

## Achieving an Advanced Speaking Proficiency in Arabic Language Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

This study is based on a case study of a Swedish undergraduate student whose Arabic name is Ibrahim. He achieved an advanced speaking proficiency in Arabic language. Based on interviews with Ibrahim, observing him in the classroom, analyzing documents, examining the opinions of his teachers and classmates, the study highlights Ibrahim's multiple identities as a language studier and assistant Imam. For many people, studying second language is one of the most important and demanding tasks they will need to accomplish. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will inspire and encourage language learners to study Arabic.

**Keywords:** Individual differences, Motivation, Language Learners.

### INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in knowing what makes some learners more successful than others in reaching high levels of proficiency in a target language like Arabic. How does one reach a native-like level of fluency in a second language? Language education has experienced enormous growth in the middle part of the previous century, and the ability to speak more than one language becomes more important these days. Arabic as second language (ASL) teachers today are concerned with how to help their students best learn and acquire Arabic language by helping them achieve proficiency in the most effective matter. These teachers must now rethink about the effectiveness of their methods in light of the innovative potentials inherent in a truly communicative medium, if the purpose of learning a language communication, the context that promotes communication should increase the motivation of learners to learn it and must be rich in interaction. In other words, they ought to make use of the various tools to measure

the progress of the learners. Among those tools are motivation, self-assessment, portfolios, and tests.

A number of scholars such as Byrnes (2006) indicate that there are only a small number of language learners who can attain such proficiency. Therefore, research of relative domains is somewhat limited. Consequently, studies are scarce pertaining to how these learners' personal and linguistic profiles have facilitated or hindered their second language acquisition.

Being the Chairperson of the Department, Ibrahim came over to my office in order to discuss important issues such as the nature of the placement test as well as the weekly schedule of his lectures. I noticed at the time that he was wearing Arab attire that is called (dishdasha). I asked him, out of interest, what his nationality is, how long he will stay in Jordan and about his Arabic language learning experience. He told me that he is from Sweden and that he came to the University of Jordan for the purpose of taking a course which is called in his University "Studies at an Arab University" and that he will stay for one semester. He added that he is studying Arabic language at Lund University and that he still has one year to finish. The following day was Ibrahim's placement test which consisted of a written and an oral

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\* University of Jordan. Received on 13/10/2010 and Accepted for Publication on 4/4/2011.

component. After evaluating his performance at the exam, it turned out that he scored an excellent result in both parts.

Based on his impressive scored result, Ibrahim was placed in the most advanced class of the program. He then rapidly proved himself to be an exemplary student worthy of observation, and this is how I believed that his case will be enlightenment to other students in achieving proficiency in Arabic as a second language. Consequently, this study aims at shedding light on some personal attributes of Ibrahim as a language learner and his relationships with Arabic language communities so as to identify the factors that facilitate or hinder a student's acquisition of Arabic. In other terms, the study focuses on inspiring language learners and educators by offering new dimensions for studying Arabic language.

### **Theoretical Background**

Learning Arabic language can be challenging because there are a number of different dialects spoken throughout the Arab world. Arabic is one of the official and major world languages. It is spoken by more than 300 million people worldwide (Swissinfo.com). Consequently, the study of Arabic, the language of the holy Qur'an and the language that is used by peoples of the Middle East, is on the rise. Therefore, intense focus within this decade is shed on specifically that part of the world which speaks Arabic as its solely official language. But, it is worthy of pointing out here that a positive view point is not always portrayed regarding Arabic and its civilization due to media, propaganda and misconceptions. As a result, there had been a number of funds that are initiated to teaching foreigners Arabic in the Arab world so as to bridge the gap between diverse civilizations (Wingfield, 2001).

The learner of Arabic has to remember that Arabic is such a vast fielding that only a few learners can even come close to mastering. Nonetheless, the study of Arabic can provide insights into cultural, religious and political components which motivate inhabitants.

