



Problems Encountered in Teaching Turkish to Arabs: the Case of Baghdad

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Abstract: Many nations fused with one another in history and felt the need to learn each other's languages due to this fusion. Turks and Arabs have lived together for centuries and united under the roofs of the same states due to their intersection in many common aspects. Their mutual efforts to learn each other's languages as a result of developing relations and common grounds have persevered till the present. In addition to Turks' efforts to learn Arabic, there have been intense efforts of Arabas to learn Turkish. The endeavors to learn and teach Turkish, which rose with Divan-u Lugati't-Türk in the past, are now carried out in an abundance of resources in modern areas through technological tools. Although Arabs and Turks lived together for many years, they have had difficulties and problems in learning each other's languages as their language come from different language families. This study focused on problems encountered in teaching Turkish to Arab students. Data on the problems experienced by Turkish language teachers who teach in schools and training centers in Baghdad were collected through interviews. Exam papers, homework, and other works of the students were examined. A survey for teachers was conducted in this regard. The study focused on the problems identified as 14 items in line with the examinations.

Keywords: Foreign language, Teaching Turkish, Teaching Turkish in Baghdad.

Introduction

Our world is developing rapidly in every aspect. Interactions on matters such as social, economic, education, etc., among nations are at a high level. These interactions have created the need to learn foreign languages. The need for foreign language increased the importance of foreign language education.

There have always been problems in teaching language to foreigners. In general, students experience difficulties in differences between their language and the foreign language they try to learn. The problems in this study usually consisted of such problems.

Comparison between the foreign language to be learned, and the native language will make it easier to determine the will arise later. Comparisons allow the teacher and the learner to anticipate the difficulty, make preparations, and carry out studies accordingly (Bölükbaş, 2001).

Teaching Turkish to the Arabs began with the Divan-ü Lügati't-Türk, written by Kasgarli Mahmut. Turks and Arabs felt the need to learn each other's languages because they have lived together for many years. Among the reasons for long life and fusion, there were reasons such as common religion, common land, trade, common goals, cultural affinity, and social life similarity.

Both languages have affected each other with the impact of living together. The influence of Turkish on Arabic is seen in the dialects of Arabic rather than the academic Arabic called "Fusha." The abundance and still intense use of Turkish words in Iraqi dialect among the public revealed the influence of Turkish.

As it is known, there were more expeditions to the eastern countries during the reign of Yavuz Sultan Selim, and the Arab population in the Ottoman State increased as a result of these campaigns. However, the most important event of this period was that the

Caliphate passed to the Ottoman State. The density of Turkish words in Arabic dialects coincided with this period. Even today, many Turkish words were from that period (Sarıkaya, 2014).

The fact that Turks dominated the Arab geography and Turkish as an official language in government offices created the need to learn Turkish in Arabs. The fact that the official documents used in Baghdad were Turkish in the Ottoman period showed the importance of Turkish education.

“*Kasgarli also wrote Divan-u Lugâti't-Turk to prove that Turkish was a great language like Arabic. Another purpose of its composition was to teach Turkish to Arabs who wanted to learn Turkish for political affairs as the Turks took over the administration in Baghdad and the palace of the caliph*” (Bayraktar, 2003:58).

Arap Alphabet

The Arabic alphabet consists of 28 letters. The number of basic shapes that make up these letters is 17. Arabic script is written from right to left. Arabic is the native language of approximately 300 million people in the world.

ا ب ت ث ج ح خ د ذ ر ز س ش ص ض

ط ظ ع غ ف ق ك ل م ن ه و ي

Turkish Alphabet

The Turkish alphabet consists of 29 letters. Turkish is the native language of approximately 250 million people.

A B C Ç D E F G Ğ H I İ J K L M N O Ö P R S Ş T
U Ü V Y Z

A b c ç d e f g ğ h i j k l m n o ö p r s ş t u ü v y z

- *Sounds found in Turkish, not in Arabic:*

ç, g, ğ, j, p, v, ı, ö, ü, o

- *Sounds found in Arabic, not in Turkish:*

ء، ؤ، ح، خ، ذ، ص، ض، ط، ظ، ع، غ، ق، و

- *Sounds found both in Arabic and Turkish:*

ب - b ، ت - t ، ج - c ، د - d ، ر - r ، ز - z ، س - s

، ش - ş ، ف - f ، ك - k ، ل - l ، م - m ، ن - k ،

ه - h ، ي - y (Aydın, 2010).

