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# SOME SELECTED METHODS OF TEACHING ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA

By

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## ABSTRACT

*This article was able to show the easiest way of achieving teaching/learning of Arabic language to its teachers and learners, by discussing some methods of teaching foreign languages identified by language of teaching as well as learning foreign languages. These methods: grammar translation, Direct, Audio-lingual, communicative language teaching, silent way, were discussed with the consideration of their concepts, merits and guiding rules for using for effective teaching and learning of Arabic language as a foreign tongue in Nigeria.*

## Introduction

There are many purposes of learning foreign languages in which it is not restricted to only travelling round the globe. Foreign trade, foreign partnership in business and education are among the purposes of learning foreign language. All these activities would not be achieved if the channel of communication is not good enough. So, communication is very important in having and maintaining relations with other people at foreign level, because it is their medium of interactions. Such as, it senses as one of the languages used in Organisation of petroleum Exporting Country (OPEC) and other international organisations. So, the language senses the vital role in their means of communications and relations.

In Nigeria Arabic language is learnt as a foreign language in some of our institutions of learning where many learners of this language cannot prove and be proud of themselves as trainees of the language because of the influence of the indigenous language. It was observed that the poor/low proficiency of learners in the language may arise from the incompetence of some instructors using inappropriate foreign language teaching methodology.

A language teaching method is a plan for presenting the language materials to learners based upon a selected approach. In order for an approach to be translated into a method, an instruction system must be designed to consider the objectives of the teaching. The merit of the method and guiding rules for its effective implementation; some methods of teaching foreign languages are reviewed in the next section.

## 2 The Grammar Translation Method

It is the way of instructing students in grammar and providing vocabulary with direct translations for learners to memorise. The Europe had a total focus on

this method especially, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. "It is now most commonly used in the traditional instruction of the classical languages" (Wikipedia, 2009). Using the method, the teaching of grammar consists of a process of cultivating in them the rules of a language which make it possible for them to correctly express their opinions, to understand the remarks which are addressed to them and to analyse the texts which they read.

#### **Objective of the Grammar Translation Method to the Arabic Learners**

The pupils, students and learners of Arabic leave schools and institutions with exposure to the tools of the Arabic language which are: the Arabic vocabulary (Al-Mufradat), Arabic grammar (Al-Iqah) and the orthography (Al-Imla'), to be able to read, understand and write Arabic texts in various contexts.

#### **Merit of the Grammar translation Method to the Arabic Learners**

The teaching of Arabic grammar is based the facts of Arabic texts. It develops awareness that the Arabic language constitutes a system can be analysed.

- It acquires gradually, by transferring the facts of Arabic language and syntactic mechanisms (Al-Qawa'id An-Nahwiyyah), moving from the simplest to the most complex.
- It also allows the assimilation of the rules in the Arabic course of study, that makes the Arabic teacher correct the Arabic exercises (Al-Tamarrin)
- The pupils/students can also determine their progress in practising the Arabic language by comparing their results.

Thus, the pupils and students can adapt the Arabic grammatical rules and control gradually the internal logic of the syntactic system (uslub Nahwiyyah). Teaching of Arabic through this method enable people to understand how the mother tongue functions, in order to enhance their ability to communicate their thought using the language. This method is commonly used in Nigerian institutions for the effective teaching/learning of the Arabic language in particular and foreign languages in general. However, "this method also promotes the reading, writing and translation skills, while it has low focus on speaking skills" (AbdulGaniyu, 2002: 106).

#### **The Direct Method**

The direct method was rooted in Germany and around 1900. It is also called natural method. It is a method that does not allow learners to use their native language, but stipulates the use of the target language as a medium of expressions. This operates on the idea that second language learning must be the imitation of first language learning. That is the second language should be learnt through imitation as the first language is acquired.

#### **Merits of the Direct Method to the Arabic learners**

1. This method places great stress on correct Arabic pronunciation
2. It advocates teaching of Arabic oral skills
3. It relies on directly representing an experience into Arabic linguistic construct rather than relying on abstractions like Arabic mimicry, Arabic

- translation, and memorising Arabic grammatical rules and Arabic vocabulary.
4. It relies on a step progression on Arabic question and answer (Assu'al wa-Al-jawab) moments which begin with naming common objects in Arabic such as doors (Al-Makatab), books (Al-Kutub), Chalkboard (As-Sabura), computers (Al-hasub), and others.
  5. It provides a motivating start for Arabic learners to begin to use the Arabic language almost immediately. Arabic lessons progress to Arabic verb forms (tarakib Alficci) and other Arabic grammatical structure with the goal of learning about thirty words in Arabic per lessons.