According to Husseinali (2006), the interest in learning Arabic in the world increased dramatically after the incident of September 11<sup>th</sup>. To illustrate, in Scandinavian countries, where Ibrahim came from, citizens only communicated through Swedish, Norwegian and Danish; but after that incident, interest in learning Arabic as a foreign language increased drastically. In this regard, Ibrahim told me that he chose to learn Arabic language so as to become an Orientalist since the interest in Arabic for Swedish people goes back to the eighteenth century.

In addition, when I asked him why Swedish people are still interested in learning Arabic, he replied that it is to assist the Arabic community in Sweden and also to send Swedish learners of Arabic to disputed Arab territories. He elaborated by stating that he chose to further study at the University of Jordan in Amman based on the recommendation of both his mentor and father due to the fact that it is reputed with its safety and security. Moreover, when I asked Ibrahim how would he go about achieving his goal in relation to developing his proficiency in Arabic language, he stated that he believed that Arabic ought to necessarily be practiced at diverse times and in different situations not only for academic purposes but also for practical ones and that this could not be achieved except in an Arabic native speaking environment.

### **Method**

The participant, Ibrahim, is a 22 year old Swedish male who was born and raised in Vaxjo. He did his undergraduate study in Arabic at Lund University where he is currently pursuing his studies in Foreign and Second Language Education. When I taught him, he had already been studying Arabic for more than three years. Due to such a background and since I was able to keep in touch with him over a period of seven months, Ibrahim turned out to be the most suitable subject for this research.

A single case study method is being adopted in this study as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded

systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 73). Moreover, an intrinsic case study is also utilized because the study's objective is to increase the understanding of a particular case, Ibrahim, who is viewed as an advanced language learner. In other words, the study is also interested in theory building and particularly in Ibrahim since he can purposefully offer an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. That is why focusing on a single case at this point seems both beneficial and feasible to gain in-depth insights into a linguistic and personal journey of a successful Arabic learner. However, this does not mean that Ibrahim is the only learner I taught who has achieved the advanced level proficiency in Arabic but rather he is among the few distinguished.

Initially speaking, I asked Ibrahim's classmates to offer their opinion about three classmates of their own choice in terms of their performance and language proficiency. The intention behind this measure is to grasp a somewhat realistic view point of particularly Ibrahim since it turned out that six of these students took Ibrahim as one of the three students of their own choice. Among the responses were the following:

- A student from Russia stated that “Ibrahim is knowledgeable and is a great thinker. He tackles the discussed topic in class in a profound and comprehensible manner and his language is excellent”.
- A student from Bulgaria pointed out that “Ibrahim is always ready to answer any inquiry posed by other students”.
- A student from Turkey believed that “Ibrahim forwards interesting and fruitful questions in class”.
- A student from China highlighted that “Ibrahim is a committed believer, and he is not in need of music to fill up his spare time since he constantly recites the Qur'an”.

- A student from Taiwan was of the opinion that “Ibrahim is a well behaved classmate whose presence in class is very evident”.

- A student from Spain commented that she enjoys listening to Ibrahim “who is a serious person of interesting remarks and who fluently speaks Arabic”.

### **Individual Differences in Second Language Learning**

In order to improve second language learning and to make it more effective, the learner ought to prepare himself both practically and psychologically. This means that the learner should be interested in learning in general and in independent practice beyond the classroom. It is worthy of pointing out here that increased attention has been devoted to areas of individual differences such as intelligence, personality, gender, motivation, age, learning styles, anxiety, aptitudes and attitudes according to Lazaraton (2005) and Robinson (2002). In this respect, Masgoret, and Gardner (2003) stress that attitudes and motivation are essential factors that influence the rate and success of second language learning in the classroom. Furthermore, Dornyei (2001) propose a process model of motivation in which they suggest that in the classroom teachers hold significant responsibility for student motivation and they outline major steps for creating classes of motivated students in the sense that they do not easily let students off the hook and suggest that teachers need to encourage students' self-evaluation.

Motivation is internally complex in the sense that some studies have shown that motivation correlates strongly with proficiency, indicating both that successful learners are motivated. Therefore, success improves motivation. However, (Dornyei, 2001) begins his work by stating that strictly speaking, there is no such thing as motivation.