Methodology

Research Method

In the study, the data were obtained using a guiding interview method, survey method, field study, and document analysis methods.

Population and Sample of the Study

The study was conducted on students whose native language is Arabic enrolled in schools and courses in Baghdad, where Turkish lessons are taught. Students from 3rd grade in primary school to the last year of high school and students of different ages were included in the study. Teachers teaching Turkish in Baghdad were used in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study took place in Baghdad, where Turkish language teaching was carried out. Conclusions were drawn by using the following methods. In Baghdad, students at different levels were taught Turkish for seven years, and analysis was made accordingly. The opinions of teachers teaching Turkish in Baghdad

were taken. The exams and other activity samples carried out on students were analyzed. The questionnaire was prepared as a result of the opinions and analysis. Then, this questionnaire was conducted on teachers who teach Turkish.

Findings and Comments

According to the research and analysis, problems encountered were grouped as follows:

Problems Encountered in Reading and Speaking due to Non-Arabic Letters

As stated above, there are differences between the Arabic alphabet and the Turkish alphabet. Arabs face difficulties in using sounds that are not in the Arabic alphabet. Most of the time, Arabic letters that are close to them were preferred instead of these letters.

ç, g, ğ, j, p, v, l, o, ö, ü

Generally speaking, Ç sound is produced as ج (c) and ش (ş). Although this problem was experienced in some places, it was not encountered in Baghdad. Because the letter ك (k) in the Arabic alphabet in Arabic (street Arabic) used in Baghdad is pronounced as ç sound, for this reason, there was no problem in using the letter ç in Baghdad. We can see its example in the proverb used in Baghdad below:

“چغیان شر لمللا علیوی” (Zelzele, 2006: 57).

The G sound, which is not found in the Arabic alphabet, is produced as the ك (k) sound. The letter ق in Arabic is used as the letter g in Turkish in Baghdad Arabic. Therefore, there was no problem in using the letter g.

Although the Ğ sound is thought to be close to the غ sound in Arabic, it is not so in usage. The soft use of

this sound in Turkish reveals the difference. While uttering this sound in Turkish, the Arabs utter it close to غ sound.

The J sound is pronounced as ج (c) sound.

Jandarma	-	candarma
Jilet	-	cilet
Jüri	-	cüri
Jöle	-	cöle

The P sound is pronounced as پ (b) sound.

Perde	-	berde
Pasta	-	basta
Pilav	-	bilav
Perşembe	-	berşembe

The V sound is pronounced as و sound. And it is a labial consonant, and و sound is produced from inside the mouth.

The i sound is produced i sound as in Turkish.

Işık	-	işik
Ilık	-	İlik
Isınmak	-	isinmak
Kırılmak	-	kirilmek

Ö, O, and Ü sounds are uttered like u sound in Turkish. The letters ö and ü are confused a lot in the oncoming years. In other words, ü can be used where ö will be used, and ö can be used where ü will be used. The same confusion is also made between the sounds o and u.

Söylüyor	-	soylüyur
Gül	-	Gul
Dört	-	durt

Ütü	-	utu
Omuz	-	umuz

Problems Encountered in Writing Letters with and without Diacritic marks

In writing, letters with and without diacritic marks are quite confused with each other. Mostly, letters with diacritic marks are written without diacritic marks.

Ç – C

Çiçek	-	cicek
Cuma	-	çuma
Çok	-	cok
cüzdän	-	çüzdän
Çarşamba	-	carşamba
cümle	-	çümle

Ş – Ş

Şeker	-	seker
ses	-	şeş
Şirket	-	sirket
nasılsın	-	naşılışın
Karışık	-	karısık
sekiz	-	şekiz

Ğ – G

Yağmur	-	yagmur
güzel	-	ğüzel
Dağ	-	dag
bilgi	-	bilği
Ağrımak	-	ağrımak
gülüyor	-	ğülüyor

İ – I

İnsan	-	insan
ışık	-	işik
İlaç	-	ilac
kırk	-	kirk
İki	-	ıkı
yazı	-	yazi

Ö – O

Ömer	-	omer
ordu	-	ördü
Ölmek	-	olmak
olmak	-	ölmek
Ötmek	-	otmek
otuz	-	ötüz

Ü – U

Ürdün	-	urdun
unutmak	-	ünütmek
Ütü	-	utu
uyumak	-	üyümek
Üç	-	uç
uçmak	-	üçmek

Problem Encountered in Using Numbers

The problem in Pronunciation of Numbers:

Numbers with double-digits in Arabic are labialized the opposite of Turkish. This constitutes difficulties in using numbers.

