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Contents

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE STRATEGIES
IN ARABIC TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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Abstract. Undoubtedly, one of the important questions a clear response to which can help us in finding a new and practical methodology for teaching Arabic is: How did the Muslim societies, particularly those which had newly turned to Islam in the early centuries of Islamic victories and had an urgent need to know Arabic, learn this language? Still, some other related questions are: where did the learners learn Arabic at that time? Which methods did the teachers employ in order to help their students acquire Arabic? Was a difficult book which was called *al-Kitāb* with a kind of respect at the heart of language instruction everywhere? Or, should we search for the teaching methods elsewhere? We are well-aware that the main purpose of teaching Arabic in the past was to acquaint the learners with the holy Qur'ān. However, we have no exact knowledge of how they accomplished this task. We believe that the lack of clear and systematic studies conducted in order to attain convincing responses to the above questions later led to some confusion in teaching Arabic and, as a result, this field never succeeded in attaining its end. Of course, we will never forget that several books were written for the purpose of teaching this language; however, they were so difficult that their writers themselves, other scholars, and linguists had to write commentaries on them to make them comprehensible to readers. This trend continued for such a long time that today we are faced with a huge number of books on teaching Arabic and syntactic (*naḥwī*) interpretation which cannot be used as appropriate means for teaching it as an L2 in today's society. Unfortunately, by making such an explicit assertion, without intending to offend anyone, we have to ignore these books' importance as some tokens of an invaluable ancient legacy. In this paper, through referring to available sources and documents, the writers have tried to answer the above questions in order to take an efficient step forward in clarifying a correct strategy for teaching Arabic and making the learning of this language more practical. In doing so, they hope not to hear about the inefficiency of Arabic teaching methods from such distinguished masters as Tāhā Ḥusayn and Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī anymore.

Keywords: teaching Arabic; syntax; Sībawayhi; *Al-Kitāb*.

The history of teaching Arabic is usually studied in the general framework of the history of education, thus a short reference to it will be useful here. According to Balāḏurī, the first Meccans who learnt to read and write before Islam were Sufyān bin 'Umayya and Abū Qays 'Abdu Manāf. Upon the rise of Islam, only 17 people in Mecca were literate (Balāḏurī 1865: 471). However, the dissemination of the new religion required people who could read and

write. At the beginning some gatherings were held either in houses or in newly-built mosques (at that time, people were not familiar with the Arabic word for school, i.e. *maktab*). The People of the Book and the captives of Badr War were the first teachers of the pseudo-schools of the time of the Prophet (s) and only taught literacy (Šalabī 1376: 47-8, 68; Amīn n.d.: 2/50-52). After the time of the Prophet (s), the teaching of reading and writing became more common. Based on available reports, there were some real schools in the era of the Umayyads, and later these spread all over Islamic lands in the Abbasid era (Amīn n. d.: 2/50-51).

Some of these schools taught literacy and the Qur'ān, and some others were mainly involved in language teaching (Amīn n. d.: 2/50). According to Ibn Qutayba (Ibn Qutayba 1969: 135), Alqama Ibn Abī Alqama (who died during the early years of Abū Ǧaʿfar Manṣūr's caliphate) was a teacher and had a school in which he taught Arabic, syntax (naḥw), and prosody (ʿarūḍ). Mosques have also been considered as one of the important centers for learning since the time of the Prophet (s). At the time of Umayyads, mosques were official places for teaching the Qur'ān, *ḥadīṯ*, and jurisprudence. During the reign of Abbasids, when different branches of knowledge became widespread, some large scientific meetings were also held in mosques (Amīn n.d.: 2/52-53). According to Yāqūt (Yāqūt 1980: 11/227-228), Aḫfaš (who died in about 830 AD) entered Kisāʾī's classes, which were held in the mosque, and asked him some questions. However, he later said that all the answers he received had been wrong. Poetry was also one of the other subjects taught in mosques, and one cannot ignore its important role in a historical study of teaching Arabic (Amīn n. d.: 2/53). It is also of prime importance to pay attention to debates on syntactic and lexical issues in such studies. In this regard, we can refer to Sībawayhi's dispute with Kisāʾi in the gathering held by Yaḥyā Barmakī's (died in 806 AD) known as "Zunbūriyya", Kisāʾī's dispute with Yazīdī in Mahdī's gathering, or Kisāʾī's dispute with Aṣmaʿī in Rašīd's gathering (Suyūṭi 1979: 2/230; Amīn n.d.: 2/55-56). The date of the opening of the first school goes back to the 5th century. At that time, Niẓām al-Mulk established some schools in different cities. One of the courses taught in these schools was Arabic grammar (syntax and morphology) (Amīn n.d.: 2/49; Aḏarnūš 1992-3: 72-73).