### Then Rules of the Direct Method for the Arabic Learners

- Printed Arabic language and Arabic texts must be kept away from Arabic learners for as long as possible to avoid bilingual problem until they grasp the Arabic speech.
- Arabic grammar of writing and spelling should also be delayed after the Arabic printed word has been introduced.
- Arabic grammar and translation should also be avoided because this would involve the application of the Arabic learner's first language

All the above items must be avoided they hinder the acquisition of a good Arabic oral proficiency. It is shown from the submission earlier that when the direct method is employed, the Arabic lessons begin with a dialogue using an Arabic modern conversational style. The Arabic material is first presented orally with actions or pictures. The mother tongue (Al-lugah Al'um) is never used and there is no translation during the teaching/ learning process. Grammar is also taught inductively; rules are generalised from practice and experience with the target language. For instance, Arabic language, verbs (Al'af'al) are used first to form Arabic verbal sentences (Al-jumlah Alfi'liyyah). Advance learners of Arabic read Arabic literature book for comprehension and pleasure. Arabic literature texts are not analyzed grammatically. The culture associated with the Arabic language is also taught inductively. Culture is considered as important aspect of learning the Arabic language.

### The Audio-Lingual Method

This Method was originally called the oral method, the aural-oral method or the structure approach. The audio-lingual method began to take shape near the end of the 1950, (Wikipedia, 2009). It is also a method based on the principles and procedures of the direct method, in part as a reaction to the lack of speaking skills of the reading approach. Courses and techniques and constructive analysis are already being used under this method; students listen to or view recording models acting in situations. Students practise with a variety of drills, and the instructor emphasises the use of the target language all times.

### Merits of the Audio-Lingual Method to the Arabic Learners

1. Arabic new materials are presented in the form of a dialogue based on the principle that language learning is habit formation.

2. The method fosters dependence on Arabic mimicry, Arabic memorisation of set phrases and over-learning.
3. The method also allows re-teaching of Arabic instructions.
4. Arabic structures are sequenced and taught one at a time.
5. Arabic structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills.
6. Grammatical explanations are provided; Arabic grammar is taught inductively.
7. Skills are Arrange: Arabic listening, speaking and writing are developed in order of acquisition of Arabic language.
8. Arabic vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in Arabic context.
9. Arabic teaching pints are determined by contrastive analysis (Muqabalah tahliliyyah) between L1 and L2.
10. There is abundant use of Arabic language laboratories, tape recorders and visual aids
11. There is extended pre-Arabic reading period at the beginning of the course.
12. Arabic teacher expresses some instructions at time through the mother tongue, but restriction among and by the Arabic students.
13. Successful responses are reinforced; great care is taken to prevent Arabic learner's errors.
14. There is also a tendency to focus on manipulation of the Arabic language to regard content and meaning.

### **How to use Audio-lingual Drills in Arabic Language as L2 Teaching in Nigeria**

1. The Arabic teacher must be careful to ensure that utterances which students of Arabic will make are actually within the practice pattern. For example, the use of erect particle (Inna-verily) as a demonstration pronoun.
2. Dills should be conducted as rapidly as possible so as to ensure automaticity and establish a system, for making the Arabic teaching interaction achievable.
3. Ignore all, but (Lakin), and (Wa), gross errors of Arabic pronunciation when drilling on Arabic grammar.
4. Arabic teacher uses shortcuts to keep the pace of (Sufr) drills at a maximum. And, he must uses hand motions, Arabic signal cards, Arabic notes, himself also as an instructional aids and others to cue responses as a choir Arabic director.
5. Use normal Arabic stress, intonation and juncture patterns conscientiously.
6. Arabic drill materials should always be meaningful. The Arabic content words are known to the students of Arabic before, Arabic teacher should introduce and teach them their meanings.
7. Using short period of drills (about 10minutes) with very brief alternative activities to avoid fatigue and boredom.
8. Arabic teacher introduces the drill by citing example on the board, by speaking Arabic model sentences and explaining a simple Arabic grammar; explanation is needed, then the drill.

9. Arabic teacher should not stand in a place in-front of his students giving instructions; he needs to move around the classroom from the front to the back and from the left to the right and checks their productions. And, this will give the Arabic teacher who to concentrate more on teaching and learners' action and reaction, especially during individual learners.
10. Use the "backward buildup" technique for long and or difficult patterns:
  - (Gadan): Tomorrow
  - (fi hadiqah Alhayawan gadan) in the zoo tomorrow
  - (Yahsudani fi hadiqah Alhayawan gaden): will hunting in the zoo tomorrow.
  - (Arrange Yahsudani Samkatan hadiqah Alhayawa gadan): The two friends will hunt some fishes in the zoo tomorrow
11. Arrange in a chronological or orderly manner to present Arabic drills on increasing complexity of Arabic learner response.

### The Communication Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method of teaching on languages that emphasises interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. "This method (CLT) began in Britain in the 1960s, in part as a replacement for the earlier, highly – Structure Method of situational language teaching. In this method, students were given a specific situation or a dilemma that they have to solve. The given situations, more often than not, are irrelevant to the needs of students. For example, teenage student's role played as the manager and staff of company that was having a financial problem. (Anson and Chan-piu, 2003);

According to Curran (2005), this approach is not based on the usual methods by which languages are taught. Rather this approach is based on counselling techniques and adapted to the peculiar anxiety, personal and language problems, a person encounters in the learning of foreign languages. So, the learner is not thought of as a student but as a client. And the native instructors of the language are not considered as teachers but, they are as language counsellors.

