

## **The Function of Arabic Literature in Arabic Language Teaching: A Gateway to Cultural Literacy**

*Basma Ahmed Sidqi Al-Dajani* \*

### **ABSTRACT**

The learner of Arabic as a second language is normally keen first and foremost to reach a level of competence in understanding the culture that embodies the language. As literary arts accord the reader, listener and learner a certain pleasure associated with reflection and imagination, the educational material selected for the purpose should include literary texts that help in projecting the ideas and accommodating the linguistic rules. This paper is based on competent sources, references on the subject, samples of literary work, informational texts and the researcher's own experience in Arabic language and literature teaching at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

**Keywords:** Arabic Language, Teaching, Learning, Through Literature.

### **Introduction**

Today, the teaching of Arabic is at an important confluence. This is manifested by the unprecedented interest shown by speakers of other languages in the Arabic language. Such interest in Arabic renders a huge responsibility on the shoulders of Arabic language teachers and education centers in Arab countries and internationally. Moreover, language is a vessel of any culture and literature is a pillar of the language. As the Arab and Islamic worlds are today living in a state of extreme turmoil, the deployment of the culture of the Arab-Islamic civilization requires sophisticated methodologies and policies to face such challenges and overcome the barriers of communication with the other.

Literature is the mirror of society. Thus, the three main branches of literature which are prose (novels, novellas or short stories), poetry and drama (literature represented through performance) often represent the intellectual and cultural trends of society.

This paper attempts to discuss the importance of teaching language through literary works by essentially addressing the following issues:

1. Introducing literature into the educational material: The why question;
2. Literature as a tool to unravel the history and culture of the Arab-Islamic culture;
3. Integrating literature in the teaching of Arabic language;
4. Teaching of reading and writing skills through literary forms;
5. The importance of studying Arab dialects from local literature.

### **Introducing Literature Into The Educational Material: The Why Question**

The last four decades have witnessed an increasing focus by Arab and western educational institutions on publishing curricula that teach Arabic to non-native speakers whose numbers are ever increasing. This is perhaps due to the ever unfolding events in the Middle East.

The question of how a language teacher conveys its grammar, systems and the significance of the vocabulary to the

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non-native learners is a matter of great importance. Equally so is the point at which a teacher would feel confident about teaching language skills and succeed in managing the educational process in a lively and an exciting manner that his/her students would relish. Needless to say ability and mastery are the main requirements of the teacher and they will be achieved when s/he is keen to master the arts of the language and its culture efficiently.

Competence and ability are the main objectives of the language learner firstly and lastly. S/he acquires them when s/he is capable of interacting in the second language environment spontaneously and comfortably.

Literature has been eloquently described by many. The essence and nature of literature reflect the social systems and cultural traditions of society which attempt to simulate its life or reverse its negative features (Adham 1979:241). Literature is beautiful ideas described in beautiful words and articulate speeches that provoke the recipient to sense an artistic delight (Ta'imah and Manna' 2001:19).

The interest in Arabic literature as one of the most valuable language teaching resources available has been there in many curricula; *Introduction to Modern Standard Arabic* by Peter Abboud in 1968, *Ahlan wa Sahlan* by Mahdi al-Osh, *Arabic for non-native speakers of the University of Jordan* and others. This interest is increasing apparently with a wide variety of the selections and more focus on utilization of authentic material. This is in harmony with the new trends in the communicative approach that consider studying literature helps to develop communicative efficiency, that is teaching learners to interact in the second language through authentic communicative situations. "Accordingly, the classroom materials and activities presented to the learner are authentic in the sense that they reflect the Arabic language varieties as they are used by the native (educated) Arabic speakers in real life situations in the cultural aspects of language" (Wahba 2010: 140).

The Calif alMa'mun (d. 833 AD) said in (Jame' Bayan al-Ilm wa Faddlihi, Ibn AbdulBar, Vol. 1, p. 146)

واعلم بأن العلم بالتعلم	والحفظ والاتقان والتفهم
فالتمس العلم واجمل في الطلب	والعلم لا يحسن إلا بالأدب

Learning a language is not only mastering the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. It requires learning about its literature, for literature is at the heart of every language. Through literature, the learner would accurately comprehend the nature and character of the speakers of the language; absorb their traditions and their social and psychological personae. For instance, reading Naguib Mahfouz's novels sheds light on the zeitgeist of Cairo during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Analyzing Nizar Qabani's poetry provides a reflection of the social and political perspectives in Syria in particular and the Arab world in general during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well. While reading Mai Ziada's articles, or Widad Skakini's or Bint al Shate's, offers an idea on the cultural interaction and the role of women in Egypt and Bilad al-Sham during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As literature is written for native speakers, non-native students can acquire familiarity with the various linguistic methods by studying some materials and thus they get a broader understanding of the language and culture. When reading, watching, studying and listening to various artistic forms of literature, students develop the capacity to examine thought and action with enthusiasm, learners may see life through the eyes of the characters when they are able to connect thereto and will consequently study with understanding.