Much of the initial impetus for using formative assessment, especially those for foreign or second language learning adults, such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, projects, and portfolios have been situated at the primary level in multicultural education system

(Leung and Mohan 2004). Testing has traditionally been the most widely used assessment tool in classrooms, and it still is. It is important to consider which of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and needs to be assessed since these tools can help the teacher develop a full picture of the students' progress. Speaking has always been a major focus of language teaching, and in the past days meant, to repeat after the teacher, or responding to a mechanical drill, fluency became these days a goal for speaking lessons and this it could be developed through the use of information gap and other tasks that required students to attempt real communication despite limited proficiency in Arabic. Listening rarely mentioned and it continues to be ignored in SLA research and theory, now plays a much more prominent role.

### **Research on Advanced Language Learners**

Historically speaking, a number of researchers such as Carroll (1967), whose focus is on foreign and second language education, have always been interested in understanding the secret behind having relatively good language learners. Studies had been done in the fields of the first and second language learning, and much attention has been paid to designing and implementing proficiency oriented communicative approach in the language classroom. Theories of language competence, theories of language acquisition and the developments of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) which is a national professional association for foreign language teachers, have been instrumental in the development of proficiency assessment knowing that guidelines have helped teachers to guide their goals and objectives for language learning in the classroom (Stern, 1983).

Many studies focus on good language learners and provide an opportunity to assess current trends in second language acquisition (SLA) theory. There has been a scarcity of research which helps us understand why some learners are able to achieve high-level language

proficiency in languages other than English such as Arabic. One of the earliest researchers in this field Rubin (1975) believes that good language learners are willing and accurate guessers in the sense that they take advantage of all practice opportunities and focus on form by looking for and analyzing patterns which develops a strong drive to communicate. In relation to this, Stern (1975) produced a number of language learning strategies to become a good language learner the most important of which is the learner's personal learning style.

In relation to this, probably one of the most influential studies about the good language learner is conducted by Naiman et al (1996) in the mid-1970s. These researchers found that adult good language learners seem to employ five strategies to achieve proficiency by: First, actively involving themselves in the language learning task; second, developing an awareness of language as a system; third, developing and exploiting an awareness of language as a means of communication and interaction; fourth, realizing initially or with time that they must cope with the effective demands made upon them by language learning and succeed in doing so; and fifth, constantly revising their second language system" (Naiman et al., 1996, 30-33 qtd. in Samimy, 2008).

Similarly, there are a number of theories advocating a good language learner:

1- A good language learner analyzes what he is learning, and does not hesitate to forward any inquiry if comprehension has not been achieved.

2- A good language learner is realistic since he knows that it will take time and effort to become proficient in the target language, i.e. Arabic.

3- A good language learner attempts to express himself in the target language even in extra curricula activities such as singing or acting.

4- A good language learner is not frustrated or embarrassed when making mistakes because he knows that these mistakes will deepen his comprehension of the construction of the target language.

5- A good language learner is independent in the

sense that he does not expect to learn Arabic and acquire it just by sitting in the classroom.

And all of these theories apply to Ibrahim who developed from a good language learner to an advanced one.

### **Definitions of Advanced Language Learner**

An advanced language learner should spend some time in a country where the target language is both the official and spoken one since he will have the opportunity to interact with the people, understand their conversations, comprehend their TV shows, and to read their newspapers as well as to understand their culture. According to Liskin-Gasparro (1987), the advanced level is defined as follows:

Advanced level is characterized by the ability to converse fluently and in a clearly participatory fashion, the speaker can accomplish a wide variety of communicative tasks, and can describe and narrate events in the present, past and future, organizing thoughts, when appropriate into paragraph like discourse. At this level, the speaker can discuss concrete and factual topics of personal and public interest to most listeners unaccustomed to non-native speakers.

### **Study Theories**

There are many differing theories regarding the way in which learners acquire and become proficient in a language. Omaggio (1993) presents a good sample of these theories that have or have had the greatest impact of classroom practice. The five theories of language learning to be discussed are the Behaviorist Theory, the Universal Grammar Theory, the Monitor Theory, the Cognitive theory and the Connectionism and Parallel Distributed Processing theory.

