Introduction to the Third Edition for Teachers

We are delighted to present this third edition of the textbook *Al-Kitaab fii Taᶜallum al-ᶜArabiyya Part One* and its companion website **(www.alkitaabtextbook.com)** and accompanying DVD. This edition represents a new phase in the evolution of these materials both technologically and pedagogically. Like previous editions, the materials revolve around a story about a set of characters and focus on vocabulary activation and developing speaking, listening and reading comprehension, and writing and cultural skills. With this edition we add a companion website with interactive, autocorrecting exercises, and we place greater emphasis on the comprehension and production of spoken Arabic, offering a choice between Egyptian and Levantine dialect components[1].Adding other dialects to the materials as options to the original Egyptian was part of our original vision, and we are very pleased to be able to realize this goal in part with the addition of the Damascene (as representative of Levantine) material here.

The increased presence and integration of spoken Arabic in this edition represents a natural evolution of these materials within the philosophy outlined in the first edition: Our goal is to present and teach language forms that reflect the linguistic behavior of educated native speakers. Increasingly, in written as well as formal spoken contexts, Arabic speakers produce and consume mixes of registers that include both formal and spoken elements. We believe it is important to introduce learners to this reality from the beginning. Our experience in the classroom with these materials and the approach outlined here is that learners' skills in all areas develop faster when basic spoken forms and expressions are taught early in the students' experience, and that these forms do not "fossilize" but rather continue to evolve. In other words, teaching spoken forms early results in an enhanced fluency that transfers to formal Arabic as well. In this introduction we will talk about our materials and our teaching philosophy. There is a separate introduction for students that we urge you to read and discuss with your students.

Learning Outcome Goals

In our experience teaching with this approach and these materials, students reach solid intermediate proficiency in all skills by the end of one year (two semesters). This means that by the time you finish working through this book, ان شاء الله, your students should have acquired the following skills:

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[1]As in *Alif Baa*, we use the terms "formal" and "spoken" Arabic to refer to different registers that are not mutually exclusive. These registers are also known as Modern Standard, Standard, or Classical Arabic (الفصحى) on the one hand, and colloquial (العامية) on the other. We avoid the use of term "colloquial" because it has derogatory connotations. "Formal" Arabic refers to a standardized register that is mainly but not exclusively used in writing and reading (including reading aloud, as in news broadcasts); "spoken" refers to the wide range of registers and forms–including many words and forms it shares with formal Arabic–that are used in spoken and informal contexts, including written ones.

- The ability to speak about herself, her life, and her environment, to initiate and sustain conversations on daily-life topics with educated native speakers who are accustomed to conversing with learners of Arabic as a foreign language, and to paraphrase as necessary to make herself understood.
- The ability to read simple, authentic texts on familiar topics and understand the main ideas without using the dictionary, and have confidence to guess the meaning of new words from context and other clues.
- The ability to write informal notes and essays on familiar topics connected to daily life.
- The ability to comprehend and produce accurately the basic sentence structures of Arabic.
- Familiarity with the differences in sounds and basic structures between formal and spoken Arabic.
- A general understanding of aspects of Arab culture connected to everyday life, including culturally important expressions commonly used among friends and acquaintances.

In this third edition, *Part One* consists of thirteen chapters, which represent the amount of material that can reasonably be activated in a year of college-level Arabic with an average of five contact hours per week. We use the word "activated" rather than "covered" pointedly: Although it is possible to introduce vocabulary and structures at a faster pace, activating them so that students can produce them fluently in context and without prompting takes much more time. These materials are designed so that students can activate vocabulary and structures; in our experience, teaching the lessons included in this volume with full activation takes approximately 125 classroom hours plus 200–250 hours of preparation outside class.

Structure of the Chapters

The chapters in this book are structured according to a philosophy and methodology of teaching that has evolved with each subsequent edition of the *Al-Kitaab* language program. Each chapter is structured as closely as possible to the syllabus we use when we teach, with exercises to be done before class and activities to be done in class. Each chapter, thus, consists of cycles of exercises, usually one for each section—vocabulary, texts, grammar, and so forth—starting with one to three exercises labeled في البيت followed by one or two labeled في الصف. Each one or two cycles in a chapter represent one contact hour of class time. The exact number of cycles per class depends on the length of your class sessions as well as the length of the exercises. Some of the grammar exercises, in particular, are short, and multiple grammar points can sometimes be activated on the same day.