There is a thin line separating history and literature, one which is difficult to define, and the two disciplines represent related types of narrative. As described in Mehrez's examination of the work of three leading modern Egyptian writers: the Noble laureate Naguib Mahfouz, Son'allah Ibrahim and Gamal al-Ghitani, "Mehrez delves into the relationship between history and narrative literature and shows that both attempt to transform "reality" and life into historical structures of meaning" (Mehrez, 1994: cover). This "real" artistic analysis in the novel *Dhat* by Ibrahim for instance, would afford language students a chance to study some authentic media sources within the chapters of his novel taken from the Egyptian newspapers of both the government and the opposition which reflects the general atmosphere that surrounded and shaped the fate of the characters.

A wise teacher who may select chapters of Naguib Mahfouz's magisterial Cairo Trilogy, which provides its reader with a deep insight into Egyptian culture, would enhance the students' understanding of Egypt's modern history, society and culture in a comprehensible structural language. This is particularly poignant as there is a special natural and factual flavour in the language Mahfouz uses in his novels and short stories.

The intellectual Arab reaction towards globalization is reflected artistically by some modern novels and novelists that language students may come across by reading, watching, or listening and then addressing the inevitable culture interaction and then communicating their thoughts to their teachers. Some such novels include *Bird of the East* by Tawfiq al-Hakim(1938), *Qandil Um Hashem* by Yahya Haqqi(1944), *Season of Migration to the North* by al-Tayyeb Saleh (1966), *Sharaf* by Son'allah Ibrahim (1997) and *Gate of the Sun* by the Lebanese writer Elias Khoury (1998).Such novels can be studied linguistically and culturally to enhance dialogue cultivation.

Selecting teaching material by the language teacher to encourage learners to become acquainted with the Arab-Islamic culture does not only involve selecting the appropriate literary works, but also how s/he would present them within the four language skills of; listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to elevate students' language proficiency and cultural integration in an interesting educational atmosphere.

In my testament to my graduate students in "Literary Communication in the Islamic Arab Civilization" and "Mirror in Arab Literature" I declared that there was a mutual benefit from their discussions on the globalization of today and the role of orientalists in analyzing the points of view of Edward Saeed in his *Orientalism* book, which heavily impacted the American public opinion and Samuel Huntington and his book *Clash of Civilizations* some of whose phenomena we now live, as well as their analysis of the term "civilization". I greatly enjoyed their literary criticism of the novel *Black Suites You* by Ahlam Mistaghanmi, learning about their interests in schools of criticism and what attracts them in creative texts, then testing them on this and reading their analysis in clear Arabic.

### **Literature as a Tool to Unravel the History and Culture of the Arab-Islamic Culture**

Teaching methods must incorporate motivational or innovative aspects that help in teaching Arabic as the mother tongue of many and encourage the analysis of Arab history and culture as well as comparing the same to those of other civilizations. Recognizing the towering figures of the Arab/Islamic civilization, those who excelled in the various fields of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology as well as in Arabic language and literature is a worthy pursuit, as it encourages today's language learners. It is an added incentive to help the learners of Arabic to further appreciate the ability of Arabic to be the lingua franca par excellence not only of literature but also of science as such towering figures have demonstrated, thus contributing to making Arabic a global language similar to other global languages around the world. Some such personalities include Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn al-Haitham (Alhazen), Ibn Zuhr, al-Khawarizmi (Algorizm), Ibn Khaldun, al-Kindi (Alkindus), al-Farabi (AlPharabius), al-Idrisi who have been among the most outstanding figures in the history of scientific thought are efficacious in presenting their output linguistically, culturally and globally.

It is as a result of studying the literature of the various eras within the Arab Islamic civilization that a non-native Arabic learner would acquire a better appreciation of the cultural landscape and a deeper understanding of the social context of the language. For example, comparing the Umayyad or the Andalusian literary movement with the Abbasid would help in following the political and social aspects related to each milieu. Furthermore, reading love poetry from the three different historical eras- Umayyad, Abbasid and Andalusian- demonstrates the main features of each era.