According to the Skinner's Behaviorist theory (1954), human language is a response system acquired through operant conditioning, therefore, language is an advanced response to a system of reinforcement and rewards as related to the production and increased ability to

communicate in a target language. The innate ability is discounted in this theory, language learning is directly related to the external environment of the learner and the reinforcement and rewards bestowed upon him.

The Universal Grammar Theory, based on Chomsky's work, purports that children are born with a "language acquisition device" (LAD) which specifically helps to process language and aids in its mastery. It is now well established that young children tend to absorb relatively easily any language that they are surrounded by, and they appear to learn to speak a new language more easily than adults do. (Dekeyser, 2005)

According to the Universal Grammar Theory, while experience with language input may have an effect on learning, language learning is mainly a biological process, governed by a genetically pre-determined capacity.

Also, rationalistic Krashen's more recent and influential monitor theory (1982), describes five central hypotheses: The acquisition – learning distinction, the natural order hypothesis, the motion hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the effective filter hypothesis. Krashen (1982) suggests certain classroom practices in language instruction in order to provide comprehensible input interesting and relevant – not grammatically sequenced – sufficient in quantity in a learner – friendly environment.

It's worth pointing out that if Krashen believed that first and second language acquisition are very similar. The cognitive theory on the other hand believes that the first and second languages differ in the internal mental activity (Crawford, 1989). Language learning is general human learning that involves the acquisition of complex cognitive skill. Language skills must be practiced automatized and placed into the learners existing cognitive structure which is constantly changing as the student learns more about the language. According to the cognitive theory (Crawford, 1989) language learning must be meaningful as opposed to rote learning in order to be integrated into the cognitive schema. In general, the

more context reduced and cognitively demanding the language task, the more it will be related to achievement (Cummins,1984).

Interestingly enough, the connectionism theory has in recent years come up with new models of language development based on what is known about the human brain. Along with these learning theories, many scholars such as Carroll (1977) believe that learner factors such as age, young students are more likely than older learners to ultimately speak a new language like native speakers aptitude, is the second most important language learning characteristic after age (Dornyei,2005), attitude, motivation, personality, social preferences, cognitive style difference and metacognition strategies affect the rate and degree of success of acquisition and need to be considered along with the comprehensive theory. Although no one theoretical model presented may reveal the formula for second language acquisition success, each perspective brings some level of clarity to the teacher's mind as it relates to their own belief.

There are many differing theories regarding the way in which learners acquire and become proficient in a language. The first such influential concept was the competence-performance distinction introduced by the linguist (Chomsky, 1965) takes the position that all humans have an innate ability to learn languages, and he presented the idea that the general definition of proficiency, based on the idealized notion of competence and performance attainable by experts through instruction, is inadequate in representing language learning and must take into account the problematic distinction between what we know (competence) and what we actually do (performance).

Chomsky's concept of competence – performance was considered by scholars like Campbell, Wales (1970) and Hymes (1971) as too restrictively anchored in a grammatical view of competence. This, in its turn, gave rise to a broader communicative view of competence which includes a sociocultural significance. Halliday

(1972) added to the notion new characteristics by defining it as an interpersonal trait in which two or more persons are negotiating meaning in the sense that there are seven main functions for a language which are: an instrumental function, a regulatory function, an interactional function, a personal function, a heuristic function, an imaginative function and a representational function.

Canale and Swain (1980) on the other hand, formulated a grammatical competence that consists of four components which are: Grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Bachman (1990) proposed a similar modal referred to as communicative language ability that incorporated some of the same components as Canale and Swain but included an additional component of cultural understanding in order to socially function in the language.

### Data Collection

After identifying Ibrahim's characteristics as an Arabic language learner, the constant comparative method generated by Leaver and Atwell (2002) has been employed. Data were collected over ten months from September 2009 through July 2010. Multiple data sources were employed such as interview questions via e-mail, follow-up questions, documents, summary of Ibrahim's colleagues' evaluative feedback and research papers for his independent study as well as observing Ibrahim in class.

