it is in the (Raf') condition, also it has been omitted in the word مساعٍ

While it is in the (jr) condition.

As well as, the omission² واو

From the end of the imperative verb that ends with a واو

Such as: " ادعُ الله " The verb ادعُ is constructed on the vowel omission, just like the omission of واو from the present verb which ends with a واو

When it is (majzoom), such as:

" لا تدعُ مع الله إليها آخر " Also, the omission of نون from the doubled noun and the regular masculine plural if it is in the (al'edafa) condition, such as: معلمو الصفون and معلما الصف - omission from the end of the five verbs in the (nsb and jazm) conditions, such as: لم تدرسا and لم يعملوا -

The examples of the omission in the Arabic language are numerous. It is not wrong if we say that an Arabic person finds some difficulty in applying these grammatical rules perfectly. So, it is not strange for a student of Arabic to make mistakes such as these.

Nevertheless, plenty examples and frequently used rules help to make the learner of the language familiar with its grammar exist, so he/she will be able to compose right structure step by step. There are some writing problems while writing the pronounced, but not written letter, such as: - هذأ - هولاء - الذي - إله - الرحمن -

On the other hand, there is a situation which is the complete opposite for this problem; since there are silent letters, such as: عمرو - جاءوا - عادوا - تأخروا -

This is not a new issue for foreign Arabic learners; because it exists in their languages, and there is nothing to do with it, but to take it as a given because the language system dictates this. (Al-Kisa'i)

4. Writing Hamza (ء)

One of the problems that the learner of Arabic faces is writing (alhamza) rules³; learners face a lot of obstacles in this area, beginning with the joining and stopping hamza, and crossing the hamza that comes in the middle or the end of the word with its different vowel points, these obstacles are almost unlimited (Alanbari, 1957).

Although the joining and stopping hamza are limited in certain verbs and nouns and are controlled by certain fixed rules, a non-native Arabic speaker may find difficulties with the general and detailed rules. One may memorize these few nouns with stopping hamza from the rest of the nouns and the imperative tri-verb, and past pentagon verb, its root, and imperative, also the past hexagon verb, its root, and imperative, and how the stopping hamza companies the article (ال), but in other situations it's a stopping hamza.

Stating this does not mean that it is impossible to attain this understanding, but it can't be achieved quickly and easily, it needs time and practice, so it is not expected from a beginner. We are not exaggerating if we say that even the learners of the advanced levels do not completely understand it, and even Arabs are susceptible to get confused between the stopping and the joining hamza.

1 Sibawaieh, abuBishr Amr Bin Othman (180 a.h.), book 5, edition 1, Beirut, daraljeel, chapter 4, page: 138.

²Look: Ibn Qutaiba Abu Mohammad Abdullah bin Muslim (276 a.h.), adabalkateb, edition 1, investigated by Mohammad Addali, Beirut, al.resala institution 1982, page 225.

³ Al.anbari, abual.barakat (577 a.h.), asraralarabia, investigated by Mohammed bahjatal.bitar, altaraqiprint:Damascus 1957, page 401

If this is the reality of writing the stopping and joining hamza, it is a broader issue in writing the hamza in its different places, because writing it in the middle of the word depends on the letters and vowel points; since it is impossible to write it correctly without considering the vowel point of the preceding letter of the hamza, and the vowel point of the hamza itself.

Hamza is written on the letter ((أ)

In the middle of the word if it has a (fatha) and preceded with an unvoiced letter, or if it is unvoiced and preceded with letter with a (fatha), and if it has a (fatha) and preceded with a letter that has a (fatha), such as: رأس

فأس استأجر

Hamza⁴ is always written on a (nabera) if it has a (kasra), whatever the vowel point of the preceded letter was, and if the preceded letter has a (kasra), whatever its vowel point was.

On the other hand, Hamza is written on a (nabera) if it has a (fatha) or a (dhamma) and comes after an unvoiced (ي), and the Arabic reader will face different shapes of this writing, such as:) (هياة، هينة، هينة) as it is written according to the common opinion or the Arabic language complex decision that to write Hamza which has a (fatha) after (ي) on a (أ)

Moreover, the rules dictate writing Al-Hamza on the line in the middle of the word if it has a (fatha) after an unvoiced (أ) or an unvoiced or stressed (و/ـو) such as:

المروءة، or if Al-Hamza has a (dhamma) after an unvoiced or stressed (و/ـو)

Actually, these rules are many and detailed, but they are unstable because the points and the shapes of the words are changed according to the sentence structure and the places of the words in it, and that usually depends on the l'rab, that's why it is impossible to memorize a word with a hamza in a certain shape. Thus, these words became a real obstacle that face learners generally, and in particular those who are learning Arabic as a foreign language.