Omar bin Abi Rabi'a (Umayyad):

فتن الله بكم فيمن فتن	" قلت: مَنْ هذا، فقالت: بعض مَنْ
أورثت في القلب همًّا وشجن	قلت: حقاً ذا! فقالت قولةً
ودموعي شاهدٌ لي والحزن	يشهد الله على حُبِّي لكم
قالت: اللهم عدِّبني إذن "	قلت: يا سيدي عدِّبتي

Hafsa bint Hamdan (Andalusian):

وإذا ما تركته زاد تيبها  
 "لي حبيب لا ينثني بعتاب  
 قلت: أيضاً وهل تزي لي شبيها" قال لي: هل رأيت لي من شبيهه

"فتأمل لطيفة: قد وضعوا لمعنى الحب حرفين لطيفين مناسبين للمسمى غاية المناسبة؛ الحاء التي هي من أقصى الحلق، والباء الشفوية التي هي من نهايته. فلحاء الابتداء، وللباء الانتهاء. وهذا شأن المحبة وتعلقها بالمحبيب. فإن ابتداءها منه، وانتهاءها إليه. وأعطوا الحب وهو التعلق القلبي حركة الضم التي هي أشد الحركات وأقواها، مطابقة لشدة حركة مسماها وقوتها، وأعطوا الحب وهو المحبوب حركة الكسر لختها بالنسبة للضم، وذلك لخفة المحبوب وذكره على قلوب المحبين وألسنتهم. إن قلت هلاً أعطوه الفتحة فإنها أخف، قلت: نعم لكن من كتاب منية المحبين وبغية العاشقين لمرعي الكرمي (المتوفى 1033 هـ/ يلتبس، وأيضاً ففي الكسر مناسبة لكسر القلوب من المحبين". 1623م).

This extract from a classical literary book on love provides many linguistic opportunities to the language learner and allows the teacher to design activities; grammatical, structural style, playing with words that are based on material suitable for stimulating greater interest and involvement than many other informative texts. At the same time, this type of material deals with an interesting common subject among humans, a subject that has mass appeal; love. Thus, it would be quite interesting for learners to get an idea about such documentations by scholars of Islamic civilization who have left us with numerous literary masterpieces to explain passion and love in all their associated shades (cf. Dajani and Khaldi, 2013).

The speech act is social more than individual as any word we speak is produced by interaction with an audience that we always imagine in our minds (Joseph 2007, p.79). The effectiveness of words and the feasibility of sentences and texts are not tested in individual or isolated scopes; they are subjected to the speaking linguistic group that adds to its effectiveness and feasibility. This means that society imposes itself on the language and the opposite is necessarily true (Omari 2012: 395).

The theory of deconstruction produced by Abdul Qaher al-Jirjani. 474 H, in his famous "Theory of Deconstruction", centuries ago represents an important foundation for the success of literary texts in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. The vocable is important in teaching students, and through it students link between the meaning and the word. More importantly, the process of putting words together, building sentences, forming texts, monitoring words inside the text, and its impact on the main circles of the deconstruction theory through which students can be taught – at one phase of the education phases – how to simulate eloquent styles, enrich their vocabulary, and seek a way to become fluent (cf. AbdulKarim).

The 'vocable' is very important in the process of composing words and it can be examined in any literary text as the first building block in the stylistic structure of the text. However, the vocable is decorated by its location in the system of words, and seems to have varying aesthetic effects in various texts. This was outlined by Abdul Qaheral-Jirjani, saying: "It is clear that disparity in this virtue and the distance from it to its opposite of vice is not by a mere word, how?! The terms are of no use when they constitute a special form of composition, and are resorted to in one facet and another of composition and arrangement" (Jirjani p.5) In another instance he says: "The testimony to this is that you see a word that you like and that keeps you company in a certain instance, and then you see the same word that weighs heavily on you, and causes you to feel estranged in another instance..." (Jirjani p.46).

Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi (d. 456 H. / 1064 AD) said:

الغرب مَطْلَعِي أَنْ عَيْبِي وَلَكِنْ  
 مُنِيرَةُ الْعُلُومِ جَوْ فِي أَنَا الشَّمْسُ

Teaching literary texts helps in developing language learning skills (listening, writing, reading and speaking). Learners also resort to simulating the phrases and sentences in the literary texts which they find are enriching and spare them the need to form phrases to communicate with others. They thus respond with a popular saying, a nugget of wisdom, or a line of poetry, to express their ideas or communicate with others, resorting to Mutanabi's verse:

وأسمعت كلماتي من به صممُ أنا الذي نظر الأعمى إلى أدبي

“Even the blind have perceived my poetic art, and my verses have rung in the ears of the deaf”, or (from the contemporary era) Abu al Qasem al Shabi’s line:

إذا الشعب يوماً أراد الحياة فلا بد أن يستجيب القدر

If People wanted life, fate must respond

Some sayings are also popular in other languages and can be easily manifested, memorized and acquired.

القلم أقوى من السيف القلم أقوى من السيف

Birds of a feather flock together الطيور على أشكالها تقع

On this basis, stories also can be best at a specific point in time, because dialogue is a basis of work, and helps in deliberate recognition and in forming questions and answers.