Now the question is how the non-Arabs learnt Arabic in the first century of the rise of Islam and after Muslims' victories. The main subject taught at schools and in other learning centers was the Qur'ān (Šalabī 2002: 55; Amīn n.d.: 2/50-9). Even after the grammar of Arabic was compiled by the prominent grammarian Sībawayhi (d.769 AD), we have no knowledge of the methods used for teaching this language (Aḏarnūš 1992-3: 71-72). Could they have learnt it from Sībawayhi's extremely difficult book entitled *al-Kitāb*, the studying of which was compared by Mubarrad (c. 210-85 0r 286 AH) to ridding on the sea waves?

This book required many commentaries and interpretations to be *comprehended*, and Sībawayhi's students and readers always boasted as to who understood or interpreted it better that others. Undoubtedly, if we took a look at the table of contents of this book and tried to read and understand a part of it, we would immediately understand that this book could never be useful for language teaching, and no student could ever learn Arabic through it. It would be strange if such difficult grammar books were used in the mosques and schools of that time for teaching Arabic to Arab and non-Arab students.

Ğāḥiẓ (d. 255 AH) spoke of the difficulty of the books written by Aḫfaš in his *al-Ḥayawān* (Ğāḥiz 1996: 1/91-92). The primary motive for writing grammar books was never their use for language teaching; rather, we believe that the hidden purpose of linguists here was to protect the language of the Qurʾān and ancient poetry against being forgotten or drowned in the ocean of numerous Arabic dialects. Their other motive was to explain the syntactic structures of this language and distinguish between right and wrong forms. Hence, we can perhaps claim that the teaching of Arabic in the past started with its writing system and then moved to the reading of some texts, particularly Qurʾānic ones, as well as Arabic poetry and prose. A study of the history of Arabic syntax and of the biographies of distinguished grammarians reveals that in the early centuries syntax was employed when a literary man, poet, or grammarian wished to evaluate his literary knowledge against a firmly established criterion and distinguish eloquent language from non-eloquent language or the pure from the impure. In the like fashion, he might have wished to promote his knowledge of grammar to a higher level. In such cases, he usually participated in private classes.

Therefore, what we read in different sources about teaching and learning Arabic syntax is limited to either a grammarian or a literary man having studied an important book under another grammarian to complete his knowledge of it, to develop his ability in teaching it or to attain a kind of higher education limited to a particular group (Šalabī 2002: 185-189; Aḏarnūš 1992-3: 72-73). In this case, we can say that the fist source used for this type of higher education was Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*, which explained the details of Arabic syntax coherently, was probed for centuries, and was studied by many grammarians under great masters or was taught by them. Available evidence suggests that most of the people who studied *al-Kitāb* as an academic source were themselves famous grammarians who sometimes had to pay great amounts of money to study this book. It has been said that Aḫfaš, the well-known grammarian of Baṣra, was the only person who studied *al-Kitāb* under Sībawayhi himself. However, this story is questionable. One reason is that, it would mean that Sībawayhi taught his book only to one person. The other reason is that, it would suggest that he studied *al-Kitāb* under the writer himself not in order to learn Arabic, but to complete his knowledge of this book. It is of interest to know that Aḫfaš thought he is more superior than Sībawayhi, in understanding *al-Kitāb* (Yāqūt 1980: 11/226-227).