Each chapter begins with extensive work on vocabulary acquisition and activation because we believe that building vocabulary—with attention to its accurate use in context—is the core activity of building proficiency in Arabic. After vocabulary has been activated, learners are prepared for the story, which is followed by focused grammar work. The progression from learning new vocabulary to the story to grammar is important to maintain: Without activating the vocabulary, the story will be hard to understand, and grammar should emerge

from a context—here, the context of the story. Culture, reading, and listening sections and their activities, along with additional speaking and writing activities, normally appear later in the chapter because they are designed to push students to expand their skills and use their vocabulary in new contexts. Each chapter ends with a new dialogue in the dialogue section, which presents the greatest challenge linguistically but is also meant to be fun. A section containing two or three review drills comes at the end of each chapter. The placement of the drills here is designed to give the instructor maximum flexibility. Most of these drills are autocorrected online exercises, which means that the student can do them at his or her leisure, perhaps as a review for a quiz.

Those of you who are familiar with the second edition will notice that the order of presentation of the formal and spoken versions of the story within each lesson has changed. Following the highly successful testing of a new approach, we have decided to introduce the story in dialect before working with it in formal Arabic. This approach has the advantage of helping students develop listening and speaking skills in real-life Arabic and comprehension skills in formal Arabic, which follows the usage patterns of native speakers, for whom spoken formal Arabic is a passive language for the most part.

As in the third edition of *Alif Baa*, vocabulary is introduced in *Al-Kitaab Part One* in three varieties: Formal, Egyptian, and Levantine (Syrian). Also new here is that all active vocabulary words are presented at the beginning of the chapter, including words that do not occur in the story but do appear in the reading texts or the new dialogue. We hope this will make it easier to activate these words more fully and help learners keep track of the vocabulary for which they are responsible. The presentation of grammar has also undergone some revision, most notably an increased emphasis on morphology, especially noun and verb patterns. The sequencing of structures has not changed, but the introduction of plurals and verb patterns has been spread out across several lessons, allowing time for learners to recognize and activate these patterns.

The mechanical work necessary to activate vocabulary and grammar inevitably means long hours of homework for learners and equally long hours of correcting for instructors and assistants. New in the third edition, however, are mechanical exercises with a closed set of answers that are all provided online as autocorrecting drills, which provides students with instant feedback. It is our hope that autocorrection will allow both students and teachers to work more effectively and that by giving instant feedback, it will help them focus their efforts and build their confidence.

Finally, this edition of *Part One* contains new reading and listening comprehension texts. And the few remaining old texts are paired with new ones. We are happy to have succeeded in placing most of the structurally simple texts, such as lists within the first few chapters, so that beginning in chapter 5 the reading texts are in prose. We think you will find that the reading exercises are more challenging and more rewarding than those in the previous editions.

In the new dialogue section at the end of each chapter you will find a linguistically challenging and culturally rich video dialogue in spoken Arabic. Each dialogue includes many of the vocabulary items that the chapter has aimed to activate and presents them in different kinds of scenes from everyday life. This dialogue can be used either as a comprehension exercise or as a second "basic text" of the chapter, depending on how much time and attention you decide to give it and how it fits in with your overall goals for the course.

Language Production in Speaking and Writing

Al-Kitaab Part One introduces two varieties of spoken Arabic in addition to a formal register. The goal here, however, is not for all three varieties to be learned. Rather, the goal is for the class to choose one variety of spoken Arabic and learn it along with the formal Arabic. You will notice that, aside from a few regular differences in some sounds (such as the pronunciation of ق and hamza, and the tendency of Syrian speakers to elide some short vowels and turn others into kasra), the overwhelming majority of words are shared among all three varieties of Arabic.

We have tried to be as accurate as possible to represent the way words are pronounced in the Cairene and Damascene dialects in particular, but we do not believe it is necessary to demand all the nuances of local dialect from beginning learners. Those of us who teach and learn outside the Arab world are usually in contact with speakers of multiple dialects and we often communicate in a type of panregional Arabic. Subconsciously, at least, we seek out shared forms and use them. Our students need to function in this environment, too, and they will be well served by an inclusive view of what spoken Arabic is.

It is up to you to decide which varieties the class will use and how they will be mixed, but remember that you do not have to be a native speaker of a dialect to allow it to be a presence in the classroom. If you speak a different variety of Arabic and want to teach it, you can introduce forms from your own dialect and adapt the story, too, if you like.

Proficiency guidelines for intermediate-level language specify the achievement of language production in informal situations and contexts. Arabic speakers use spoken registers exclusively in these circumstances, even when interacting with speakers of dialects other than their own. In our view, the ability to produce formal language in speech and writing is a skill that takes even native speakers (who have a big head start) years to develop. To expect it exclusively from beginning learners, we believe, is counterproductive. Therefore, our expectation at this level is that learners will produce mixed forms, some formal and some informal, according to the tools they have available to express themselves. For example, it is not reasonable to expect ليس to be used in writing before students have learned it. However, they have acquired the spoken forms of negation ما and مش that are used by native speakers in informal contexts. This mixing will not always be natural, just as the grammatical forms themselves will not always be accurate. Accuracy emerges gradually, including accuracy in language register.