The curriculum would attract learners to interact more through comparative studies; exchanging opinions, learning about new aspects of other cultures among the students themselves, discussing some classics from the Umayyad's and Abbasids then compare them with some modern pieces. Listening to selected verses of Salah Jahin or Om Kulthoum can give a sense of language appreciation.

Reading extracts of the classical Andalusian Arabic book *Ammunition in the Traits of the People of the Arab Peninsula* by Ibn Bassam Al Shatrini (d. 542 H /1147 AD) in advanced language levels offers historic, literary and social aspects of the Islamic community’s features throughout the Islamic era. Moreover, it offers a look at some features of comparative literature with samples by Andalusians and other Arabs in the East. Additionally, it includes a very early example of a discussion on intellectual property rights, a matter that is so prominent in today’s intellectual and academic circles.

Also for the graduate level, it is gainful and thrilling to study parts of the writings by the literary scholar Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi (d. 456 H./ 1064 AD). Indeed, it would reflect positively on non-native language students to read such authentic materials written centuries ago, as s/he may understand most of it and relate it to the modern age; an example of such works could be Ibn Hazm’s famous book *The Ring of the Dove* about Love relations and his book *Morals and Rights Conduct in the Healing of souls*.

Students' reflection of the latter was positive as far as reading, comprehending and discussing in class: They almost all agreed that Ibn Hazm succeeded in addressing interacting between people from his own reflections on life and his personal experiences. He deduces wisdom, sermons, and advice to push out heartache and fulfill spiritual and psychological happiness. Ultimately, the scholar is persuaded of the vast culture of the author, based on the comprehensive understanding of diverse cultures such as the Persian and Greek cultures. All students were of the opinion that translation has always been a key in global intellectual production.<sup>1</sup>

The same applies to the world traveler Ibn Batuta (d.770 H/ 1378 AD) and his book of travels *The Trip – Book of Travels*, where the students can see lively images of journey literature and analyze the importance of the journey as a source of history and of international relations. It supplies great information about the various types of trips and the purposes of travel and thus good material for the class to discuss and write about; pilgrimage, study, scientific, exploration, political, touristic, trade, business and spiritual. It can also encourage the class to talk about individual adventures at a young age, to travel far and adapt to different environments, coexist in cultural diversity, learn from and about the others and finally understand the importance of recording notes. The students may enjoy comparing that ancient trip of Ibn Batuta and its results with modern trips, their own experiences and readings, especially in view of the current circumstances that facilitate travel between the continents to explore and learn.

#### **Integrating Literature in the Teaching of Arabic Language**

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<sup>1</sup> Graduate international students of Arabic Language and literature Program.

Literature has a strong motivating power due to its calling on personal experiences (Llach p.10). "Literature is the record of experience interpreted by personality that behind every book which the race has preserved is a human being's eager effort to give life meaning, to create beauty, to express vivid emotions and ideas, to make men aware of themselves and the life they lead" (R. P. 1931) (Koutsompou. p.74).

A goal of learning a language is to communicate with its' people, understand and express oneself clearly. The learner is anxious to speak with the native speaker spontaneously. The inspiring teacher encourages students in different linguistic levels to provide models of personal tales in short stories style-about their childhood- when studying the past, present or future tenses.

It would be amusing for a learner to use some of the vocabulary and styles of an autobiography he/she studied to apply it on him/herself. There were successful attempts with advanced students writing maqama and living the old experience in a modern fashion.

"The Spaniards came closer to obtaining the (linguistic) habit (than the people of Ifriqiyah), because they were greatly interested in it and saturated with poetry and prose they had memorized. In general, the (Arabic linguistic) habit plays a greater role in Spain, and instruction in it is simpler and easier (there than elsewhere), because the (Spaniards) are nowadays greatly interested in, and concerned with, philology and literature and the teaching tradition in those (subjects), as we have mentioned before. Also, non-Arabic speakers with a corrupt (linguistic) habit are only recent immigrants in (Spain), and non-Arabic (speech habits) are not the basis of the language of the Spaniards." (Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah 1377: 768).

Between language and literature, there is a timeless relationship. Language is the other side of thinking process, communicating, building relationships, buying, selling, education and entertainment. All these features and situations can be easily depicted from literary works.

The holistic sense of a language, its social and cultural concept is more than the vocabulary, grammatical, linguistic and morphological systems. In fact language as a whole includes behavioral and indicative systems, as well as mental statements, acoustic emissions associated with the signifier and the signified. It is a societal inheritance that is susceptible for development that influences and holds within it the effect of time and the vocabulary of its culture and civilization. Language is a cultural image with all its reflections (Omari 2012: 394).

Therefore, languages are considered to be the most genuine historical record for the people. By looking at the stages that each language passed through and its characteristics, historians and scholars can deduce the phases of its native speakers (Wafi 1971: p.9,10).

