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MI 349

One Pager

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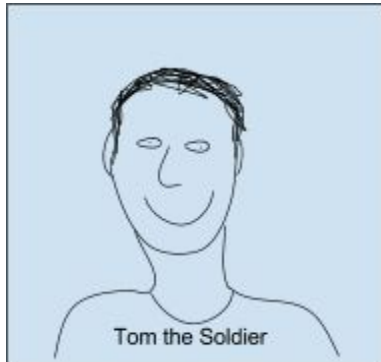
Short Pitch

Personal Blog for educational purposes in the Arabic Language

Elevator Pitch

This blog will be created from personal experience and knowledge but will benefit other Arabic students in their quest to conquer the language. There are many sites with Arabic information on them but this site will include multiple pages with information that I feel is essential to the serious Arabic student. The information on this blog will include a section for culture, arabic learning tips, standard arabic, shaami dialect, moroccan dialect, and outside resources. This website will be useful because most culture and language websites are separate and it is also hard to find websites that feature multiple dialects.

Personas



I. Tom the Soldier

Jim joined the military after graduating high school and just recently find out he is going to be stationed in Iraq. He has been learning Modern Standard Arabic for the past 6 months but he knows that he will not understand the Iraqi dialect and is looking for other learning sources to learn more about the Iraqi dialect and culture. He is hoping to find someone he can practice speaking with.

II. Hala the Heritage Speaker

Hala is a Senior at Wayne State University from the city of Dearborn, her family is Palestinian and she only speaks the language with her grandparents. She is majoring in Medicine but very passionate about the refugees in Syria and would like to know more about her family's history and language.

III. Susie the Arabic Student

Susie is a Junior at Wayne State University and majors in Arabic and Computer Science. She plans to study abroad to Morocco this Summer and wants to be fully integrated into the culture. She is an advanced Arabic Speaker but struggles with the dialect and cultural phrases. She listens to the news in Arabic every morning but would like to start listening to Arabic tv shows. She vaguely understands the Arabic culture but knows nothing about Morocco, specifically.

Quote:

""Kul shi mzian, la bas?" That's how you say 'hi, how are you' in Moroccan dialect right?"

"Wait, how do I spell 'mzian' in transliteration? Like that or like 'mzyan' or 'imziiayn'?"

Who is it:

- 20 years old
- Royal Oak, Michigan
- Student
- Frequently reads blogs and uploads photography to her own flickr account. Loves tumblr and reblogging new information and has become quite famous for her creative traveling photos on Instagram. She isn't a gamer, unless MarioKart counts, and has tried to create a few games for her classes, but doesn't really know what kind of games to create.
- Wants to work for the State Department after she graduates and possibly open a non-profit abroad.

Goals:

She wants to get to a level 3 on the ILR system before she leaves Morocco and wants to learn some tips from other students who have reached that level of proficiency. She wants to become fluent in Standard Arabic as well as two other dialects and then obtain a job at the State Department where she can continue traveling the world.

Attitude:

Susie is very busy with her classes and wants to find useful information quickly, she doesn't have time to look through multiple sites in order to find the best one to learn Arabic from.

Behavior:

Susie listens to the news in Arabic online but has trouble finding and organizing information from other websites about the arabic language and culture. She bookmarked about a hundred Arabic learning pages only to find that the language is a little different on each one and that a lot of the phrases are the same. She can't seem to find Islamic greetings and departures and still can't find the format for writing an email in Arabic, which is pretty frustrating.

Comps

I. Desert Sky

<http://arabic.desert-sky.net/index.html>

Desert Sky may be the biggest comp and most useful Arabic website

Pros

- Heavy grammar section with very detailed examples and helpful explanations
- Organized Cleanly
- Organized by category
- Easy to navigate

Cons

- There is no dialect, audio, video, or culture included (very important to the language)

II. The Arabic Student

<http://www.thearabicstudent.com/>

Pros

- Blog from student's perspective
- Uses videos that are culturally relevant and popular!! (TV shows, music videos, Vines..)
- Arabic script and translation for dialect

Cons

- Ugly design

III. Arabic Speak 7

http://arabic.speak7.com/arabic_vocabulary_animals.htm

Pros

- They have a section for Islamic phrases (so hard to find & important)
- Section for careers in Arabic (motivation of learning language)
- Business in Arabic language - (email, how to address people)
- English, text, and transliteration

Cons

- Ugly design
- Large and distracting (doesn't fit design) advertisement at the very top.