The initial interview questions were sent to Ibrahim via e-mail on October 23rd, 2009. The questions that were included are:

- (1) Why did you decide to study Arabic?
- (2) How did you study Arabic formally? When? Where? for how long?
- (3) How many students were there in your class? How many times Arabic was studied in class per week?
- (4) How would you characterize the teaching methodology?
- (5) Have you been to any Arabic speaking country?

When? Where? for how long?

(6) Were you exposed to Arabic mass media on a regular basis? What was your impression in terms of sincerity of offered facts being able to compare and contrast views transmitted to different speaking audiences?

(7) How do you assess your current proficiency in Arabic?

Ibrahim was also asked about his relationships with Arabic communities in Sweden and in Jordan. The questions that were included are:

(1) How would you assess the response of the community when utilizing standard Arabic language in communication?

(2) Have you experienced a limited number of opportunities to engage in communication with Arabic-speaking peers, colleagues and other teachers?

### **Findings**

In accordance with the findings, it is evident that Ibrahim could be recognized as having two separate but closely related identities. To start with, Ibrahim is viewed as a foreign language learner whose mother tongue is completely different from the target language and he is seen as an assistant Imam who practices his work through the usage of Arabic as a means of communication.

It is believed that Ibrahim's prior knowledge and recitation of the holy Qur'an and his in-depth study of it helped him a lot in achieving proficiency in Arabic. Furthermore, it enabled him to fluently use the language in a smooth manner that is flawless in terms of grammatical and linguistic mistakes.

### **Ibrahim as a Language Learner**

Ibrahim is portrayed as a language learner in terms of his personality, motivation, attitude, age, and intelligence, language aptitude, past language experience, and possible contributing factors for his success in attaining an advanced level of proficiency in Arabic. Ibrahim's journey started in learning Arabic through being

introduced to a tourist book in which the Arabic alphabet were stated along with simple terms that might be useful for a tourist in for instance the market and at a restaurant. The number of words in that book was around three hundred which he studied not very seriously during his free time. Then he bought a travel guide book from Berlitz to have a somewhat better exposure to Arabic. So he began thinking of working in either the diplomatic corps or another governmental post.

But on second thought, Ibrahim realized that his main interest is actually in the language itself rather than in diplomacy or any other practical domain. As a result, he was keen on studying more than his peers who are also interested in studying Arabic as a second language by taking individual courses on his own in order to enhance his comprehension and proficiency. Consequently, Ibrahim tried to encompass Arabic in various fields by being introduced to *The Introduction of Ibn Khaldoun*, *The Journeys of Ibn Batouta* and *al-Aghani lil Asfahani*. It is essential to point out here, that Ibrahim made use of every possible source to facilitate his task by making use of the dictionary, the internet and consultation with his mentor as well as other instructors. Ibrahim tried by that to expose himself to both the classic and modern standard Arabic language in the written and oral forms through reading, writing and conversation.

After two years of Ibrahim's study of the history of the Middle East, he decided on taking his Arabic learning to a higher level especially that he had just embraced Islam. Therefore, he went to Lund University for two years to earn a recognized diploma in learning Arabic as a second language. Ibrahim here pointed out that in each class there were around five to twenty students who meet three times a week to learn Arabic. He stressed that the methodology of studying was useful since it was based on a useful educational curricula. he later on studied Arabic in diverse fields such as literature and media.

Ibrahim elaborated by stating that he formerly visited Morocco when he was nineteen years old for approximately two weeks during which he enjoyed the

experience since he was able to practice his Arabic. Moreover, he used to tune to Arabic religious channels such as al-Dalil and al-Rahmah from which he made use of religious consultations offered through these specified programs. Upon reaching this level, Ibrahim was in a position to distinguish between the facts being offered in various languages and cultures since he speaks and writes in Swedish, English, Spanish, Russian and German. Consequently, he realized that there is a somewhat erroneous impressions being depicted from the West about the East. Here Ibrahim highlighted that his ultimate role as an advanced Arabic speaker can help Westerners understand Islam and Middle Eastern culture in a more realistic manner. Therefore, he states that he wants the Swedish people to be able to form their own opinions about politics instead of receiving ready-made clichés about the Arab and Moslem worlds from media and other sources.

