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ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM OF INTERMEDIATE LANGUAGE IN ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING

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The outline

There is a great importance in teaching languages in general and Arabic language in particular; In the field of language teaching and learning, researchers continuously seek to trust and use the latest methods to teach the English language. Here the problem of intermediate language is emerging as a method of teaching foreign languages and this problem raises many questions about the utility or futility of this method and the research here seeks to answer these questions through an analytic, and a-scope that monitors the use of intermediate language in foreign language education. To get a convincing answer to the questions asked, the advantages and disadvantages of this use will be highlighted and balanced.

Introduction

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most compassionate, the Lord of the Worlds, and the prayer and peace on the envoy are the mercy of the two worlds: Muhammad Bin Abdullah, the best prayer on him.

In general, teaching foreign languages has many benefits, most notably: learning the language of a nation who is safe for their own, understanding their conversations and learning about their culture, accessing to their hearts, reporting their knowledge and education and influencing by them, affecting by their good ethics, achieving many of the purposes that pursue in various cultural, economic, social fields and etc.

In addition, the nature of the era in which we are, the era of the globalization with its diverse challenges – particularly cultural and scientific challenges – has compounded the importance of teaching and foreign languages; because it is necessary to encounter the challenges of this era and to achieve fruitful communication and

interaction among different civilizations and cultures in an age of openness to the other extensively that humanity has never seen

before. As the world has become - on a large scale – like a small village in the revolution of communications, information, the world's accelerating changes and developments are running head on and losing balance.

Teaching the Arabic language to non – speakers is important as teaching other languages, and moreover, Arabic has special features that give an increased importance of education and learning other languages to non – speakers. Since it is unique in the languages of religion, civilization and science at the same time: the language of the Holy Koran, the Prophet (PBUH) year, with the line of Muslim scholars, has a huge heritage in the sciences of Sharia: Interpretation, Hadith, doctrine, etc.

We also have learnt from Arabic scientists in various life sciences: medicine, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy and like

that, these scholars wrote their own knowledge in Arabic; therefore, the Arabic language of humanity has carried a huge cultural heritage; thus, it is a civilization that has expanded in scope and depth of its impact, as well as a civilization that is rooted in history, all of which makes the Arabic language the best language for study and education.

This is why the teaching of Arabic language of speakers with others is witnessing a great expansion and spreading in various countries of the world. However, the reality of this teaching suffers from some problems, among them is the problem of using the intermediate language, on which the opinions of researchers in teaching Arabic language of speakers differs between supporters and opposers, this is a difference that calls for searching for the use of the intermediate language in the field of teaching Arabic language as a foreign language with its pros and cons. By balancing them, you can identify the situation with the use of intermediate language, which is what the search here seeks by discussing the following points:

Firstly, the definition of intermediate language:

Intermediate language is defined in several definitions, including the following:

1. Intermediate language: it is any other language that is used “as an auxiliary element for teaching Arabic language, whether this language is one of the students’ mother tongue, or it is a common languages that they understand with different native languages”¹.

¹ Rishdi Ahmed Ta’aima practical guide in the preparation of educational materials for Arabic education programs, Institute of Arabic Language, Um Al-Qura University, Makkah-Al Mukarramah,

2. Intermediate language is “the language that both the target language and the learners are master, whether it is their mother tongue, or for some of them, or not, and it is a means of translation and understanding between teacher and his students and sometimes among students in some language situations in the classroom”².

3. Intermediate language “means the use of a language other than a target language as a means of teaching the target language”³.

In the light of these definitions, the search here may define the intermediate language in the field of Arabic language teaching of speakers as:

Any other language, other than Arabic, is used to teach Arabic to other speakers.

This intermediate language may be one of the followings:

- The mother tongue of Arabic – speaking students.
- A language other than Arabic and a language other than the native language of learners, and this language is a common language that the teacher and students understand in their all different languages.
- A language other than Arabic and other than the native language of learners, the author of the book or educational material, or the teacher, thinks that it is a common language. It can be an assistance in teaching Arabic as a foreign language for students.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1405-1406 AH/1985AD, p (165).