IV. Hobob Arabic

<http://www.hobob.org/arabi/>

Pros

- Entire site is in Arabic (pro for advanced)
- Categorized by topic
- Grammar categories

Cons

- Entire site is in Arabic (con for beginners)

V. Personal Arabic Blog

<http://jacqualyn.tripod.com/arabic.html>

Pros

- Dialectal slang and noted from which specific city, Country

Cons

- Only one page
- Word Art.....
- pink and purple theme...?
- Vocab lists separated by “=” signs instead of put into a chart

VI. Lebanese Roots or Lebanese Arabic Phrasebook (Very Similar)

<http://lebaneseroots.tripod.com/maroniteacademy/5.2.culture-language.html>

Pros

- Connects the dialect with the culture and history
- Very relevant cultural phrases are presented
- Links to other useful arabic websites

Cons

- Numbered horizontal navigation lol
- Ugliest presentation of a video - YouTube (not fit to screen video of a desktop screen)
- Why is there no organization or categories?

VII. Arclite

<http://arclite.byu.edu/ce/arabic.php>

Pros

- Videos to present the language categorized by profession/topic.
- Speed variability on videos (slow down, speed up)
- Dialect!

Cons

- Cognitive Affordance - when you first look at the page you literally have no idea what it is
- The links are not descriptive (What am I clicking on?!)
- The design - seriously? Black and white?
- There is no Arabic text

VIII. Express Beta

<http://webapp.llc.msu.edu/expressAuthor/view/?ID=121>

So this website is a little different, in that it is an msu website and private and needs authorization. I'm placing it here because it is less of competition and more of inspiration.

Pros

- Uncommon words are highlighted and translation is provided - often times described in Arabic but sometimes English is used if the word is uncommon even for an advanced speaker.
- The reading have audio with them to follow along, this is very important in mastering reading and listening in a language.
- There is a video to go along with the topic
- Students learn better from Vocabulary in context rather than vocabulary lists, which is why this is so useful.

Cons

- For the purpose of a leisurely education blog I don't like the idea of questions along with the topics
- The page is private and there is only one topic.
- The whole website uses only Arabic text meaning it could only be used by advanced speakers.

What I learned I would like in my own website from this task:

- A nice organized home page
 - Descriptive links
 - Search bar
- Categorized by Fus7a and Dialectal educational content
 - Common phrases and topics relevant in each dialect
 - Information available on “computer slang” - especially for the alphabet
 - Use transliteration w/ dialect & Arabic script with fus7a
- Content to be categorized by proficiency level
 - Design to be appropriate to proficiency level
 - Beginner in English
 - Intermediate in Arabic with help (English in hover maybe)
 - Advanced in Arabic and links and info to be placed on right (Arabic is read right to left)
- Vocabulary lists to be categorized by topic *separate pages for each topic
 - Audio to go along with everything.
 - Express Beta-type videos to go with each vocabulary list that are separated according to proficiency level.
 - Videos to be culturally relevant & interesting
 - Fus7a - News
 - Dialect - (TV shows, Music videos, vines...)
 - Arabic text to supplement the videos (maybe subtitles)
 - Maybe with English subtitles for Intermediate learners
 - Speed variability on videos
- Grammar available
 - Especially useful grammar -> commands, iDafa, connectors.
- Links to other useful websites
- Make efficient on phones/tablets
- Enable proper color scheme to be usable to those who are colorblind
- Possibly allow for users to send me information (or a chat forum) that I can organize and put within my dialect sections seeing as I don't know the differences between dialect in each country let alone city.

Additional Questions

- Will this be too information dense? Should I organize not by tab but possibly by separate blogs?
- Do I want to include “Student Information”
 - Programs
 - Study Abroad Experience
 - Cultural Customs
 - Opinions...
 - Job Opportunities