Teaching Vocabulary

Because Arabic has a long history and is spoken across a large geographical area, it has an expansive vocabulary. This will be learners' biggest challenge in reaching fluency in Arabic, and you should encourage them to devote as much effort as they can to actively acquire the vocabulary in each chapter. "Actively acquiring" means developing the ability to produce the word accurately in the appropriate context without being prompted—that is, without seeing the word in a list or word bank. Put another way, activated vocabulary is vocabulary that the learner owns, that he or she uses in the context of his or her life. It is crucial that students prepare vocabulary before class by listening to the audio and doing the drills designated as homework drills.

Each vocabulary item is contextualized in a sentence recorded in formal Arabic as well. These sentences are meant to serve two purposes: (1) to contextualize the new vocabulary, and (2) to give students practice in close listening skills. Ask the students to write out the vocabulary sentences in each chapter so that they can develop their recognition of sounds and word boundaries and their ability to use grammatical and background information to construct meaning. This exercise will help them prepare to interact with authentic listening texts and to comprehend language just beyond their current level.

As in *Alif Baa,* vocabulary in *Part One* is introduced in three color-coded varieties: المصري, الشامي, الفصحى. Words shared by more than one variety are in **black**. It is important to remember that the vocabulary list is not a glossary and that the words given for each variety do not constitute an exhaustive list of equivalents. The vocabulary words presented also have not been chosen randomly, rather they are included because they occur in one of the video segments or reading texts in the chapter. Since most of these texts were originally composed in formal Arabic, the vocabulary lists originated in the formal register. Not all spoken words that are in use are given in these lists. Only those words the actors use in telling the Cairene and Levantine versions of the story are included. The words are listed separately when the word or its pronunciation, as it occurs in the story, differs from the formal word. You will notice that these variants are often very close, separated only by a vowel sound; we have included them in the chart so that you can click on them to hear the differences in pronunciation. It is important for students to learn and study the spoken forms aurally, because some spoken Arabic sounds cannot be represented accurately in Arabic script.

The "Ask Your Colleagues" exercises are designed to be done in class using a combination of formal and spoken Arabic that has been very successful in our classrooms. This exercise helps students activate and personalize new vocabulary as they interview their classmates in Arabic. Because they are using the new vocabulary in context, there is a substantial amount of grammar practice that takes place during the time devoted to vocabulary. This combination ensures more active study and, we believe, faster acquisition.

The questions are provided in English for three reasons: (1) to help reinforce the association of words with particular contexts, (2) to force students to produce the new vocabulary in context from scratch rather than reading the Arabic words on the page, and (3) to help students avoid using English, since everyone knows what the questions mean from the outset. Take advantage of that shared knowledge by encouraging your students to work with their partners on the best way to express their thoughts in Arabic.

Teaching Grammar

Before speaking about our approach in teaching and learning grammar, we, as teachers, should ask ourselves an important question: What is the basic grammar of Arabic? What do learners need to know, passively and actively, to produce and comprehend informal Arabic on topics involving daily life? "Informal" is an important distinction because learners' grasp of formal language registers is assumed to follow, not precede, informal registers. Thus the most formal aspects of Arabic grammar—case endings, in particular—are not level-appropriate for elementary- and intermediate-level learners.

What is important for intermediate-level learners is basic sentence structure, especially sentence types, agreement, verb conjugation, noun phrases, and subordination. These structures are not difficult to grasp—in fact, most learners can comprehend these structures in reading and listening long before they have been formally introduced to them, but learners need lots of practice to activate them. Mechanical practice is necessary but not sufficient to reach that goal. The grammar will have been internalized when students use it unprompted in their speech and writing. Accuracy will not be 100 percent. Recall that it is natural for intermediate speakers to make errors even in simple structures. These errors have nothing to do with not knowing or understanding the rules but simply indicates that the structure needs more activation.

At this level of basic grammar, most structures are shared by spoken and formal Arabic. Word-order patterns, including subordinate structures such as indefinite relative clauses, noun-phrase grammar, and the basic components of verb conjugation, are all shared grammatical structures. The main differences are in negation, verb mood, and subordination, in which modal particles differ. These variations are quite manageable at the comprehension level, and the degree to which one or both forms are activated will depend on the goals of the instructor and the program.

As in the previous two editions, the sequencing of grammar in *Part One* third edition materials is based not on a predetermined design but, rather, on the story itself, which was written independent of any grammatical considerations. We believe that privileging context in this way yields a more natural sequencing of structures for the learner that she or he can use. Following well-established models of spiraling in language acquisition, most grammar points are presented gradually, with information increasing in level of detail each time according to the language functions appropriate to students' abilities.