Whilst literature is indeed the thought of the nation's heritage, which is expressed in a written language to transparently transmit the nation's social, political, intellectual, humanitarian, economic and cultural inherited ideologies. "It is evident therefore, that between history and narrative literature there exists a relationship of complementarity that can only enrich and deepen our understanding of a given culture or society. The relationship Aristotle proposed between history and poetry: history is what happened; poetry is what could have happened" (Mehrez, 1994 p.4).

أبا تمام .. أين تكون؟ أين حديثك العطر؟ وأين يدّ مغامرة؟ تسافر في مجاهيل وتبتكر  
أبا تمام .. أرملة قصائدنا، وأرملة كتابتنا، وأرملة هي الألفاظ والصور  
فلا ماء يسيل على دفاترنا ولا ريح تهب على مراكبنا ولا شمس .... ولا قمر  
أبا تمام .. دار الشعر دورته، وثار اللفظ، والقاموس ثار البدو والحضر  
وملّ البحر زرقته، وملّ جذوعه الشجر ونحن هنا .. كأهل الكهف ... لا علم ولا خبر  
(نزار قباني، 1972، من مفكرة عاشق دمشقي)

"It is important to note that as literature begins to write the silences and exclusions of official history, the literary

text will in turn produce its own significant silences. If the writer is engaged in making speak the silences of history, then the critic, as Terry Eagleton says, has the task of making speak the silences of the literary text itself" (Mehrez, 1994p.7).

The use of literature as a teaching tool motivates the learner to interact with the content and reflect about authentic linguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural material. Moreover, literature offers a number of teaching scopes from a cultural perspective and extracts there from can be used to analyze sentence structure, grammar, vocabulary, word forms etc. (Edwards, 2009 p.6). Exercises for grammar, vocabulary, aural proficiency, etc. can be drawn from the pages of a book.

The position of the writer as "underground historian" is indeed what characterizes much of the literary output in the contemporary Arab world. One of the examples that immediately comes to mind, and which becomes doubly urgent under occupation, is the example of the late Palestinian writer and critic Ghassan Kanafani, for whom the literary endeavor itself defined political action: My political position springs from my being a novelist. Insofar as I am concerned, politics and the novel are a indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite (Mehrez, 1994 p.8).

It is necessary to present and focus on the language's culture to non-native language learners, because it is a foundation that must be presented to learners. This was stated by the writers of the foundation book published by the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Sciences: "The foundation in this sense is not restricted – naturally – to the alphabet, phonetics, the structure of words and sentence composition, it also includes – more importantly – the civilizations culture expressed by the Arabic language with its expressive wealth and effectiveness, distilled in its users, entrenched them through the genius of time and place" (Badawi, and Fathi, 1988,Part 1, p. d).

Behavioral theorists believe that the language is an automatic behavioral habit, and that learners "are dominated by the system and rules of the mother tongue, as well as its phonetics, grammar, syntax, connotations and culture. These negatively impact the learner when acquiring a second language, as the learner transfers the systems of the mother tongue to the second language..." (Ossaily, 2006 p.41). Therefore, followers of this theory believe in exaggerating the training of learners on patterns that are different than those of the mother tongue so that they may become accustomed to them, and focus on oral education, which can be achieved by selecting a literary text that contains patterns of linguistic rules that are unique to the Arabic language. The learner can read this several times in order to simulate it.

### **Teaching of Reading and Writing Skills through Literary Forms**

Because literature in the Islamic Arab civilization is defined as a science that shelters Arabic talk from oral and written mistakes according to al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 H. / 1143 AD) and it is the sum to which an artist should adhere to in a linguistic analysis, it is useful to give it more attention in teaching Arabic Language to non-native speakers. Literature increases the fun of teaching and learning and can improve reading comprehension to a great extent, because reading proficiency rests on the interaction between reader and writer, interaction mediated by the text (McKay 1986: 192). The more motivating and enjoyable the text, the more intense, real and powerful the interaction will be (Brumfit and Carter, 1986 p.5) (Llach, 2007p.13).

It is through reading Arabic texts that writing abilities can also improve, as reading helps learners to develop their writing skills in this language. Krashen (1989) and Coady (1997) argue that it is through extensive reading that learners acquire most of their vocabulary. For Grabe and Stoller (1997), reading contributes greatly to vocabulary development and also to listening comprehension (Llach, 2007 p.10). With some initiating activities, the teacher smoothes the path of the reading exercises and guides the learners to what they will be dealing with. It is important that the learners predict what will come and that they have some previous idea of what they are going to read (Llach, 2007 p.13). Pre-reading classroom activities give students an idea of what is required of them in connection with continued reading (cf. Svensson, 2008 p.28) (Edwards 2009, p.14).