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Kisāʾī, too, went from Kūfa to Baṣra in order to study *al-Kitāb* under Aḫfaš. In return, he paid him 50 dinars (Qifṭī 1952: 2/39; Ḍayf 1972: 94). Abū ʿAmr Ǧarmī (d. 225 AH) and Abū 'Uṯmān Māzinī (d. 248 AH) were two of the other scholars who studied *al-Kitāb* under Aḫfaš (Yāqūt 1980: 11/225), and both were deemed to be among the distinguished figures of the fields of syntax and literature of their time (Yāqūt 1980: 12/5-6). Māzinī, a student of Aḫfaš who, according to Mubarrad, was the most knowledgeable grammarian after Sībawayhi (Ḍayf 1972: 118, 122), taught his book and valued it so highly that he said one should be ashamed of himself if he wishes to write a book on grammar after Sībawayhi. It is said that a Jewish *ḏimmī* (i.e. free non-Muslim subject living in a Muslim country) paid 100 dinars in order to study *al-Kitāb* under Māzinī, but he did not accept his offer and, in response to his student Mubarrad, who asked him about the reason for his refusal, he said "This book has more than 300 references to the Qurʾān, and I do not wish to recite these holy verses to a non-Muslim (Ṣafadī 1991: 10/212; Yāqūt 1980: 7/111). This narration reveals that the learning and teaching of *al-Kitāb* were not open to the public, and they were taught by great masters in private classes in return for expensive tuitions. Mabramān (d. 345 AH) taught this book for no less than 100 dinars (Suyūṭī 1979: 1/175).

The book *al-Kitāb* was so famous that in Baṣra, every time someone said that a person had read *the book*, it meant that he had read Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb*.

About 100 years after Sībawayhi, Mubarrad (d. 285 AH) became one of the first writers of grammar books when he wrote the two valuable books *al-Muqtaḍab* on syntax and *al-Kāmil* on literature and syntax. Moreover, some well-known grammarians such as Zaǧǧāǧ (d. 311 AH) and Ibn Sarrāǧ (d. 316 AH) studied in his school under him and used his books as academic sources. According to Yāqūt (Yāqūt 1980: 1/131-132), Zaǧǧāǧ went to Mubarrad in order to learn syntax and promised to pay him one dinar a day until death made them part. Later, because of a request made by some members of Banūmāriqa who resided in Ṣarāt, Mubarrad introduced Zaǧǧāǧ to them to teach their children grammar. Ibn Sarrāǧ (d. 316 AH) was also involved in teaching Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* which was still the main grammar textbook of that time. He wrote his *Kitāb al-uṣūl al-kabīr* based on his research on *al-Kitāb* (Suyūṭī 1979: 1/109-110). However, Ǧāḥiẓ (d. 255 AH) recommends that the language learners' mind should not be filled with syntactic rules, and teachers must teach them only those rules that help them ~~to~~ avoid committing errors when writing a letter or when reading a poem. Moreover, Ibn Ǧawzī (d. about 597 AH) emphasized that we need to know as many syntactic rules and words as necessary but not more than that. These comments strengthen our belief that such detailed and extensive grammar books as Sībawayhi's and as those of his students should not be used for language learning (Ibn Ǧawzī 1989: 153-154; Aḏarnūš 1992-3: 67-68).

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The fourth Hijrī century marked the beginning of a new trend in teaching Arabic. From this time onwards, we read in the biography of each grammarian scholar that, in addition to writing books, he was also involved in teaching syntax. Some of the most important books that were written following pedagogical purposes included *al-Mūǧazu fī l-naḥw* by Ibn Sarrāǧ, *al-Ǧumal* by Zaǧǧāǧī (d. 337 AH), *al-ʿĪḍāḥ* (on syntax) and *al-Takmila* (on morphology) by Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī (d. 377 AH), and *al-Lumaʿ* by Ibn Ǧinnī (d. 391 AH).

