American University Students' Beliefs About Arabic Language Learning

Received on August 11, 1997
Accepted for publication on June 17, 1998

Oqlah Smadi and Fawwaz Al-Abed Al-Haq
Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Abstract

The study aims at investigating American students' beliefs regarding Arabic language learning. To achieve this objective, five dimensions are scrutinized: AFL aptitude, the difficulty of AFL learning, the nature of AFL learning, AFL learning and communication strategies, and motivation toward AFL learning. To obtain students' beliefs on these dimensions, a 35-item questionnaire was developed based on Horwitz (1987). The findings reveal that these dimensions are significant and contribute to successful AFL learning. We do not claim that such factors are enough to explain the differential success of FL learning. Other factors also clearly have an impact on FL learning success; these include: age, personality, cognitive style, language input, and others. The language aptitude impact on language learning "seems to be too important to ignore" (Larsen - Freeman and Long, 1992). Positive attitude toward the target language and its speakers together with high degree of motivation be it integrative or instrumental enhance the learners' efforts to better achievement and proficiency in the target language. Cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies contribute to success in language learning since students who develop greater TL proficiency were found to be more able to use such strategies than others (Chamot, 1987). Major conclusions and implications are presented to be utilized by learners, teachers, and curriculum designers. Encouraging students to produce target language with some errors is much better than insisting on accuracy at the expense of fluency. Effective learning and communication strategies reported in literature on language acquisition should be
adopted by all those concerned with AFL teaching. Misconceptions about Arabic language and Arabs should be signaled out and clarified to the learners since such beliefs may have a negative impact on their learning behavior and so their attainment.

**Introduction**

Mastery of foreign language learning is the outcome of multiple variables such as: age, language aptitude, social-psychological factors, personality, cognitive style, learning strategies, environment being linguistic and nonlinguistic, and a few others (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1992). Seliger (1984:37) maintains that "... there exists the universal fact that human beings of all ages, attitude, levels of intelligence, socioeconomic background, etc. succeed in acquiring L2s in a wide variety of both naturalistic and formal settings."

The study of language attitudes is common in applied linguistics research. Theoretical definitions of attitudes have been predominantly concentrated on three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Ryan and Giles (1979) take language attitude to refer to, in a broad sense, any affective, cognitive, or behavioral indices of evaluative reactions toward different language variations or their speakers. According to Shuy and Fasold (1973), expressions of positive or negative feelings toward a language may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty or simplicity, and ease or difficulty of learning. If such is the case, language attitudes will have a definite effect on second or foreign language learning, and the measurement of language attitudes will provide fruitful information for teachers, students and educational policy planners. Language users' attitudes toward Arabic as foreign language is important because these attitudes can influence language learning as well as decisions on planning the acquisition of Arabic.

Various models have been proposed to account for success or failure in foreign and second language learning. Gardner (1983, 1985) put forward a socio-educational model to explain the second language learning process in social contexts. This model includes the following variables: cultural beliefs, motivation, attitudes, integrativeness, and language aptitude. Schumann (1986) considered the cultural
dimension to be the primary drive in language learning. To him the "acculturation" process incorporates the learners' integration with the target language speakers socially and psychologically. Fillmore (1991) proposed a social model to explain second-language learning. This model includes three components: the need to learn the second language, cultural openness of the target language group, and the culturally open environment which brings both learners and native speakers of the target language together.

Thus, these models show the attitudinal and cultural dimensions to be the most decisive factors in the process of second- or foreign language learning. Recent studies on the interrelationship between language learning and attitudes have come up with similar findings. Abu-Rabia (1991) investigated the influence of attitudes of Israeli-Arab learners on their reading comprehension in Hebrew. He found out that students with strong instrumental motivation towards Hebrew comprehended stories with Jewish content better than students with lower instrumental motivation. In another study, Abu-Rabia (1995:183) studied the relationship of attitudes and cultural background to reading comprehension in L2 of eighth-grade students in three different social contexts. He found out that "the students were instrumentally motivated rather than integratively motivated, and that instrumental motivation was commonly a strong predictor of L2 learning."