² Abdulaziz bin Ibrahim Al-Osaili, Methods of Teaching Arabic to Speakers of other languages, Imam bin Saud Islamic University, year 2002 AD, p (226)

³ Abdul Rahmon bin Ibrahim Al – Fawzan, Illuminations for teachers of Arabic language for Non-Speakers, year 1439AH, p (51).

This language is called the “intermediate language”; because it mediates between the teacher and the learner; in order to make it easier for the learner to understand what the teacher says, and to facilitate the teacher’s delivery of information to the learner, and to identify what the learner understood, and what information, knowledge and concepts he acquired about the Arabic language⁴.

And the use of the intermediate language in the field of teaching Arabic is a reality, and it cannot be denied, and the position on that – acceptance or rejection – should be based on an analysis of the framework in which the intermediate language is used, considering the purpose of learning Arabic itself, the method of teaching used, and the field in which it is used, and the field in which Intermediate language is used, and this is what the research will explain below.

Secondly, Intermediate language and the purpose of learning Arabic:

Students who do not speak Arabic are accepted to learn Arabic language. For various and complex purposes – despite their bifurcation and diversity – can fall into two main categories:

The first section: studying Arabic for special purposes.

The second section: studying Arabic for general purposes.

The position on the use of intermediate language in Arabic education in each of these sections can be analyzed as follows:

Section I: studying Arabic for special purposes: An “introduction to

⁴ Rishdi Ahmed Ta’aima, the reference in teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages, Institute of Arabic Language, Umm Al-Qura University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, p (771, 772).

teaching the Arabic language in which the curriculum elements are specified from: objectives, content, teaching methods, and evaluation, in which the teaching process itself is defined – based on the learners’ characteristics, their goals for learning the Arabic language, and the nature of the situation in which they use it⁵.

From this it is clear that all the elements of the curriculum in the case of studying the Arabic language for special purposes are subject to his special purpose that push students to learn the Arabic language, as the language education program is prepared for special purposes. In order to meet the specific needs of the learner, and in terms of content it is related to specific fields of work, professions or activities, and the program may be determined to teach specific skills in a specific field, and it may be taught without submitting to predetermined methodologies, and it employs methodologies and activities that suit the field it serves. And the needs of the learner that are designed to meet, and he may use in some teaching situations methodologies that are different from the methodologies used in general programs for language teaching⁶. For all this, the use of the intermediate language in teaching Arabic for special purposes may be important and necessary, even if we say: it is forbidden

⁵ Islam Ali, Envisioning the subject course (Teaching Arabic for Special Purposes) in Light of International experiences, Research (Fourth international conference on teaching Arabic language and Literature for special purposes), Department of Arabic language and Literature, College of Revelation knowledge and human sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, First edition Rajab in 1434AH in May 2013 CE, Court Research, Part one, (279).

⁶ Rishdi Ahmed Ta’aima and Mahmoud Kamel al-Naqah, Teaching the language communicatively between curricula and strategies, publications of the Islamic Organization for Education, Science and Culture – ISESCO – in the year 1427AH- 2006CE, p (222, 223).

matter that must be prohibited in programs for teaching Arabic for general purposes.