Reading as an interactive process, is a common expression used by specialist authors on language didactics. It can be described as a process in which the reader utilizes various kinds of knowledge when moving through a text. When attempting to make sense of a text it is probable that you will use six different types of knowledge, syntactic-, morphological-, general word-, sociocultural-, topic-, and genre knowledge, in order to decode as well as interpret meaning of the language (Hedge, 2001p.189) (Edwards, 2009 p.3,4).

In his book *Acquiring Language in Ancient Arab Intellect*, Oraghi made important references on acquiring language in ancient Arabic intellect. He replied on the philosopher Ibn Sina, (427 H.), proving that the acquisition aspects in language based on hearing. This explains the appearance of some phrases relevant to this skill in Arabic writing, such as the saying: Hearing is the father of all tongue acquisition (Oraghi:50). The book discussed at length the idea of language acquisition in ancient intellect, stressing the importance of the joint sense from which all senses branch out, which is the primary cavity in the brain, from which five rivers flow. Through this sense, people recognize images and differentiate between them.

#### **Beginners' level;** Stories and songs

There should definitely be a difference between the curriculums of young Arab native speakers and university level non-native Arabic learners, but children's stories may provide some useful common vocabulary in a nice and easy style.

Encouraging language learners to practice reading with stimulating kids' short stories for homework and answering comprehension questions to practice speaking and writing is the teacher's role.

Perhaps beginners need plays where physical expression is considered an important element bringing together language and body movement. It is well known that physical expression constitutes 32% of the communication channels of learners. (Fezari, <http://fizaziabdeslam.over-blog.com/article-46245027.html>)

Listening to poetry, odes and songs – which are very essential in every culture, represents a main source for language learners– as affability (أُسَى) is a derived word human (إنسان) in Arabic –and it is very well known the importance of the classical literary Arabic encyclopedia ALAGHANI as a historical and cultural reference.

ويأتيك بالأخبار من لم يزود<sup>2</sup>      سئبدي لك الأيام ما كنت جاهلاً

Time will reveal to you what you are ignorant of, and the news will be brought to you by a man whom you did not ask to do so.(Theodory. 1959. P. 268).

أمانة تسليمي عليك فسلمى      إذا طلعت شمسُ النهار فأتها

The sun that rises every day is a sign of my greeting you, so return my greeting. (Theodory, 1959 P.264).

Moreover, poetry, with its rhythms, develops the skills of reading in learners and enriches their vocabulary. Muawiya Bin Abi Sufian the Founder of the Umayyad Caliphate (d. 60 H.) said in educating youngsters: “Good poetry opens the mind, discloses logic, unleashes the tongue and indicates gallantry and courage...”(Askari. V.1. p. 274)

On the other hand, popular sayings contribute to familiarity with the culture and nature of the Arabs and reveal their emotional composition.

The following are some examples for beginner and intermediate levels that can be studied while explaining grammar functionally.

البيت الضيق يسع ألف صديق      البيت الضيق يسع ألف صديق

الحديث ذو شجون      One conversation leads to another

خير الكلام ما قلّ ودلّ      Best words are few with full indications

<sup>2</sup>By the Old Classical pre Islamic Arab Poet Tarfa bin alAbd.



A war may break out by a single word رُبَّ حَرْبٍ شَبَّتَ مِنْ لَفْظَةٍ

Better consult a man of experience than a sage سَلْ مُجْرِباً وَلَا تَسَلْ حَكِيماً

The value of each man lies in what he does well قِيَمَةُ الْمَرْءِ مَا يُحْسِنُهُ

Each session has a different discussion; each government has different men لِكُلِّ مَقَامٍ مَقَالٌ، وَلِكُلِّ دَوْلَةٍ رِجَالٌ

It is important for the literary text to be clear in its statement, easy to compose and without exaggerating imagination.

A number of assignments will help motivate students delve deeper into this genre of entertainment. Ask them to analyze a week's TV schedule to see how much time is devoted to such programs and how the different channels compare in their approach (cf. Turner, 2004) Using their own ideas, they can create a concept for a new TV show and present it to the class. You can add another element to the lesson by showing portraits of people as students select them for their show and motivate why. To conclude this part of the project students can write a short text on the concept of being famous as well their opinions on reality TV. (Edwards 2009: 22).

A graduate student in Arabic Language and Literature for non-native speakers reflected on studying poetry of Nizar Qabbani: "Through decades of poetry and prose production, from "The Brunette Told Me" in 1944 to the time of his death in 1998, Nizar Qabbani left a true treasure trove for humanity. His poems about love still ignite fires in the hearts of lovers all over the world. He is famous in the Arab World and the world at large, because love is common to every country, every language and every society. His political poetry also touches to some degree the feelings of everyone, for who has never felt injustice? Through the work of the prominent Nizar Qabbani, we see the idea of liberation, the liberation of the weak from the strong and the oppressed from the oppressor. This is a common element throughout the poems of Nizar." (Nilsen 2015)

### **The Importance of Studying Arab Dialects from Local Literature**

Discussion is going on whether to start with classical Arabic or the colloquial of the place of studying. It is better to stimulate the situation for Arabic learners since colloquial is a natural phenomenon, is just a branch in the tree of any language and inseparable -like day and night. The learner is the one to choose with which to start as he/she needs to learn both. The teacher is the one who submits colloquial through speaking and talking, and modern standard for writing and reading.