In a series of recent studies on the role of attitudes and learning setting, among other factors, in the learning of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, similar results to those of other researchers in this area were reached. Al-Abed Al-Haq and Smadi (1996a) examined the attitudes of Saudi university students toward learning English and found that the use of English does not make the learners Westernized; neither their national identity gets weakened, nor their religious commitment becomes corrupted. Learning English, though instrumentally motivated, is believed to be a religious and national duty among the Saudis. In another study, Al-Abed Al-Haq and Smadi (1996b) found that religiously committed Saudis were highly instrumentally motivated toward English learning. It was fully acknowledged
that a new type of motivation was predominant among these learners, namely, religious motivation. In a third study, Al-Abed Al-Haq, Smadi, and Aldosari (1996) distributed a questionnaire to 1176 undergraduate Saudi university students and found that the learners were instrumentally motivated since the need for English has notably been increased after the oil boom.

It is true that many of the studies in the field of foreign language acquisition yield inconclusive or contradictory results. However, the following generalizations based on foreign language acquisition research can be drawn (Dulay et al., 1982; Wong Fillmore 1982; Ellis 1987; Mclaughlin 1987; Wenden and Rubin 1987; Larsen-Freeman and Long 1992):

1. There are predictable sequences in the acquisition of foreign languages, i.e., foreign language acquisition follows a natural sequence of development.

2. There is systematicity in foreign language acquisition where the learner's interlanguage includes a system of variable rules.

3. Environmental factors are indirect determinants of the rate and the level of proficiency achieved in foreign language learning.

4. Foreign language learning is an active process in which cognitive and metacognitive strategies are manipulated.

5. Knowledge of a linguistic rule does not entail the ability to use it in communicative discourse.

6. Comprehensible input to foreign language should be: socially needed, motivating, structurally simple and regular, and more redundant and repetitive.

7. Learners have to realize the need to learn the target language and must be motivated.

8. Adults are more self-conscious than children, thus tending to be cautious in using the target language. They are better able than children to consciously learn linguistic rules and extract linguistic patterns.
9. Some personality or cognitive style characteristics that influence foreign language learning include: the willingness to take risks, tolerance of ambiguity, skill in social interaction, attitude, aptitude, and motivation.

10. Foreign language instruction should start in elementary school where feasible, if eventual native-like proficiency is to be anticipated.

Beliefs of learners about learning a foreign language should be investigated because they are a source of information that makes teachers sensitive to the types of beliefs and attitudes learners hold and to the possible consequences of these beliefs and attitudes for the teaching and learning of foreign language in general, and Arabic as a foreign language in particular. There is almost no mention of explicit learners' beliefs in the literature. Such beliefs were not systematically examined except by Horwitz (1987) and Wenden (1987) who studied ESL learners' beliefs. As far as the present study is concerned, the researchers have not come across any study on the learners' beliefs of Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) in general and American students' beliefs regarding it in specific.

It should be mentioned that the field of AFL is currently enjoying popularity for political, economic and cultural considerations. Hence, the study will provide some insights and implications for those concerned with this area (Smadi and Al-Abed Al-Haq, 1995; Hussein, 1995).

**Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at examining the American students' explicit perspective beliefs regarding learning AFL. The study will delineate the nature of these beliefs and find out whether these beliefs affect language learning strategies. To achieve this objective, five major dimensions related to learning AFL learning are examined, namely: (1) AFL aptitude (2) the difficulty of AFL (3) the nature of AFL learning, (4) AFL learning and communication strategies, and (5) motivation toward AFL learning.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that the field of AFL is rarely studied. Hussien (1995) maintains that the field of AFL or TASL is a new one.
Furthermore, the knowledge of students' beliefs will benefit both teachers and students. "When language classes fail to meet students' expectation, students can lose confidence in the instructional approach and their ultimate achievement can be limited" (Horwitz 1987:119). Sometimes, teachers encounter AFL learners who have misconceived ideas about the nature of learning AFL. "Therefore, knowledge of student beliefs about language learning is an important step toward understanding the etiology of learning strategies" (Horwitz 1987: 120).