### Merit of Communicative Language Teaching to Arabic Learners

1. This method promotes an equal opportunity for every Arabic student to participate in the activity.
2. It also encourages Arabic learners to work together
3. It improves learners' self-esteem and interest in school activities.
4. It allows interethnic relations among the Arabic learners.
5. It requires Arabic teachers to provide Arabic language support in terms of useful vocabulary and grammar so that students of Arabic are able to succeed in the task given.
6. It requires strategies for students of Arabic collaboration and attention to how strictly, the Arabic structured patterns to and encourage their effective cooperation for better learning.

## Guidelines for Using Communicative Language Teaching for Arabic Learners

1. The Arabic activity/teaching must be purposeful and meaningful. Students of Arabic should be given convincing reasons for doing the activity, and they should know what they will achieve upon the completion of the activity.
2. The Arabic activity must be authentic. The Arabic items taught in the activity must suit Arabic students' ages, habits and environment. Arabic students must be able to use the items for academic and non-academic purposes.
3. Arabic Teachers should feel and know how to adapt Arabic textbook activities.
4. Mechanic drills should not be only Arabic activity in pair or group work.
5. A diversity of Arabic activities is needed.

Students of Arabic language will benefit more from CLT because it enables them to understand that communicating and sharing with pairs during the training hours is a language strategy that they can apply outside a classroom setting. They can improve more if they always use this method during Islamic gatherings, such as: naming ceremony, Islamic marriage, funeral ceremony and others.

### The Silent Way

The silent way is a discovery learning method, invented by Caleb Gattegno, in the 1950s. This method is named the silent way because the teacher is usually silent, leaving room for the students to talk and explore the language.

### Procedures for Using Silent way in Arabic Lessons

- i. By using a set of coloured rods
- ii. By playing Arabic Verbal Commands (fi'l Al'amr)
- iii. By playing a tape record in the Arabic language for some minutes during the teaching of Arabic listening skill
- iv. By playing audiovisual set, television video or overhead projectors programmed in Arabic for some minutes during the teaching of some skills in Arabic class (listening, Speaking and Reading).
- v. By placing well chart containing some Arabic words or picture relevant to the lesson.

### Aims and Objectives of Silent way in Arabic Institution Class

1. To avoid the use of the vernacular
2. To create simple Arabic Linguistic Situations
3. To let the Arabic teacher, concentrate on what the students of Arabic say and how they say it
4. To pass on the learners of Arabic the responsibility for the utterances of the descriptions of the Arabic objects shown or the actions performed
5. To draw the attention of the learners of Arabic to the differences in Arabic word pronunciation and the flow of Arabic words
6. To generate a serious game-like situation in which the rules are implicitly agreed upon by giving meaning to the gesture of the Arabic teacher and his mimic

7. To save the Arabic teacher and Arabic learners' time during the teaching/learning period.
8. To reduce the Arabic teacher's stress of talking more during the classroom institution.
9. To reduce imitation and encourage personal production of one's own sounds
10. To provide the support of perception and action to the intellectual guess of what the noise means and visual watching means
11. To remove the Arabic teachers from class and activity dominated
12. To allow learners of Arabic to provide solutions to the teaching/learning problems

This method is commons among the private Arabic institutions, in which an Arabic language teacher instructs a student in the upper class to teach other students in the lower class. Even at times, the teacher instructs the gifted one to explain what he understands from the lesson to his group. So, Arabic language instructors need to emphasise more on this method in order to add more effectiveness to the performance of their students.

#### **Materials Utilising as the Arabic Language Progress in Silent Way**

- i. A set of coloured wooden rod
- ii. A set of wall charts containing Arabic words of a "Arabic functional" vocabulary
- iii. A pointed for use with the charts in visual Arabic dictation.
- iv. A colour coded phonic charts for Arabic use
- v. Tapes or discs as required; films for Arabic use
- vi. Drawing and pictures, and a set of accompanying Arabic worksheets
- vii. Overhead projectors programmed in Arabic
- viii. Transparencies, Arabic three texts, an Arabic book of stories, Arabic worksheets

#### **Other Method of Teaching**

Other method of teaching foreign language, as identified and explained by scholars such as Jean Pol Martin:

1. Language immersion.
2. Minimalist/Methodist method.
3. Direct practice Method.
4. Learning by Teaching.
5. Proprioceptive Language Learning Method.
6. Primslaur Method.
7. Michael Thomas Method.
8. Code Switching.
9. Blended Learning.
10. Functional- Notional Method.
11. Reading method.

### Conclusion

The methods of teaching foreign language are discussed in this paper. They were related to the teaching of Arabic language in Nigeria. Arabic language is also taught in Nigerian institutions as a foreign language. So, Arabic language trainees should benefit from lessons where a collection of methods discussed above are used. Hence, Arabic language teachers/educators should employ a set of methods in their instructional decision.

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