From among the characteristics of the above works we can refer to their being concise and including several clear examples and proofs. This is the reason why they were used as the main sources for teaching Arabic for some centuries (Qifṭī 1952: 2/161).

The 5ᵗʰ and 6ᵗʰ Hijrī centuries can be considered to be the culmination of the composition of textbooks. It was at this time that syntax, which had been compiled in a clearer and more logical form, found its way as a major course of study into mosques and schools. The courses taught in the seminary of literary sciences in Niẓāmiyya School in Baġdād consisted of morphology, syntax, reading literary texts, and rhetoric. Morphology and syntax were taught to help seminary students ~~to~~ understand jurisprudential discussions in Arabic. Hence, the presence of a good teacher of syntax was of prime importance. Ḫaṭīb Tabrīzī (d. 502 AH), Abū Manṣūr Jawalīqī (d. 540 AH), Ibn Šaǧarī (d. 552 AH), and Abū l-Barakāt Kamālu l-dīn ʾAnbārī (d. 577 AH) were some of the well-known teachers of lexicon, literature, and syntax in Baġdād's Niẓāmīyya (Kisāʾī 1984: 136; Aḏarnūš 1992-3: 73). The book *al-Mufaṣṣal* by Zamaḫšarī (d. 538 AH) functioned as an important source for syntax teachers of that time. After that, the books *al-Kāfiya* on syntax and *al-Šāfiya* on morphology by Ibn Ḥāǧib (d. 646 AH) and the commentaries written on them attained special attention. Shortly after these books, *Muġnī l-labīb* by Ibn Hišām (d. 762 AH), which was an encyclopedia of the grammarian's syntactic discussions and views, and *Alfiyya*, which was in the form of poetry dealing with morphology and syntax of the Arabic language, by Ibn Mālik (d. 672 AH) came to the fore.

Ibn Hišām also wrote two other textbooks entitled *Šuḏūru l-ḏahab* and *Qaṭru l-nadā wa ballu l-ṣadā* and commented on them himself. From among the writings of Ibn Hišām, his *Muġnī l-labīb*, which enjoys a different style and mainly focuses on the structure of Arabic sentences, and *Qaṭru l-nadā* were widely used as textbooks. The first and fourth chapters of *Muġnī* are taught even presently in Iranian seminaries and universities at higher levels of education. Ibn Mālik's *Alfiyya* and the commentaries written on it are among the works that were not only used as textbooks in seminaries and universities in the past but are also taught today in academic centers. The most important commentaries written on this work include those of Ibn ʿAqīl (d. 769 AH), Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), and Ušmūnī (d. 929 AH). Reportedly, Šamsu l-dīn Suyūṭī (d. 808 AH) charged one dinar for reading and commenting on each couplet of *Alfiyya* (Suyūṭī 1979: 1/91).