In this regard, Ibrahim has reached a high level of proficiency enabling him not only to comprehend and communicate in Arabic but also to think in Arabic which is very vital in reaching the level of excellence in a second language. In fact, he states in his paper written on 26th December 2009 that he interacts with Arabic speakers by using memorized lines of scripts and utterances of speech acts that he was exposed to earlier. Ibrahim then added that he was disappointed when using his standard Arabic in an Arabic speaking environment because the response would be most of the time given to him in English and not in Arabic. However, he pointed out that being in such an environment allows him much more opportunities to communicate with peers, colleagues and teachers. In this respect, he states in the conducted interview on 3rd January 2010 the following: "Furthermore many of my friends are Arabs, and some of them do not speak any other language well which makes it mandatory for me to speak in Arabic at many times".

Ibrahim here made quite an interesting assimilation between his practice of martial arts and Arabic. He explained that the more one practices both activities, the

more perfect his performance becomes. In this respect, he elaborated by stating that exercise and repetition is required to articulate what the mind intends to do with the outcome action. He believes that discipline in these kinds of arts trained him to adopt discipline in studying Arabic as a second language by for instance reading a passage time and again until full comprehension is reached through the consultation of secondary sources.

In addition to Arabic, Ibrahim reported that he has a good knowledge of English, Spanish, Russian and German. So when I asked him in another interview on 17th February 2010 to compare his learning experience of English with Arabic, he replied in writing that:

I have studied English for many years as most Swedish people. In high school I completed the Cambridge English Course and earned a diploma for that. I studied Spanish for six years and reached quite an advanced level; however because of the lack of practice, I have forgotten most of it. Furthermore, I studied Russian for two years and achieved quite a good knowledge of the language, but as in the case with my Spanish, I have forgotten most of it due to also lack of practice. Besides [sic] these languages I have also studied German for six months. I have always liked language studies and found it easy. Without doubt having a grasp of several languages helps one in learning new languages, and comparing the grammatical structures with each other. Learning new languages also improves the quality of the mother language.

Based on the above, Ibrahim is a highly motivated and disciplined language learner. Clearly, he has a language aptitude which initially enabled him to learn one of the most challenging languages for Swedish speakers. Ibrahim is an autonomous and highly self-regulated language learner who makes use of his surrounding environment to continuously improve his Arabic. For instance, since he has a liking for poetry, he attempted to write his own poetry in Arabic based upon his awareness of learning strategies which he employs quite well.

### **Ibrahim as an Assistant Imam**

After converting to Islam, the main driving force for studying Arabic became Ibrahim's desire to reciting and comprehending the holy Qur'an as well as other religious discipline as exegesis in order to understand his new religion. Consequently, he started to spend more time at the Islamic Center in Lund. In this regard he states by an e-mail of 19th March 2010 the following:

An important point concerning my studies is that my practicing of Arabic has not been limited to the classroom. I have spent a lot of time, and spent time in memorizing and reading the holy Qur'an, and reading books in the subject of various branches of Islamic knowledge like Tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis), Fiqh (jurisprudence), 'Aqeedah (creed), etc. One important point which must be made is that the holy Qur'an has been a great source of help to me at many times. For example, I once at an exam could not remember how one verb is written as Na'eib fa'il mabniyyah 'ala al majhool, so I searched in my head through verses of Qur'an and found it, and there are many other cases like that. Last of all I would like to point out that if I have any knowledge it is only that which I have learnt through the sciences from Allah. We human beings know nothing except that Allah has let us to learn. I ask my Lord to increase my beneficial knowledge, and to benefit from that which he has taught us. And our final supplication is: All praise belongs to Allah the Lord of all creation.

### **Discussion**

Some findings in the present study confirm with the findings of Leaver and Atwell (2002) pertaining to good and advanced language learners. In an extensive qualitative study of attributes of highly successful language learners, interviewees reported high levels of extrinsic and instrumental motivation especially once they had reached the superior level of language proficiency. This study also presents new dimensions of a good language learner of Arabic. It also reveals some complex socio-cultural dimensions that are often

overlooked in earlier studies even though – as in Ibrahim's case – being white, blonde, and blue eyes does not encourage others to initiate conversation in Arabic.