Method

Sample

The available sample included all American university students who were enrolled in Arabic summer courses at the Language Center, Yarmouk University, Jordan in 1994; they were 25 male and female students. Their ages ranged from 19 to 50 years old. Their previous learning of Arabic varies from 1 to 3 years. The students came to Yarmouk University through an agreement with the University of Virginia, USA, which sponsors American students learning Arabic.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed on the basis of Horwitz' inventory of beliefs about language learning to assess American students' opinions on a number of issues related to Arabic language learning. It consist of 35 Likert-scale items dealing with five dimensions for the purpose of the study. A first draft of the questionnaire was given to a jury of 10 AFL specialists at the Language Center - Yarmouk University in Jordan to determine its content validity. Their comments were taken into consideration when producing the final version of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was computed and found to be 0.83. It should be mentioned that there are no clear-cut right and wrong answers to the items. Moreover, it is not the purpose of the study to identify incorrect students' opinions; rather, it aims at describing the respondents' beliefs and discussing the possible effect of these beliefs on the learning teaching situation of AFL. It is worth mentioning that items number 3, 15, 17, 23, 25, and 27 are intended to reveal the broader context of
subjects' beliefs and attitudes toward foreign language learning in general; Arabic language learning in the present study belongs to this area.

The questionnaires were distributed to the sample to be filled in and given back to the researchers.

The responses were computed, frequencies and percentages were calculated. This statistical procedure was used because the available sample was small. Other statistical procedures such as MANOVA need larger samples (Ferguson, 1976).

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented in tables with reference to the dimensions of the questionnaire.

Table 1 presents the percentages of the students' responses to the items related to AFL aptitude. Aptitude is viewed differently by various scholars.

Carrol (1981:84) states, "aptitude as a concept corresponds to the notion that in approaching a particular learning task or program, the individual may be thought of as possessing some current state of capability of learning that task-if the individual is motivated and has the opportunity of doing so. That capability is presumed to depend on some combination of more or less enduring characteristics of the individual."

The enduring characteristics represent a composite of multiple abilities which are: (1) phonic coding ability, (2) grammatical sensitivity, (3) rote learning ability for foreign language materials, and (4) inductive language learning ability.

Skehan (1985) extends the concept of aptitude to include: (1) a hybrid which combines a language processing ability and the potentiality to tackle decontextualized materials, and (2) a cognitive ability that is not only relevant to formal learning situations, but also to non-formal learning settings.

This aptitude is not confined to linguistic abilities, rather it incorporates linguistic and nonlinguistic potentialities. In this regard, Ellis (1987) maintains that the innate aptitude for language proficiency goes beyond a knowledge of the grammar and sound systems to include and ability to communicate effectively.
Table (1)

Percentages of Students Responses to the Items Related to AFL Aptitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*No. of Item</th>
<th>**SA%</th>
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<th>D%</th>
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* stands for number of items as in Appendix A

** SA stands for Strongly Agree, A for Agree, N for Neither Agree nor Disagree, D for Disagree, SD for Strongly Disagree.

The items in Table 1 concern the general existence of specific abilities for language learning and beliefs about the characteristics of more or less successful language learners. In other words, these items address the issue of equal ability for Arabic language learning, i.e., whether American students are better learners of AFL than others, and whether they differ among themselves in this ability.

There is overwhelming agreement among the respondents regarding a special ability for foreign language learning: 95.4% agree that some people have special ability for learning foreign languages and 86.3% believe that children are better than adults in learning foreign languages. The respondents are undecided regarding the distinction of Americans over others at learning foreign languages: 36.4% disagree while 18.7% agree. Interestingly, 45.4% disagree that they have a special ability for learning foreign languages, and only 31.8% believe so. This is supported by the overwhelming majority (90.9%) who believe that all human beings are capable of learning to speak foreign languages regardless of their ethnic background, sex, and other factors. In other words, the respondents seem not to believe in the superiority of Americans over others in learning foreign languages. There is a common belief in
the field of language acquisition that bilinguals are better learners of languages than monolinguals and trilinguals are better than both (Cummins and Swain, 1986). This belief is supported by the findings of the current study: 77.3% believe that it is easier for a bilingual to learn another language. There is a general notion that students in literary fields are better at learning languages than students in scientific ones. It seems that a slight majority of the respondents (54.5%) disagree with that belief. However, 45.5% are undecided on this issue. Females are generally thought to be more skillful at learning languages than males (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1992). It seems that the respondents (50%) do not strongly agree, although 45.5% are undecided on this issue. The respondents are undecided (68.2%) regarding the relationship between intelligence and bilingualism, though almost one third agree that bilingualism is an indication of intelligence. These responses indicate that the majority have a positive assessment of their own language learning abilities.