Section II: studying Arabic for general purposes:

The study of the Arabic language for general purposes aims to provide the learner with the linguistic skills that enable him to use the language in a general use⁷, that is to use the language in life generally; Hence, the general programs for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers “include a cross-section of the public with multiple functions, characteristics, interests and other matters in which this audience differs, except for one thing they meet, which represents the common destiny between them, which is that they learn the language to spend their affairs in life in general, and with this audience, it is difficult to define the specific linguistic needs unless they are related to the general life situations: in the marketplace, at the institute, in places of worship, in travel and etc.⁸ And the Arabic in general purposes for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers aims to achieve the following competencies:

A) Linguistic competence: it is in the field of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers and it means: providing learners with “the linguistic skills that make them able to understand the nature of language, the rules that control it, the system that governs its phenomena, and the characteristics that distinguish its components as sounds, vocabulary, structures and concepts. Accordingly, it can be said that linguistic competence is achieved when the student controls the

phonemic system of a language - distinction and production – and knows the basic rules of the language and its theoretical and functional structures, and is familiar with an appropriate amount of vocabulary that allows him to understand the language and use it in different life situations.

B) Communicative competence: this sufficiency is achieved when the learner can use the language automatically and express his ideas and experiences fluently, and absorb what he hears from the language easily.

C) Cultural competence: it is intended to understand the culture that the Arabic language carries that reflects the ideas of the Arabs, their experiences, values, literature, their art and etc.⁹

To achieve these goals, no intermediate language should be used in the teaching of Arabic, because multiple problems that result from its use, which prevents the achievement of these goals, according to what will come its statement in talking about the negatives of using the intermediate language.

Thus, the attitude towards the use of the intermediate language in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers is affected by the purpose of learning it: if the teaching is for a special purpose, then the use of the intermediate language is an acceptable justification in many cases, and may even be necessary in some cases, but if the purpose of teaching Arabic is a general purpose, which is learning Arabic for life, then the use of the intermediate language is not acceptable except for necessity.

Just as the position on the use of the intermediate language in teaching Arabic to

⁷ Saleh Mahjoub Al-Tafari, Arabic for Special Purposes, New Trends and Challenges, p (5), research published on the site: <http://irep.iium.edu.my/7030/1>

⁸ Rishdi Ahmed Ta'aima and Mahmoud Kamel Al-Naqah: Teaching the language via communication (previous reference), p (22).

⁹ Rishdi Ahmed Ta'ami, the reference in Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Previous reference), p (62).

non-Arabic speakers differs according to the purpose learning Arabic, this position also differs according to the field of intermediate language use as follows:

Thirdly: The position of the intermediate language according to its scope of use:

The intermediate language in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers may be used in books, educational materials, and it may be used in the classroom during teaching and position, both cases differ in the two cases in the followings:

The use of the intermediate language in books and educational materials:

Some authors of books and teaching materials for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers tend to use the intermediate language, and they are encouraged to do so by the fact that there are learners and teachers who accept this. A request for ease, and saving effort in the learning process, while he does not know - or ignore – that this leads to the learner's weakness and the failure of his thinking about the target language.

The intermediate language may appear in books and educational materials for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in the form of the following:

- Translation of the book's vocabulary.
- Translation of language combinations (sentences). Giving instructions to the texts and exercises of the book.
- Translation of the entire text of the book¹⁰.

¹⁰ Boukabaa Touati, The Intermediate Language in Teaching Arabic to Non-native speakers, Journal of Al-Umda in Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, Fifth Issue, p (215).

The studies and research I have come up with regarding the preparation of Arabic language books to teach native speakers of other languages almost unanimously agree that one of the characteristics of a good book is not to use the intermediate language, regarding this, Dr. Rishdi Ta'aima says: "As for our opinion regarding the use of an intermediate language when writing a book to teach Arabic, it is summarized in the rejection of the use of the intermediate language in such a book, and thus, its content becomes valid for students of different languages of different nationalities. This opinion is justified by many reasons, the most important of which is to fix the Arabic word in the mind of the scholar, to train him in the effort to learn the language, and to enable him to think directly, through a single mental process, not several processes."¹¹

2-instruction of using intermediate language in class during the lesson:

The views of researchers on using intermediate language within the classroom during the teaching process differed from support to rejection. As follows:

A-the views of the proponents

The view that supports the use of intermediate language within the classroom, during the teaching process, is based on the fact that the learner is completely dependent on his mother tongue in the context of learning the second language; This is because the mother tongue is the one that predominates in his imagination in all situations, and it is difficult for him to get rid of this influence that makes him - continuously - look at things and things, and

¹¹ Abdul Rahman Bin Ibrahim Al-Fawzan, illuminations for teachers of Arabic for non-speakers (former reference), p. 51, 52.

explain the facts and events according to the logic of his mother tongue and its system, which differs - of course - from the logic and system of the target language in many respects. In addition to this, the learner cannot easily disrupt the linguistic habits that he acquired from his mother tongue. In order to learn new linguistic habits relates to grammatical structures, pronunciation of sounds, vocabulary, and others.

Supporters of the use of the intermediate language also believe that using it helps learners to speed up accurate understanding of vocabulary and structures, and keeps them away from guesswork, suspicion, likeness, and confusion, that in addition to, it reduces time and effort, and enables the student to learn a large amount of the target language in a short time¹².

B-The Opponents' Viewpoint

The viewpoint of opposing the use of intermediate language in the classroom during the teaching process is based on the theory of behavioral psychology, which views language as a behavior similar to other behaviors that a person learns or acquires through habit building and formation. Then learning the new language is like acquiring a set of new habits, and acquiring new habits requires leaving the families of old habits, and this means that using the intermediate language as one of the old habits of the learner will lead to an overlap with the new habits, which hinders the learning process¹³.

Moreover, there are many reasons for avoiding the use of the intermediate language in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers because of its harmful effects on

the learning process, and among these reasons are the following:

- teaching Arabic in Arabic is the most capable of fixing Arabic in the minds of students.

- there is a training for scholars to make an effort to learn Arabic in teaching Arabic in Arabic.

- teaching Arabic in Arabic is a training for students to think in Arabic.

- the use of intermediate language makes students lose focus on the Arabic language.

- the use of intermediate language negatively affects the learning process; Because what a student learns quickly without thinking is quickly lost.

- students acquire their mother tongue without translation, and learning the second language is very similar to learning the first language, and as long as students have been able to learn their first language without translation, adults can do the same when learning the second language; They do not need to learn an intermediate language.

- the use of the intermediate language makes the student's mind go through several stages, and not using makes his mind go through one stage, and his thought is only focused on the target language¹⁴.

Accordingly, some opponents of the use of the intermediate language warn the Arabic-language learner of three things:

One of them: speaking in his mother tongue.

Second: To learn binary word lists that include Arabic words and translations of them in his mother tongue.

Third: To translate from Arabic into his mother tongue.

¹³Previous, same page.

¹⁴ Abdul Rahman bin Ibrahim Al-Fawzan, Illuminations for Teachers of Arabic Language for Non-Speakers (Previous Reference), p (53)

They warn the learner of these actions because they wipe out much of the effort that they spend in learning the Arabic language. Because his mother tongue controls him¹⁵.

For all this, the American Council for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL) advises to stay away from translation in teaching languages, and to use the target language to a large extent, up to 90%, while leaving the rest to address problems resulting from comprehension difficulties.

And in view of the arguments advanced by the proponents and opponents of the use of intermediate language and the evidence on which each of them relied; The viewpoint of the opponents is preferable to me, but the matter in this problem should not be dealt with by adopting a firm direction or a strict position with complete rejection or absolute acceptance with its tools, mechanisms, and teaching methods used, in addition to the meaning to be conveyed to the learner.

But despite this, I think that the use of the intermediate language remains the last option for the teacher in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers, so that he does not resort to this option until after he exhausts all other means and tricks to explain the intended meaning and communicate it to the learners. This is for the following:

1-teacher who uses the intermediate language a lot in teaching his students is like a doctor who treats his patient with painkillers that help him some time to relieve his pain, but it does not eradicate the origin of the disease, so the pain does not come back shortly after the effect of the analgesics ends.