Syntax in Andalusia

According to Maqqarī in *Nafḥu l-ṭīb* (Maqqarī 1998: 1/205), the knowledge of syntax in Andalusia enjoyed particular importance, and the scholars of that land were greatly involved in this field from the second half of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. Ğūd bin ʿUṯmān Naḥwī (d. 198 AH) brought Kisāʾī's book, which dealt briefly with syntax and had been written for novice learners to Andalusia (Zubaydī 1973: 1/256-257). Nevertheless, it is surprising that until the end of the 3rd Hiğrī century no significant work on syntax appeared there. It is said that this was because Andalusian scholars were mainly teachers rather than scholars. At the beginning of the 4th Hiğrī century *al-Kitāb* found its way into Andalusia and, as a result, created a great evolution in the status of Arabic and the related studies there (ʿĪdī, 1989). In the 6th century, Ibn Maḍḍāʾ al-Qurṭubī (1119-1195) criticized the most important principles and laws that had been developed by the two great Eastern schools of Baṣrī and Kūfī and dominated the rules of Arabic syntax for centuries in his *al-Radd ʿalā l-nuḥāt*. Through relying on linguistic facts, he tried to omit all the rules that were not required in syntax and presented some new strategies for solving syntactic problems. In his book, he harshly attacked the theory of agent, *taqdīr* in phrases, analogy and causes, and unscientific exercises (Ḍayf 1972: 304-306; *EI²*). However, his efforts were not very fruitful. After all, we have to accept that the complexity of classic grammatical books concern various factors such as: 1. Multiplicity of grammarians' views. 2. Their perfect trust in the Bedouin language and their attesting it 3. Their fantasies 4. The problem of the agent. The mentioned factors caused the new findings in the field of language pedagogy, not to be acceptable at all (Ḥassān 1971: 72,127,178,196).

Contemporary Periods and Arabic Grammar

In the contemporary period, writing grammar books and studying the principles of Arabic continued with the interpretation of commentaries on the works of Ibn Ḥāğib, Ibn Mālik and Ibn Hišām by some Lebanese scholars such as Ğarmānūs Faraḥāt (1680-1732), Nāṣif Yāziğī (1800-1871), and Aḥmad Fāris Šidyāq (1804-1887). In this regard, we can refer to Faraḥāt's *al-Ṣarf* and *al-Naḥw*, which were published in Lebanon in 1900. Clearly, one can never search for a new method of teaching Arabic in these books because they are all commentaries on early scholars' works.

Perhaps, we can say that with Rifāʿa Ṭaḥṭāwī's (d. 1873) work on grammar entitled *al-Tuḥfatu l-maktabiyya li-taqrībi l-luġati l-arabiyya*, which was written under the influence of the French method, a new chapter opened in the teaching of syntax. In 1945 the Culture House of Cairo (Mağmaʿu l-luġati l-ʿarabiyya bi l-Qāhira), due to the existing requests and suggestions, granted the permission to modify certain structures in order to simplify syntax.

Therefore, many textbooks were written based on what the Culture House sanctioned after the revolution.

Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā (1888-1962) tried to revolutionize the quality of teaching Arabic syntax or *naḥw* in his *ʾIḥyāʾu l-naḥw*. After trying the methods of all teaching centers, he concludes that all of them lead to boredom and annoyance because of the learning of syntactic principles and their complexities. He also believed that the writing of books with titles including terms such as "simplification", "explanation", and "approximation" was also rooted in the same complexities. However, he maintained that none of them were capable of providing an answer when facing a grammatical or methodological problem. Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā argued that writers of grammar books, in order to complete their teaching method and to gain success, added some glosses to their books which gradually entered the main texts and resulted in nothing but the books' becoming thicker. In order to present his own method, he distinguished between two types of rules: 1) those the learning of which does not create any special difficulty and concerning which there are no disagreements among grammarians, such as different forms of agreement between singular, plural, and dual agents and their verbs; 2) those the learning of which is not easy and concerning which there are some disagreements among grammarians, such as the Nominative case or placing a noun in various positions in a sentence. Then he wrote his book based on the following principles:

1. *Ḍamma*: short /u/, signifies attribution.

2. *Kasra*: short /i/, signifies the genitive case (with or without a preposition).

3. *Fatḥa*: short /a/, is not a mark of grammatical inflection but short vowel mark easy to pronounce. Whenever there is no specific reason for using another short vowel mark, they use *fatḥa*. This mark means *sukūn* or the lack of sound in spoken language.

4. The *ḥarakats* (short vowel marks) of inflection, except those in *mabnī* words (i.e. those words the *ḥarakats* of which do not change) and in dependent words (i.e. those words the *ḥarakat*s of which depend on the previous *ḥarakat*), do not deviate from the above-mentioned cases.

5. *Tanwīn* or nunation signifies the indefiniteness of a noun.