While the number 21 is pronounced as twenty-one in Turkish, it is pronounced as one and twenty in Arabic.

1453	bin dört yüz <u>üç</u> <u>elli</u>
54	dört ve elli
88	sekiz ve seksen

Problems Encountered in Numeral Adjectives

a) Number is not used when expressing the quantity of a single item in Arabic. It is sufficient to mention only its name (Işık, 2015:49).

<i>Turkish</i>	<i>Arabic</i>
Bir kalem	kalem
Bir kitap	kitap
Bu bir kalem -	bu kalem
Bir defter aldım -	defter aldım

b) Two numeral adjectives are not used. Instead, an affix that indicates two is used after the nouns.

“Like many languages, Turkish has singularity and plurality categories. The duality (*tesniye*) found in Arabi is not present in Turkish” (Ercilasun, 2013:21).

<i>Turkish</i>	<i>Arabic</i>
İki kalem	kalemeyn
İki kitap	kitabeyn

c) The noun-plural affix is used in Arabic when using numeral adjectives from three to twelve.

<i>Turkish</i>	<i>Arabic</i>
Beş kalem	beş kalemler
On bir kitap	on bir kitaplar

Sınıfta iki öğrenciler var.

Futbolda 11 oyuncular oynar.

d) The word “piece,” commonly used with numerical adjectives in Turkish, is not very common in Arabic. This causes difficulties for students to use the word “piece.”

Beş tane yumurta aldım - beş yumurta aldım
On bir tane kalem alacağım - on bir kalem alacağım
Sınıfta sekiz tane sıra var - sınıfta sekiz sıra var.

Due to the differences above, confusion and difficulties are generally encountered in the usage of numerical adjectives.

Problems Caused by Syntax Differences

Problem Arose from Difference in Sentence Structure:

Sentence structure in Turkish is different from the sentence structure in Arabic. These differences create difficulties in forming sentences.

The Arabic spelling of “burada yüzme havuzu var mı?” and the order of its elements are as follows:

هل يوجد حمام سباحة هنا؟ *mi var havuz yüzme burada?*

The Arabic spelling of “Türk kahvesi istiyorum” and the order of its elements are as follows:

أريد قهوة تركية *İstiyorum kahvesi Türk.*

Ben çalışıyorum ders.

Oynuyor futbol.

İstiyorum içmek çay.

Evet, Ahmet okuyor kitap.

Problem Caused by the Structure of Name Phrase:

Arabic noun phrases have a sequence contrary to the sequence of Turkish noun phrases. While the determinant comes first and then the determined in Turkish, the opposite is the case in Arabic.

<i>Turkish</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Arabic syntax</i>
<i>Sığır eti</i>	لحم البقر	eti sığır
<i>Türk Lirası</i>	الليرة التركية	lirası Türk

Bu defteri sınıf.

Kumandası klima nerede?

Problem Caused by the Structure of Adjective Clause:

Adjective Clauses also have a sequence contrary as in noun phrases.

<i>Turkish</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Arabic syntax</i>
Yeni kalem	أَلْقَلَمُ الْجَدِيدُ	kalem yeni
Çalışkan öğrenci	الطَّالِبُ الْمُجْتَهِدُ	öğrenci çalışkan

Öğretmenim kalem mavi yok.

Babam araba beyaz var.

Tişört siyah seviyorum.

Problem with Misspelled Vowel

There are no vowels in Arabic. This sometimes causes the trouble of omitting vowels.

Okul	-	okl
Sınıfım	-	sınıfm
Türkçe dersi	-	Türkçe ders
Teneffüste çay içtim	-	Tenffste çay içtm.

Problem Encountered in Vowel Harmony Rule:

The vowel harmony rule in Turkish causes considerable difficulties for Arabs. These difficulties present themselves in writing and speaking.