Reading forms of ironic literary which reflect the reality assists in forming social awareness, in the form of articles and short stories by Zakaria Tamer, as well as Salwa Baker. This indicates to the students the importance of including the colloquial dialect in creative work and the way it conveys lively and realistic images.

It is better to keep up with the effect of place and time in learning a language and its culture. So, the role of literary essays, cartoons, films, television serials, stories, plays and novels emerges.

Offering glimpses of the Arab language literature and its culture, so that the students can meet Arab literary giants and writers famous for their creativity in different countries, through their translated material and what was published about them, and then discuss the intellectual content of the creative language used and discuss the extent the society's culture reflects on creative work, thus understanding the importance of the role of literature in interacting among the people of the various cultures.

Autobiography literature: Focus on the art of biography literature in order to present realistic images through personal confessions, recording historic, social, political and scientific phases that are useful to form a comprehensive image of the Arab World in influential time periods. The students learn about the lives of the elite who left their mark on Arab literature such as Ihsan Abbas in his book "The Estrangement of the Shepherd", thus learning about him as a literary critic on one hand and a Palestinian immigrant on the other. There is also Michael Naimeh in "Seventy", through which they learn about him as an intellectual, philosopher and pioneer in diaspora literature.

Then there is Aisha Abul Rahman in "On the Bridge" and her important scientific and cultural role. She was the second woman to write in Egypt's Al Ahram newspaper after May Ziadeh, and the first woman to lecture at Al Azhar.

They can learn about how she personally opened faculties of arts in some Arab countries.

In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela wrote of his time in prison: "I tried to read books about South Africa or by South African writers. I read all the unbanned novels of Nadine Gordimer and learned a great deal about the white liberal sensibility." (1991 Nobel Laureate in literature)

The Syrian director Mustafa Akkad in his movie "The Message" succeeded in delivering a positive image of the "other" for a large value in the Arab-Islamic civilization. He delivered a universal message about an important unclear era for many.

It is essential to make use of new technology tools in practicing language skills for all learning levels. It can be very well utilized in listening to various Arabic dialects, watching movies, recording practices of speaking and making conversations with native speakers.

A graduate student compared a novel with the movie (of the same story) and the literal criticism on both in a presentation showing the linguistic differences between writing and speaking the same verses. The story of *Yacoubian Building* by Alaa' alAswani; "Galal Amin attributed the success of to its success in describing the Egyptian state. (Amin. 2003) The story depicts the modern Egyptian society through personas that all live in the Yacoubian Building in downtown Cairo. The history of the Yacoubian building itself symbolizes the history of Egypt from the times of British colonialism to date. Alaa Al Aswani saves the situation in Egypt through this building in downtown Cairo, which embodies the division between the rich and the poor, and the degeneration and corruption in Egypt during Husni Mubarak's rule". (Amin, Jalal; 2005. Al Aswani, Alaa. *Yacoubian Building*. Cairo: Madbouli Library).

The choice of the teaching articles plays a main role in attracting the learners towards knowing the Arab Islamic culture. Combining the linguistic and the cultural materials is a requirement as the learner is keen to know more about the language use in all aspects and fields than about the linguistic rules and the four skills. Language is a thought container.

It is advisable to open the floor for students to choose their readings and areas of their own interest as it seems they learn much more when they read for pleasure. However, it is the teacher's role to help and convince students to take an interest in the reading material suggested in class. Realism and emotional engagement are important components. (Edwards, 2009: 7) Personal interest in the literature makes it easier to connect with the text and therefore facilitates learning as well as teaching. Promoting students to think for themselves and to critically view the world around them is one of the teachers' objectives. To a degree, the more controversial a book is the more there is to work with, more to analyze and discuss. It is more a point of provoking a reaction among the students. (Edwards, 2009: 9)

Students shall train themselves to think critically, to examine facts and their relationships and to see the consequences of different alternatives. (Lpf 94) (Edwards, 2009: 18) It will be interesting to see what fascinates them and how they interpret the image of stereotypes) (Edwards, 2009: 18) In teaching the novel *Black Suites You* by Ahlam Mistaghanmi, the foreign students' literary criticism revealed some different spheres of the native teacher. Literary criticism allows freedom of expression in explaining what attracts and what opposes.