6. Proper nouns are not marked by *tanwīn* (nunation) unless they have the features of an indefinite noun.

7. Adjectives are marked by *tanwīn* unless they have a definition (Muṣṭafā 1951: w-ḫ).

Although Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā's views created some commotion among scholars, they were finally approved by Cairo's Culture House (Ziriklī 1986: 1/74).

In 1977, Ḍayf presented four suggestions to the Culture House in order to simplify Arabic syntax:

1. Reorganizing the rules of syntax and eliminating those which are not needed.

2. Employing some of the ideas of Ibn Maḍḍāʾ and the suggestions made to the Culture House of Cairo such as omitting *taqdīrī* inflections in *al-ismu l-manqūṣ* (deficient nouns ending with *yāʾ*), *al-ismu l-maqṣūr* (Deficient nouns ending with *alif* or *al-ʾalif al-maqṣūra*), noun in the genitive case for *mabnī* and first person *yāʾ*, and omitting local inflections in sentences.

3. Ignoring the inflections of the words whose grammatical function does not play a role in their correct pronunciation.

4. e.g. the inflections of *lāsiyyamā*, some tools of exception, interrogative and predicative *kam*.

5. Presenting some more accurate rules and definitions of terms such as: absolute object, associated accusative, and state.

The above suggestions were approved with some modifications and, finally, after the addition of two other suggestions to them, Šawqī Ḍayf wrote and published his book *Taǧdīdu l-naḥw*.

Separation of Morphology from Syntax

One of the noteworthy discussions in Arabic teaching methodology is the study and teaching of morphology and syntax separately, as two independent fields of knowledge, or combining them and teaching them alongside each other. We do not know exactly what the method of teaching Arabic in ancient schools was. A look at the table of contents of Sībawayhi's *al-Kitāb* reveals that those who had chosen this book as a textbook learnt morphology and syntax at the same time. We can consider Māzinī's *al-Taṣrīf* in the 3rd century as the starting point of the separation of morphology and syntax from each other (Ḍayf 1972: 121). However, later many books were written which did not pay serious attention to this point. In the 5th and 6th centuries the separation of syntax and morphology in the teaching of Arabic became official, and they were taught as two independent fields during this period. A clear example of this separation can be seen in the books *al-Kāfiya* (on syntax) and *al-Šāfiya* (on morphology). The subject of morphology or *ṣarf* is nothing but the rules of word-formation. The arrangement of grammatical subjects in independent books were also unchangeable and fixed. Also the type of inflection provided the basis for arranging them. (i.e. *marfūʿāt* (nominative case), *manṣūbāt* (accusative case), *maǧrūrāt* (genitive case), and those lacking in independent inflections and depending on their previous words (*Tawābiʿ*). This division was at the basis of grammar books at that time.

In the contemporary period, some Europeans followed the same method, for example, Régis Blachère in *Grammaire de l'arabe classique*, William Wright in *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* (First ed. Vol1, 1859, Vol2, 1862) and Carl Brockelmann in *Arabische Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1962). However, the method of presenting syntactic discussions in these

books is slightly different from that of classical books on syntax and even from that of new books written by Arab writers of grammar books. From among the above books, Wright's book seems to be the most complete one. He referred to and benefitted from all ancient sources and did not refrained from including any of the exceptional and rare forms and structures. Some others such as Haywood and Namad have discussed both morphology and syntax alongside each other in their book entitled *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language,* intended for teaching Arabic and its rules. From among Arab writers, Šayḫ Muṣṭafā Ġalāynī also mixed morphology and syntax to a great extent in his series of instructional books called *al-Durūsu l-ʿarabiyya.* Perhaps, we can say that nowadays both methods are used for teaching Arabic with the separation method remaining the dominant one.

Undoubtedly, the descent of the holy Qurʼān in Arabic helped this language to maintain its ancient structures and not yield to any significant changes. Hence, we should say that ancient Arabic syntax is still employed in modern Arabic. However, the above-mentioned two methods had clearly no use for those who learn Arabic as a foreign language.