Bilgisayarım	-	bilgisayarim
Okudu	-	okudı
Gülmüş	-	gülmüş

Problem Encountered in Using Direction Affixes:

In Arabic, the direction is made with a word (إلى). It is not attached to the word it comes from as in Turkish. It serves as a word, not an affix. For this reason, it causes negligence where it is necessary to use direction affixes in Turkish.

Ahmet okula gitti	-	<u>Ahmet okul gitti.</u>
Sabah saat sekizde arabaya bindim	-	<u>Sabah saat sekizde araba bindim.</u>
Hafta sonu sinemaya gidiyorum	-	Hafta sonu sinema gidiyorum.

Problem Encountered in Final-obstruent devoicing: It is often forgotten that the letters ç, k, p, and t transform into the letters c, g, ğ, b, and d through devoicing. Final-obstruent devoicing is overlooked in both writing and speaking.

Kitap	-	kitabı ver	-	<u>kitabı ver</u>
Bardak	-	bardağı getir	-	<u>bardakı getir</u>
Güç	-	gücüm	-	<u>güçüm</u>
Gitmek	-	gidecek	-	<u>gitecek</u>

Problem Encountered in the Optative Mood

Generally, problems are encountered in all forms of the optative mood. The most number of errors is seen when the positive question state is sizably used.

Öğretmenim okuyayım mı? - *öğretmenim oku*
Geleyim mi? - *gel*
Tahtayı sileyim mi? - *tahtayı sil*

Problems Caused by the Use of Letter Blends

The error of not using letter blends is often being made as such a grammatical rule does not exist in Arabic. It is a problem encountered mostly in writing and speaking.

Tahtayı sil - tahtaı sil
 Arabaya bindim - araba bindim
 Bahçeye gittim - bahçee gittim

Problems Encountered in the Use of Genitive and Possessive Suffixes

Students have a hard time pronouncing the words that receive these affixes at first when students learn them. This problem is partially resolved with practice. However, this problem reappears in the future in most students who fail to grasp it.

Babam araba
 Arkadaşım topu
 Sınıfının defteri

Problem Encountered in Spelling the Question

Word “mi”

It is one of the mistakes made in writing exercises. The affix that must be written separately was written conjoined.

Geliyormusun?
 Su içebilirmiyim?
 Anne dışarı çıkabilirmiyim?

Confusing Present Continuous and Present Simple

In Arabic, present continuous tense and present tense are used as a single tense. This situation causes incorrect uses in Turkish.

“Arab students have a hard time matching Arabic tenses with Turkish tenses when they first start learning Turkish. Because they encounter with tenses of new actions which they fail to name although they used it before, and this causes the formation of a tense syndrome against Turkish” (Doğan, 2007:41).

Ben şimdi çay içiyorum - Ben şimdi çay içerim.
 Daha zil çalmadı, ders devam ediyor - Daha zil çalmadı, ders devam eder.
 Ahmet nerede? - Ahmet dışarıda futbol oynar.

Problem Caused by Speaking Gutturally

Arabic is a language mostly spoken gutturally. Either word comes out of the larynx or uttered more high-pitched than Turks speak.

Conclusion and Suggestions

As can be seen in the items provided with examples, there are problems in teaching Turkish in Baghdad. Although it is not easy to overcome these difficulties, it is not very difficult either. These problems can be overcome by increasing the exercises, reading storybooks, watching Turkish movies, and practicing speaking. Teachers’ prior knowledge of these problems and preparing themselves accordingly will accelerate the learning.

A large part of those learning Turkish plans to visit Turkey soon. This is a great opportunity for people in Baghdad, where there is a very limited environment for speaking Turkish.

It will not be appropriate to pass without emphasizing that Turkish TV series have an important place in learning Turkish. People who bestow sympathy for Turkey and Turkish try to learn Turkish by watching

Turkish TV series. Students who cannot visit Turkey can be encouraged to watch Turkish TV series.

As a result of the interview we conducted with the teachers and studies we conducted, it was seen that students who learn the language but can not find the chance to practice it later fell into the problems that we mentioned above in the future. For this reason, it is necessary to provide advice to people who learn Turkish not to detach themselves from Turkish.

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