¹⁵ Rushdi Ahmad Toaima, the reference on Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Previous Reference) p (774, 775)

2-the intermediate language, although it is able to convey to the learner the lexical meaning of the singular, is often unable to convey its contextual meaning, and this contextual meaning is the one that relies on it in the process of linguistic communication.

3-modern methods of teaching foreign languages tend to reject the use of the intermediate language, as its use was a matter adopted by the method of grammar and translation until variables emerged that imposed a rethinking of methods of teaching second languages, and the procedures of each of them, as the need for direct and oral contact with the owners of other languages, and making the effort to try to understand the culture of others in their own language; Modern methods have emerged that reject the use of the intermediate language in teaching the second language, such as: the direct method and the audio-oral method. Indeed, the supporters of the grammar and translation method have biased against the use of the intermediate language in teaching languages¹⁶.

4-the styles of the learners are different: there are the auditory style learners who learn better by hearing the words and spoken explanations.

There are learners with a visual style who benefit more from what is presented to them through the sense of sight and vision in the teaching process.

And there are learners with a tactile style who learn best when engaging in manipulating subjects and objects.

There are the kinesthetic learners who learn best when they participate

¹⁶ Rushdi Ahmad Toaima, the reference on Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Previous Reference) p (773, 774)

physically in experiences and educational procedures.

In my opinion, the use of the intermediate language in the teaching of foreign languages benefits one of these patterns, which is the pattern of learners with the auditory type only, while the teacher's avoidance of using the intermediate language makes him use methods and procedures in explaining the meanings and concepts that can benefit those with different styles: it is useful for those with aural style using the means of explanation by stating the synonym, or counterpoint, or stating the derivation, and other verbal methods in explaining meanings and concepts, and the teacher can use some methods that benefit learners with visual style by using static and moving images in explaining the material that the language he wants to communicate to students, in addition to this also that he can design educational situations that can benefit learners with a tactile style, and those with a kinesthetic style.

This means that when the teacher chooses the easy way of using the intermediate language to explain the meanings and concepts, he may benefit one type of the types of learners, and in return he neglects the needs of other types of learners who need other methods and procedures that help them learn better. The teacher can come up with some of these procedures and methods if he preferred to make the effort to replace the intermediate language with other methods of explanation and stating meanings and concepts.

5-the use of the intermediate language, and the grammatical and translation method that adopts its use, makes translation from the language of students

into Arabic¹⁷. Since "the precise meanings of many words, expressions and sentences of any language are qualities that are culturally unique to that language; therefore, it is not possible to learn and understand those meanings except through that language itself; and from this standpoint, translating words, phrases and sentences from one language to another will hinder the foreign language learner for a correct and accurate understanding of its meanings"¹⁸.

6-The method of grammar and translation that adopts the use of the intermediate language in the teaching of foreign languages is one of its main defects in neglecting communication skills, as students are not trained in this method much to use the language actively in expressing themselves verbally and in writing. Hence, this method does not achieve the objectives of learning the language by listening and speaking¹⁹.

7-in many cases of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, learners are from different nationalities, so that one level includes a large number of learners whose mother tongue is different which leads to the emergence of a problem in deciding which intermediate language can be used in their education.

8-in many educational situations in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, the teacher is forced to use an intermediate

¹⁷ Mahmoud Kamel Al-Naqa, Rushdi Ahmed Toaima, *Methods of Teaching Arabic to Non-Speakers*, Publications of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ISESCO 1424 AH - 2003AD, p (72).

¹⁸ Boukabba Touati, *The Intermediate Language for Teaching Arabic to Non-Speakers*, (Previous Reference), p (217).

¹⁹ Mahmoud Kamel Al-Naqa, Rushdi Ahmed Toaima, *Methods of Teaching Arabic to Non-Speakers* (Previous Reference), P (72).

language that is not the learners' mother tongue, but another language, which makes the issue more difficult and problematic. Due to the increase in the possibility of error in translation, or inaccurate translation, as the translation process - in this case - goes through more than one stage, as the translation starts from Arabic into the intermediate language used in education, and from there to the mother tongue of the learners, which may lead to many problems in understanding the meaning.