This was because the function of such principles is to give order to a language that is learnt as a firs language, but they lack the required efficiency for novice foreign or second language learners. Thus it was necessary to rearrange or reorganize grammatical structures with the purpose of teaching Arabic as an L2. This task was accomplished by those Europeans who wished to teach Arabic to non-native speakers. In their books, they presented the most important rules of highest levels of frequency, which were by chance among the last to be discussed in the classical system of teaching Arabic, but the knowledge of which was necessary for reading and writing, right from the beginning. In this regard, we can refer to adjectival form (*naʿt* and *manʿūt*) or the possessive form (*muḍāf and muḍāf ʼilayhi*), and the structure of simple nominal and verbal sentences. They also omitted the extra topics and matched the rules of Arabic with the syntactic rules of their own language as much as possible in order to make them more understandable. They classified Arabic into the following categories:

1. - Classical Arabic or the same language of the Qurʼān;

2. - Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which was not much different from classical Arabic because of the holiness that the Qurʼān had granted to this language;

3. - Other dialects of Arabic which were not used in academic centers.

They taught the modern standard Arabic to those who wished to learn this language. Concerning the other varieties, it might be necessary to mention that some attempts have been made to create a written form for them, particularly Egyptian Arabic, and organize their syntactic structures. For instance, we can refer to the endeavors of Saʿīd ʿAql, who called the Arabic language of his country "Lebanese" and then developed a writing system for it based

on the Latin alphabet. Then he started writing books, particularly poetry books and novels, in that language using the new writing system. For instance, we can refer to a collection of poems called *Ḫumāsiyyāt*, which was published in Lebanese employing its specific writing system in 1978. His justification for doing so was primarily to maintain the identity and independence of Lebanese as a native language and then to reveal the simplicity of learning to write in this language comparing to writing in Arabic (Arkandiusz 2006: LIII/423-471).

The learning of Arabic in Iran is necessary for several reasons, the most important of which are as follows:

1) - Arabic is the language of religion, and one must learn it in order to become familiar with Islamic sources and study them.

2) - This language is closely mixed with Persian language and literature and, in order to correctly understand many instances of Persian literary legacy, one has to know Arabic.

However, the employment of ancient or old methods for learning Arabic and the mixture of general grammar, which is necessary for correct reading, understanding, and writing, with specific grammars many of which include a collection of rare structures only used in some dialects (Ibn ʿAqīl, n.d.: 1/50; Ḥassān 1971: 72) does not lead to desirable results for novice learners. It has not been very easy to get rid of this method either because teachers have been used to following such methods for a long time and have shown no interest in switching to new ones. Of course, some valuable steps have been taken for teaching Arabic in Iran following a rational method, and some books have been published in line with this purpose, for example, *al-Ṭarīqatu l-ğadīda min durūsi dari l-ʿulūmi l-ʿarabiyya* by Aḥmad Nağafī and Saʿīd Nağafī ʾAsadu-llāhī and published by *Daru l-ʿulūmi l-ʿarabiyya* Institute in 1947. The other books include *The Direct Method of Teaching Arabic Language and Literature* by Ḥusayn Ḫurāsānī (Tehran 1960), *al-Naḥw l-tağrībī* by some of the professors at Tehran University in 1970 and, finally, *Teaching Arabic*, volumes 1 & 2, by Aḏartāš Aḏarnūš (1987), which are used as textbooks in theology courses at Tehran University. This last book was more efficient and influential than others. Here, Aḏarnūš tried to identify the difficulties of Arabic syntax and replace the complicated rules with more rational and logical and very simple ones. The order of the syntactic structures presented in this book is completely different from what we see in classic books. Of course, he proposed some Persian equivalents for many of the terminologies used in Arabic grammar which are more useful for a correct perception of the syntactic rules in terms of meaning.

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