It is written on و, if it is preceded with a letter that has a (dhamma) whatever its vowel point was, and if it has a (dhamma) and is preceded with letter that has a (fatha) or a (sukoon). However, there are some rules that allow several ways to write Al-Hamza, such as written Al-Hamza that has a (dhamma) and followed with a long و can be written on a (nabera), like: شئون

This is possible when the letter's nature allows the joining of Al-Hamza. But when it cannot be joined, it is written in three ways, such as: رؤوف، رؤوف، رؤوف. Despite the Arabic Language Complex (1964), this variety attempts to prevent the decision to write Al-Hamza on و whatever the letter nature was- it is a confusing issue for Arabs and others who want to learn Arabic.⁵

This is problematic issue for teachers in general, if they open the door on all of these methods and rules at the same time, chaos will prevail, which cannot be re-organized. If the teacher chooses the standard method, the students will, at first, be limited with the unlimited. So, depending on the lingual complex, it may provide the solution to such a problem.

Furthermore, learners of Arabic language may encounter other problems while consolidating words together to get organized sentences, because their languages follow different systems. For example, students usually fall in adjective-noun agreement when the noun is feminine, such as: ولد صغير بنت صغيرة.

A foreigner doesn't often succeed in producing these structures, so he/she usually reaches for one formula for both masculine and feminine nouns, then the following are produced: بنت - ولد صغير صغير

It maybe a result of what he/she is familiar with in their mother tongue – for example, English. The same thing happens in masculinizing and feminizing the verb with the subject and its agent; the

4 Ibn Qutaiba, Adabalkateb, pages 262-270.

⁵Alawneh, Sharief (2000), Al.akhta' Al.imla'iyah Al.Sha'ea fi Al.sahafa, Arabic language conference in media, Amman, pages 129-139

speaker of a foreign language usually produces a masculine verb although the subject is feminine, such as: كتبت البنث الكتاب. كتب الولد الكتاب

The foreigner expresses this in one way, which is: كتب البنث/ الولد الكتاب

Also: كُتِبَ الكتابُ / القِصَّةُ. كُتِبَت القِصَّةُ. كُتِبَ الكتابُ

This confusion is because of the wrong production of masculinizing and feminizing rules in Arabic language. Actually, it is not easy to get the learners to reach the clear understanding; this needs the teacher to be completely ready to play the role of the parents towards their son/ daughter to offer them a rich educational atmosphere, since every chance must be invested to enrich the lingual skills.

5. Conclusion

There is no choice but the standards in teaching Arabic, especially not like other languages, because it is not seen as other languages, and the mistake today will not be a syntactic rule tomorrow; since Arabic did not accept mistakes as a development that lead to modernity³ in its historical journey –and we mean the clear mistake- and that is because it is related to the heritage in general, and the holy heritage in particular. (Jan Jack Lu Circle, Language Violence, translated by: Mohammad Badawi, Arabian Unity studying center , Beirut, Edition 1, 2005, P 49-50).

Thus, teaching Arabic for non-speakers needs a full understanding of the lingual system as a whole, and this comprehension must be the result of a real understanding of the structure of the language that is based on a group of the vocal, morphological, and syntactical systems that widen and cross each other to merge and shape the speakers configuration. To guide the students to reach a level of understanding a language from the perspective of a new lingual system, which is similar to native speakers understanding of the systems, is a high goal that all language teachers hope to achieve.

References

- Alanbari, A. (1957). *asraralarabia*, investigated by Mohammed bahjatal.bitar, altaraqiprint: Damascus: Damascus.
- Alawneh, S. (2000), *Al.akhta' Al.imla'iyahAl.Sha'ea fi Al.sahafa*. Arabic language conference in media, Amman.
- Ibn, Q., Abu, M., & Mohammad, A. (276 a.h.), *adabalkateb*, edition 1, investigated by Mohammad Addali, Beirut, al.resala institution 1982.