Have confidence in your students' ability to comprehend and activate grammar. Keep in mind that the first part happens quickly and the second takes time and practice. It is important that you guide your students to prepare for class by reading the lesson's explanation and by doing the accompanying mechanical drill that helps them begin to use the structure. Outside class, each student can work at his or her pace and be ready to begin using the new structure in class. Their use of this new structure may be tentative at first, but practice, not explanations or lectures, is what will build their confidence.

Our approach also relies on an understanding of interlanguage that says students acquire language by constructing their own internal grammar rather than by internalizing a presentation of grammar. It is the goal of this approach to help learners build their own grammar using induction, analogy, and hypothesis formation and testing. Learning a language involves critical thinking no less than memorization. You can help this process along by asking students questions rather than providing them with answers when they do not know something. Encourage a critical thinking approach to grammar and reward students verbally for asking questions.

Reading for Comprehension

"Reading" for many native speakers of Arabic educated in the Arab world means "reading aloud" because they studied formal Arabic in school, and formal Arabic is most often read aloud. For us, however, reading means reading for comprehension, which is a very different activity that requires different skills. We use the term "reading comprehension" to refer to activities that develop the skills that all fluent readers of Arabic use subconsciously. We are not concerned now with developing the skill of reading texts aloud, which is unrelated to comprehension and, in fact, often interferes with it. Reading aloud helps pronunciation and reinforces vocabulary and structure, and we have provided composed texts for just these purposes in the review drills section of many of the early chapters. Reading activities in this book aim to develop skills such as guessing the meaning from context, using background knowledge to help set expectations about what will be in a text, and using grammatical knowledge to construct meaning. As in previous editions, each chapter in this edition of *Part One* has at least one reading comprehension text. All of the reading texts in this book are authentic—written for educated adult native speakers of Arabic. This is important because the learners using this book are adults and deserve adult reading material.

Make sure your students know that you do not expect them to understand everything in the reading texts, and that they should try to focus on what they *do* understand rather than on what they do not. We want students to approach these texts with an expectation of exploration and discovery, guided with questions like: What kind of text is it, and what clues does it give you as to what kinds of information it gives? Can you guess the meaning of any new words from context? Every piece of information your students can recognize or extract from authentic texts represents a step forward in building students' Arabic language skills.

Reading comprehension texts, thus, are designed to be explored, *not* to be read aloud or read in a linear fashion. In fact, students should be discouraged from reading aloud, even to themselves, and should be encouraged to try to look at phrases or lists. These texts are meant to be skimmed, scanned, and discovered, since their main purpose is to teach strategies and skills necessary for fluent reading. Of course, focusing on close reading and grammatical details is a crucial part of building fluency in reading, and you will notice that these kinds of questions increase as students learn more structure formally. The traditional way to focus on such details is through translation, but we believe that translation of authentic texts at this level is counterproductive because the quantity of unknown vocabulary words would force students to process the text in linear fashion, which is counterproductive to our goal of balancing fluency and accuracy and allowing accuracy to develop gradually.

The reading comprehension exercises included in the book are designed to teach themselves. Your role here is not to explain but to motivate and encourage students and to celebrate with them as they discover the text themselves. We recommend that these exercises be done in class as much as possible, especially at the beginning of the book, until students develop confidence both in themselves and in your expectations of them. (This method also helps prevent students from using the dictionary or asking others about the meanings of unknown words in the text.) Many of these exercises work well when students work in pairs, and this cooperative learning approach helps to create the desired atmosphere of exploration and discovery that makes reading fun.

Each reading comprehension exercise begins with open-ended questions that focus on global comprehension. The key here is to let the students lead by reporting the meanings that they are able to construct. Asking the students specific questions is counterproductive at this stage. Following a global look at the text, second- and third-round questions ask students to focus on specific sections of the text that present them with "muscle-building" exercises that work on bottom-up processing skills. These questions involve guessing the meaning of new words from carefully chosen contexts using contextual and grammatical clues and the Arabic root and pattern system, recognizing and processing grammatical structures in new and authentic contexts, and developing discourse management skills—keeping track of large structural issues, such as recognizing sentence and paragraph structure, identifying parallel constructions, paying attention to connectors, and parsing long sentences in which the subject and predicate or verb may be located far away from each other.

Because the purpose of these reading exercises is to build skills and strategies, we strongly discourage the use of the reading exercises as vocabulary exercises. Each text has been carefully chosen so that students can comprehend a great deal and develop processing skills through reading without any additional vocabulary. Providing lists of all unknown vocabulary in the text will lead students back to linear processing and will not help them develop reading proficiency.

We hope that this new edition will be a useful learning and teaching tool for Arabic, and that those of you who have used previous editions will find the changes we have made helpful in achieving your goals. We wish you a successful, enjoyable, and rewarding experience teaching Arabic!

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