It is thought that Ibrahim reached such an advanced level in Arabic due to his memorization of the holy Qur'an and his adoption of the proficiency and communicative method. In addition, his communication with Arabs at his university along with some of his teachers of an Arab origin as well as his earlier exposure to Arabic during his visit to Morocco highly helped him overcome obstacles. To illustrate, he shared strong relations with Arab students who delivered Friday sermons by translating their orations from Arabic to Swedish and English since a large percentage of the audience were non-speakers of Arabic. All of this expanded Ibrahim's socio-cultural awareness of Arabic. This in its turn enabled Ibrahim to tackle any subject in Arabic and to conduct interaction with others without prior preparation. All these factors have contributed to his future goal of becoming a successful language educator in Arabic.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the interest of the entire world in Arabic language, researchers were interested in examining the reasons behind students' achievement of fluency in Arabic. The existing literature indicates that little is known about these Arabic learners (Husseinali, 2006) or advanced language learners (Leaver and Shekhtman, 2002).

It is worthy of pointing out that the proficiency of learners of a second language increases when they are encouraged to practice their second language by carrying out various functions. In this regard, determining which type of foreign language instruction is to be used, depends on a number of variables such as the learners' aptitude, age, gender and motivation. At the same time, one must also take into consideration the learner's individual differences such as the cognitive and affective needs as well as the preferences, personality and style of

each.

Therefore, the present study explores a Swedish student's five years journey of learning Arabic. As shown in Ibrahim case, if one does not have close personal ties with target language countries, then it is not easy to travel there frequently or have easy access to target language communities at home. The study reveals that learning a second or foreign language is not merely a linguistic endeavor, but rather, it involves other factors such as a learner's multiple identities and access to social networks of target language communities. It has been reached that the major factor which urges students to tirelessly reach an advanced proficiency level is motivation regardless if it were a religious, social, economic or academic one. To explain, it was in fact motivation that kept Ibrahim on striving to reach such a proficient level in Arabic. The

present study also reveals that a learner's access to target language communities can be greatly enhanced and facilitated by allies or mentors.

### Recommendations

1- In order to enable learners to reach their maximum capacity of learning, they are encouraged to express themselves in their own preferred styles whether in written or oral forms.

2- It is very essential and vital to stress that not any native speaker of a language is capable of either teaching or instructing non-speakers since a specialization of this domain in particular is required in order to overcome constant challenges and so as to remain updated with contemporary methods that are to facilitate the learning process the outcome of which is aspired to be rewarding.

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## تحقيق إتقان متقدم لمهارة التحدث، اللغة العربية (دراسة حالة)

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### ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى "دراسة حالة" طالب سويدي اسمه العربي إبراهيم وهو في المرحلة الجامعية الأولى، ووصل إبراهيم في دراسته للغة العربية إلى مستوى متقدم جداً في مهارة التحدث في اللغة العربية وإتقانها كأحد أبنائها، وقد ظهر هذا واضحاً في المقابلات المتعددة التي أجريت معه، ومن خلال متابعته في غرفة الدرس، وتحليل بعض الوثائق التي تتعلق به شخصياً، ودراسة آراء بعض من درّسه في السويد، وتحليل ما كتب عنه بعض أصدقائه في الصف.

وتلقي هذه الدراسة الحالية تلقي الضوء على هوايات إبراهيم المتعددة كدّارس للغة العربية، وكمساعِد إمام أحياناً في مصلى الجامعة في السويد. أما بالنسبة لكثير من الناس، فإن دراسة اللغة الثانية بجانب اللغة الأولى تعدّ من أصعب المهمات وأكثرها تطلباً لتحقيق إتقانها. لذلك، تأمل هذه الدراسة في أن تلهم دارسي اللغات وتشجعهم على دراسة اللغة العربية كلغة ثانية.

الكلمات الدالة:

الكلمات الدالة: الفروقات الفردية، الحافز، متعلم اللغة.

\* الجامعة الاردنية، عمان، الأردن. تاريخ استلام البحث 2010/10/13، وتاريخ قبوله 2011/4/4.