A realistic example that can clarify this is what Dr. Jamal Abdel Aziz Ibrahim said, where he says: "I was teaching students something from the geography of their country (Sierra Leone), and I got my information about the composition of the population in Sierra Leone from their fifth grade geography book after translating it into Arabic. And in which the (Mandi) tribe represents the largest percentage of the population, as they represent two-thirds of the population, and the area in which I teach is the tribe (Tamani), and the institute in which we study is a mixture of students from several tribes, including students from (Mandi) who were competing Scientifically with the rest of the students, and sometimes the institute is the first among them, but some of the fools who do not appreciate the consequences of things have almost stupidly triggered tribal strife - and Africa is controlled by the tribal complex in general - so the students of (wishful thinking) understood that I prefer them to students of (Mandi), and translated to them the word (Akbar) which means in the context Largest to Greatest or Best, and the students revolted against me, and almost killed me, had it not been that I understood their leader in the mistake of translation, and at that time they settled and were reassured, and he helped

extinguish the fire of sedition that I treated them with humility and kindness, and they had never before that experienced any superiority from me²⁰".

9-teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers; In order for it to bear its desired fruit, it needs to create a linguistic environment that is pure from linguistic impurities and errors, and the use of the intermediate language spoils this environment. And then it hinders the learning process, and prevents reaching the desired fruit.

For these reasons, I think that the use of the intermediate language in the classroom in the teaching process should be considered as a necessity that permits prohibitions and necessities estimated in proportion, so that the teacher does not resort to the intermediate language until he exhausts the other means of explanation and clarification.

The use of the intermediate language should decrease as the learner progresses in learning the Arabic language. It is acceptable to use the intermediate language with beginners because they do not have a linguistic background that the teacher can build on in his teaching for them - it is unacceptable that reliance on the intermediate language remains the predominant one in teaching advanced

²⁰ Kamal Abdel Aziz Ibrahim, Toward an Ideal Teacher of the Arabic Language for Non-Speakers, a working paper submitted to the International Council for the Arabic Language in cooperation with UNESCO, the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science, and the Union of Arab Universities, the Third International Conference on the Arabic Language under The title "Investing in the Arabic Language and its National, Arab and International Future", during the period from 7 to 10 May 2014, corresponding to 8 - 11 Rajab 1435 in Dubai, p (4, 5).

levels; Because these levels have become possessed of experiences, and linguistic wealth which helps the teacher dispense with the intermediate language in their teaching.

Conclusion:

In the end, the research findings can be summarized as follows:

The use of the intermediate language in the field of teaching Arabic is a reality, and it cannot be denied, and the position on that - acceptance or rejection - should be based on an analysis of the framework in which the intermediate language is used, considering the purpose of learning Arabic itself, the method of teaching used, and the field in which it is used intermediate language.

The attitude towards the use of the intermediate language in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers is influenced by the purpose of learning it: if the teaching is for a special purpose, then the use of the intermediate language is an acceptable justification in many cases, and may even be necessary in some cases, but if the purpose of teaching Arabic is a general purpose which is learning Arabic for life, then the use of the intermediate language is unpalatable except for necessity.

Just as the position on the use of the intermediate language in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers differs according to the purpose of learning Arabic, this position also differs according to the field of use of the intermediate language, so it is unacceptable to use the intermediate language in books and educational materials that are used in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, as for the use of the language. The intermediate language in the classroom during the teaching process, it should be considered as one of the

necessities that allow prohibitions and necessities estimated by their extent, so the teacher does not resort to the intermediate language until after he exhausts the other means of explaining and clarifying, and the use of the intermediate language should decrease as the learner progresses in learning the Arabic language.

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