Interestingly enough, these findings are in agreement with Horwitz (1987) regarding foreign language aptitude, though the samples and the languages in focus are different. This tendency exhibits the existence of similar trends in teaching foreign languages in general.

Table 2 presents the percentages of students' responses regarding the items related to the difficulty of AFL learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table (2)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percentages of Students' Responses to the Items Related to Perceived Difficulty of AFL Learning</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Item</th>
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</table>
These items concern the difficulty of learning AFL and the relative difficulty of the different language skills as well as students' expectations, regarding their own success. The respondents unanimously (95.4%) believe that some languages are easier to learn than others; to them, Arabic is a difficult language to learn (77.3%). Although Arabic is believed to be difficult to learn, the majority (68.2%) believes that they will learn to speak Arabic very well. This means that, again, they have positive assessment of their abilities to learn Arabic and their expectations for success are high. Regarding the length of time necessary to learn Arabic, and to speak it very well, 59.1% indicate that they need 3-5 years while 27.3% need 5-10 years. It seems that their estimate of the needed time is realistic, taking into consideration their teaching/learning situation. Concerning the learning of different skills of Arabic, speaking seems to be considered more difficult than the other skills, where 59.1% believe that comprehension is easier than speaking, reading and writing whereas 50% agree that reading and writing are easier than speaking. While only 31.8% believe that speaking is easier than understanding. These findings can be explained in light of the fact comprehension requires less effort than the other skills because it is a receptive skill (Clark and Clark, 1977).

The respondents' realistic judgments about the difficulty of learning AFL skills as well as the length of time are crucial to the development of students' expectations for achievement of Arabic language learning. A belief that it will take 3-5 years to learn a language can be encouraging and cause students to exert maximal efforts since reasonable results can be expected.

**Table (3)**

Percentages of Students' Responses to the Items

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<tr>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>SA%</th>
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These items include a broad range of issues relevant to the nature of language learning, the role of cultural contacts and language or any other academic subjects, and the learners' conception of the focus of the language learning task be it vocabulary, grammar or translation oriented.

The majority believe that knowledge about Arabic-speaking culture is necessary in order to speak Arabic, and it is best to learn Arabic in its native environment (68.2% and 68.1%, respectively). These findings are in line with the principles of language acquisition which stress the fact that natural environment enhances the learning and acquisition processes of language. A full 81.8% believe that learning a foreign language is different from learning other academic subjects, since learning a language requires linguistic and cognitive abilities, among others.

There are many who think that learning a language is a matter of translating from their native language or learning grammar rules or vocabularies. In the current study, 59.7% disagree that translation is the focus of the learning task, while the respondents exhibit undecided judgment regarding vocabulary and grammar as foci of the learning task. It seems that the respondents consider vocabulary and grammar of almost equal importance in learning AFL; therefore, it is difficult for them to give priority to one component of language at the expense of others.

Table 4 presents the percentages of students' responses to items relevant to AFL learning and communication strategies.

Ellis (1987: 182) defines communication strategies as "...psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language users' communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serve as substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement." Rubin (1987: 25-26) maintains that communication strategies mainly focus on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. They are used when a speaker encounters some difficulty as a result of not finding the appropriate linguistic means to achieve the communication purpose. Learning strategies are those that contribute to the development of the language system which the learner builds and which has
impact on the learning process. These strategies are cognitive, like clarification, guessing, reasoning practicing, memorization, transfer, etc., and metacognitive like: planning, evaluation, and monitoring (Chamot, 1987).