## Conclusion

Teaching Arabic language through Literary Communication is such an enjoyable experience. It offers both the teacher and the students a pleasant ambience and gears the class into new heights in the lively discussions. It is a dual utility; teacher and students with multi levels of interaction; creativity, criticism, learning new aspects of different literatures. The combination of linguistics and literature motivates and provokes the desire to have exchanges intellectually and academically. It is amusing to discuss the social, political, economic, historical, religious and human relations issues through artistic literary works; novels, novellas or short stories, poetry, songs, plays and drama.

It is a real challenge for the teacher to succeed in attracting Arabic Language non-native students to the Arabic culture, develop their linguistic skills and disclose their talents in a creative way. Language students' ultimate objective is to present the language clearly and communicate with the natives fluently. It attracts students to discover their own

talents in the learned language. Listening to poems, songs, stories and plays that they created and wrote in Arabic is an achievement.

Culture in whatever form and on any image embodied historical work, literary mosaic or philosophical books or narrative work or cinematic productions, they always tend to look at creating a better society. Through learning languages and studying literatures, there is a genuine attempt to realize substantial social and cultural aspects to fully acquaint and communicate. Literature in Language Education is indeed a gateway to cultural literacy.

Comparative issues in literary works encourage learners to express themselves through interacting, exchanging opinions, learning about new aspects of other cultures among the students themselves, discussing some classics from the different times; Umayyads, Abbasids then compare with some modern pieces. Listening to selected verses of Salah Jahin or Om Kulthoum can give a sense of language appreciation.

Offering glimpses of the main intellectual, literary and culture issues in the Arab World to monitor phenomena and the way they are studied by modern Arab thinkers, critics and writers, as compared to ancient Arabs, then attempting to address their dimensions in western thought, thus covering issues of influencing and being influenced. The discussion can be guided through literary and critical curricula lessons in general, both old and new, offering an in-depth and aware exchange on the issues being discussed, attempting to entrench them, viewing their particulars, and linking each of them to their contexts and conditions of development, as well as constantly searching for similarities and parallels in intellectual, cultural and literary critical heritage in the Arab and Western worlds.

Suggestions for choices of personalities to be studied that allow graduate non-native Arabic speakers to enjoy studying the lives of a variety of contemporary Arab literary figures through their words and parlance:

1. Yousef Idris, Alaa al-Aswani, Aisha Abdul Rahman, Salwa Bakr, Radwa Ashour (Egypt);
2. Zakaria Tamer, Nizar Qabbani (Syria);
3. Ibrahim Nasr-Allah, Naji al-Ali, Layla al-Atrash, Ihsan Abbas, Ahmad Sedqi Dajani, Ahmad Hasan Zou'bi, ImilyNasra-Allah (Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon);
4. Mohammad Shoukri, Wasini al-A'raj, Fatima Marnisi, Ahlam Mostaghanemi (Morocco, Algeria and Tunis);
5. Ali Qasemi, Nazek al-Mal'ika (Iraq);
6. Hammour Zeyada, Ibrahim al-Kouni (Sudan and Libya); and
7. Saoud al-Sanousi, Atheer al-Nashmi, Mohammad al-Gharbi, Soliman al-Ma'mari (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Oman).

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## توظيف الأدب العربي في تعليم اللغة العربية: بوابة للمعرفة الثقافية

بسمه أحمد صدقي الدجاني\*

### ملخص

يقوم البحث على أهمية الاستعانة بالأدب العربي في تعليم اللغة العربية للناطقين بغيرها وتعلمها، بهدف استيعاب أشمل للثقافة والفكر. والأساليب المنهجية التي تسعى لتحقيق الكفاية اللغوية بإتقان المهارات اللغوية الأربع من خلال تتبع أعمال أدبية عربية متنوعة. ويُقدّم نظراتٍ في تمهيد طريق التواصل الثقافي البناء بين أبناء اللغات المختلفة في سعيهم للتعرف والتفاعل. ولأن الأدب مرآة للمجتمع، فإن ميادينه المتنوعة ما بين الشعر والقصة والرواية والمقالة والمسرحية والأغنية تُمثل الأنماط الفكرية والاتجاهات الثقافية المتعددة في كل مجتمع. ومُتعلّم اللغة العربية من الناطقين بغيرها يرغب أولاً وأخيراً في الوصول لدرجة الكفاية في فهم الثقافة التي تُجسّدُها قواعد هذه اللغة ومهاراتها. ولأن الفنون الأدبية - على اتساعها - تمدّ قارئها وسامعها ودارسها بشيءٍ من المُتعة مع تغذية الإحساس بالتخيّل والتفكير، فإنّه من الواجب في اختيار المادة التعليمية للناطقين بغير العربية تقديم نصوص أدبية تساعد في تقريب الأفكار واستيعاب القواعد اللغوية.

الكلمات الدالة: اللغة العربية، تعلمها، تعليمها، أدبها، ثقافتها.

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