Table (4)
Percentages of Students' Responses to the Items Related to AFL Learning and Communication Strategies

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<th>No. of Item</th>
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The items are related to the students' actual language learning practices. Learning and communication strategies are the focus of this dimension. First, with reference to learning strategies, 81.8% agree that accurate pronunciation is important to speak Arabic, while 100% disagree that one should not say anything unless he produces it correctly; 86.4% agree that guessing can be used if a word's meaning is not known. As many as 95.5% believe that repetition and practice are important to be used, and 59% disagree that if beginners are permitted to make errors it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later, i.e., errors can not be avoided since they are inevitable, particularly at the early stages of learning. Also 54.5% believe that traditional practice and practice with tapes or cassettes are important. However, the majority are undecided regarding the cognitive strategies and processes of AFL learning. Second, with reference to communication strategies, 90.9% overwhelmingly agree that they enjoy practicing Arabic with its native speakers and 54.6% disagree that they feel timid when speaking Arabic, while 40.9% agree. These findings highlight a number of
learning and communication strategies which are discussed in the literature and considered crucial for learning a language (Wenden and Rubin 1987; Ellis 1987).

The sample seems to be communicatively oriented since respondents stress the idea that learners should be permitted to commit errors as long as the communication act is fulfilled. Teachers should expect errors, not focus on students' errors during communication; they should be patient with students' speech not the language form they use. Accordingly students should not be embarrassed by their errors (Daly et al., 1982). Moreover, the large minority (40.9%) which feel timid when speaking Arabic could be a result of fear of being incomprehensible; therefore, encouraging students to speak even if they make mistakes and to feel relaxed about it is important.

Table 5 presents the percentages of students' responses regarding motivation. Effective factors related to language learning have been widely discussed. Ellis (1987:118-9) summarizes the major findings in this area as follows:

1. Motivation and attitudes are important factors that determine the level of proficiency achieved by different learners.

2. The effects of motivation and attitudes as a system of beliefs appear to be separate from the effects of aptitude. The most successful learners will be those who have talent, a high level of motivation for learning, and positive attitudes.

3. In certain situations, an integrative motivation may be more powerful in facilitating successful language learning, but in other situations instrumental motivation may be equally effective. Hence, instrumental and integrative motivation should be manipulated, since both types of motivation reinforce effective learning.

4. The level and type of motivation is strongly influenced by the social context in which learning takes place.
Table (5)

Percentages of Students’ Responses to the Items Related to Motivation Toward AFL Learning Communication Strategies

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<tr>
<th>No. of Item</th>
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</table>

These items concern desires the American students currently have associated with the learning of AFL.

It is very clear that the sample is highly motivated, both instrumentally and integratively. Fully 100% want to learn to speak Arabic well. A large majority (77.3%) associate the ability to speak Arabic with better job opportunities. They have a very strong desire (95.4%) for friendships with Arabs and 77.7% would like to learn Arabic so that they can get to know Arabs better. However, the sample believes that Americans, in general, do not need to learn Arabic; 81.8% disagree that Americans feel it is important to speak Arabic. This is justifiable in light of the fact that English is the language for wider communication and the lingua franca for most of the world; Arabic is needed by Americans only for special purposes.

After discussing the various dimensions of the study, it is worth presenting the correlations among them to find out their interaction with each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
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<th>D2</th>
<th>D3</th>
<th>D4</th>
<th>D5</th>
<th>QALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
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<td>0.4585</td>
<td>0.1274</td>
<td>0.2421</td>
<td>0.4708</td>
<td>0.7292**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.0000</td>
<td>-0.1023</td>
<td>0.2368</td>
<td>0.2710</td>
<td>0.6064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.7193**</td>
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<tr>
<td>QALL</td>
<td>0.7292**</td>
<td>0.6064*</td>
<td>0.4591</td>
<td>0.7193**</td>
<td>0.4415</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* α= 0.01 ** α = 0.001

D1: AFL Aptitude
D2: The Difficulty of AFL Learning
D3: The Nature of AFL learning
D4: AFL Learning and Communication Strategies
D5: Motivation Toward AFL Learning.
QALL: Correlation Among all Dimensions.

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It seems there are no correlation between the individual dimensions; however, there are significant correlation between the first, the second, and the fourth on the one hand and all the dimensions on the other hand. This finding indicates the significance of the interaction among these dimensions. Contrary to what Ellis (1987) believes, aptitude seems to have more weight than the third and fifth dimensions in determining the subjects’ success in learning Arabic. Furthermore, aptitude, the nature of AFL learning, and AFL learning communication strategies appear to join together to facilitate successful language learning. The absence of correlation between the third and the fifth dimension on one side and all dimensions on the other side does not indicate that they are not important, rather, the subjects are highly motivated to learn Arabic since all of them want to learn it well (see Table 5). They think that dimensions one, two, and four may affect their success of AFL learning more than the other dimensions.

**Conclusions and Implications**

The findings of this study agree to a large extent with those of Horwitz (1987), though the samples and languages in focus are different. There are common trends and conceptions regarding foreign language learning. They should be utilized effectively by learners, teachers, and curriculum designers.

The findings of this study indicate that motivation, aptitude, attitude, personality traits, learning and communication strategies, among others, are important factors which help to determine successful language learning. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the study of students' beliefs is of great importance since it reveals correct and incorrect conceptions regarding language. Misconceived ideas may hamper language learning; therefore, they should be revealed, discussed and clarified at the beginning of a language program. From our experience, we notice that many AFL learners believe incorrectly that they are supposed to understand every word and structure used in their foreign language classes. When simply told that they are not expected to understand every single utterance, and that none of the other students understand every word, they feel relaxed and not frustrated. This feeling creates a positive learning atmosphere and more readiness to proceed.
Knowledge of learning and communication strategies students employ is significant, since they promote productive learning procedures. Teachers, curriculum designers, and learners should adopt the effective strategies. The study shows that a large majority of the sample are not aware of the cognitive learning strategies stated in item 35 of the questionnaire. Teachers and learners should make sure that what is taught and learned is comprehended, applied and used in further communicative situations.

The questionnaire proves to be simple and accessible to students since it is direct, revealing and explicit. Therefore, it is recommended to be used in similar situations, since Arabic is currently spreading internationally.

It is not surprising to AFL teachers that students enter AFL classes with many preconceived ideas about Arabs and Arabic language learning; they come across these beliefs on a daily basis whenever a student resists an instructional activity or requests different teaching procedures. Misconceptions about Arabs, Arabic, and language learning may create a distance between learners and the target language, because their learning behaviors are governed by their beliefs, which in turn have a negative impact on their attainments. Thus, a systematic assessment of AFL students’ beliefs would greatly enhance learning in classroom situations.
Appendix A

American University Students' Beliefs About Arabic Language Learning

Below are beliefs that some American university students have about learning Arabic as a foreign language.

Read each statement and then decide if you:

(1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers. We are simply interested in your opinions. Mark each answer on the special answer sheet. Questions 4 and 15 are slightly different and you should mark them as indicated. REMEMBER:

(1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree.

__________1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.

__________2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.

__________3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.

__________4. Arabic is:

   (a) a very difficult language
   (b) a language of medium difficulty
   (c) an easy language
   (d) a very easy language

__________5. I believe that I will learn to speak Arabic very well.

__________6. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.

__________7. It is important to speak Arabic with an excellent pronunciation.

__________8. It is necessary to know about Arabic-speaking cultures in order to speak.

__________10. It is easier for someone who already speak a foreign language to learn another one.

__________11. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.
12. It is best to learn Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country.

13. I enjoy practicing Arabic with the Arabs I meet.

14. It's o. k. to guess if you don't know a word in Arabic.

15. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take them to speak the language very well:
   (a) less than a year
   (b) 1-2 years
   (c) 3-5 years
   (d) 5-10 years
   (c) you can't learn a language in 1 hour a day.

16. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.

17. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning vocabulary words.

18. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.

19. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.

20. People in my country feel that it is important to speak Arabic.

21. I feel timid speaking Arabic with other people.

22. If beginning students are permitted to make errors in Arabic, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.

23. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.

24. I would like to learn Arabic so that I can get to know Arabs better.

25. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.

26. It is important to practice with cassettes or tapes.

27. Learning a foreign language is different than-learning other academic subjects.

28. The most important part of learning Arabic is learning how to translate from my native language.
29. If I learn Arabic very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.

30. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.

31. I want to learn to speak Arabic well.

32. I would like to have Arab friends.

33. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

34. It is easier to read and write Arabic than to speak and understand it.

35. The process of learning Arabic should go through the following consecutive strategies: Knowledge-comprehension-application-analysis-synthesis-evaluation.
References


Rubin, Joan (1975). "What the 'Good Language Learner' Can Teach Us". *TESOL Quarterly, 9* (1).


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