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**AIU COURSE: TENSES IN ARABIC, FRENCH AND ENGLISH
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

Assignment:

Phase 2

Introduction to Arabic

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Abstract

This book presents a comprehensive comparative analysis in **Tenses** between three languages (Arabic, French and English). The objective is to make foreign language acquisition easier for native speakers, comparing numerous linguistics and grammatical aspects of each language to each other.

The Study is divided into eight chapters: The first chapter is introduction to Arabic language, Arabic Non- Indo-European, Standard Arabic and Dialects. The second chapter is linguistic comparison between the three languages in active and passive. The third chapter is the characteristic of Arabic language in term of sentence structure and conciseness. The fourth chapter is elements of grammar I deals with gender and plural, personal pronoun, possessive adjective between the three languages. The fifth chapter is elements of grammar II deals with background of Arabic syntax, tenses in Arabic, French and English, interrogative and negative between the three languages. The sixth chapter is elements of grammar III deals with definite and indefinite articles in the three languages differences and similarities. The seventh chapter is elements of grammar IV which deals with way of expressing “Almost” in Arabic, French and English. The Chapter eight is grammar exercises which will be as a practical application for learning and understanding tenses in all three languages (Arabic, French and English).

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I- Introduction to Arabic

In the Name of Allah The Most Gracious the Most Merciful

The Glory of Arabic Language is that; The Holy Qur'an has been revealed in Arabic language.

“Verily, we have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand.”¹

**“And among his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference in your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge.”
The Holy Koran (AL RUM;22).²**

Language is the most important phenomenon in life. It is the way of expression and communication between people, which is, in general, the case of all languages. However, the Arabic language has other special characteristics; it is not only the language of communication and dialogue but has also been chosen by The Almighty as the language of The Holy Koran, the book which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be upon Him (PBUH).

The Arabic language is a miraculous language in terms of style and eloquence. It has unique specifications, which you cannot find in other languages. It is wide and deep in meaning and can only be fully understood in its context.

In comparison with French and English languages are international languages which are spoken worldwide. More than one and half billion people speak English and French as a second language. Even the French, who are very proud of their mother tongue and more sensitive and cautious towards foreign languages specially English, have eventually realized the importance of English language and they have introduced intensive English language courses in their schools.

Moreover, some departments at universities and colleges require English language because most of the subjects are taught in English. Incidentally, we notice that English is the most widely used language in the world. If a group of people from different countries is gathered in one place, the only language of communication in that situation is English not Chinese, or Indian or any European languages.

Learning foreign languages especially French and English can help us understand different cultures. It also builds confidence in interacting with others. Nowadays English

¹ The holy Qur'an, chapter12, verse 2

² The Holy Qur'an, chapter30, Verse22

has reached its highest level of popularity by becoming the medium of communication between millions of Internet users worldwide.

I would like to emphasize that language is not only a way of communication, but it's a way of thinking as well. Research has shown that bilingual speakers have more opportunities and choices than those who are monolingual. Research has also shown a bilingual speaker has more opportunities to think broadly than a person who speaks one language.

Thus the need to learn a second language and understand its tenses is of vital importance.

Previous studies:

The importance of language and its usage is to understand its tenses. From this point we find the Arabic language textbooks talk about tenses in general but not in sequence. From here, the research becomes very important.

(Tenses in Arabic, French and English Comparative Analysis) to help students understand between (morphological division and syntax) in Arabic, French and English.

I find myself motivated to write about this topic as a research proposal for my PhD to facilitate the task of learning English, French or Arabic as a second language. The reason why I choose this topic is that learning Arabic or French as a second language becomes difficult because of the differences between languages, especially learning tenses. There are also other obstacles to a successful language learning experience such as the Arabic language textbooks and teaching styles of language teachers. Research in comparative languages is very beneficial to facilitate the learning of a second language.

As a language teacher, I am very aware of the difficulties faced by second language students. One of the difficulties is learning tenses and how to use them in writing or speaking. Thus the importance of learning tenses through comparative analysis can help the students to quickly see the similarities and differences. The success will definitely motivate and create a desire for the students to learn the target language.

The Arabic language is the key to understanding a group of 22 nations and over 200 million native Arabic speakers. There are also over a billion Muslims who use Arabic as their liturgical language.

1. The important of Arabic Language:

1.1 Arabic is a Semitic language close to Hebrew Aramaic and Amharic, and more distantly related to certain language families of North Africa.

Arabic has a vast literary heritage dating back to the pre-Islamic era (5th and 6th centuries, A.D.). It is today the native language of over 200 million people as well as the liturgical language for over a billion Muslims throughout the world.

1.2. The Arab world shows strong linguistic and cultural continuity. Arabic is the official language of countries from North Africa to the Arabian Gulf (Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen). Although geography (including great distances and topographical barriers such as deserts and mountain ranges) has fostered diversity of regional vernaculars, a shared history, cultural and literary background and (to a considerable extent) religion acts to unify Arab society and give it a strong sense of cohesion.

1.3 Economic

In the past three decades the world has witnessed the emergency of the Arab world as a centre of attraction and strategic place for business, development , industry and socio-political, which has created a situation of competition for capturing the West Asian markets and to establish economic and trade relations with the Arab countries. Here we realized the important of learning and understanding the Arabic language.

1.4. Arabic literature

Arabic is the richest of all the Semitic family of languages. Arabic is known to have originated from the south- west Semitic subfamily. It is divided into two branches: the Northern and the Southern. Each of the subdivisions may be further subdivided into minor dialects that developed, shaped and spread with distinct regional distinct regional features.

Spoken or colloquial Arabic is not generally written down; none of the dialects are "taught" in the Arab world because they are acquired as mother tongues; therefore the idea of teaching the spoken vernacular in a formal classroom setting is unfamiliar to most native speakers of Arabic. Nonetheless, speaking skills are important and necessary for students whose goals include travel to live, study or work in an Arab country, so some universities offer courses in dialects such as Egyptian, Levantine, Peninsular, Gulf and Iraqi. There is a fairly extensive range of materials available for teaching specific Arabic dialects.

Formal Spoken Arabic (FSA) or Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA) A pragmatic option for teaching generalized Arabic speaking skills is to use the kind of Arabic spoken by native speakers with each other when they come from different dialect areas, or when they

elevate their everyday colloquial language to a higher level (in speaking with a professor, for example, or a dignitary on an official occasion). This type of Arabic has been documented by both western and Arab authors.

Pertaining to its linguistic classification, Arabic linguists classify the language under various categories e.g. Semitic, Afro-Asiatic, and Hamito-Semitic. The Arabic language shares many phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic traits with other Semitic languages such as Assyrian, and Hebrew (Barber 1964: pp.73-75, Brill 1960:p. 753, Bakalla 1984: p.4)

The Quraishi Arabic was the major dialect of Mecca through which the Holy prophet Mohamed Peace Be Upon Him, received the Quranic revelation. (Chejne 1968: pp.6-10, Bakalla 1983:p.1)

The spread of Islam to the various regions of the world since the 7th century had had much influence on the native languages which came directly or indirectly in contact with it. Many languages in Asia, such like Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei etc... Africa, and Europe were influenced by Arabic at the levels of phonetics, grammar and vocabulary.

Numerous writers reported on the influence of Arabic on Islamic as well as non-Islamic languages on various aspects; among these are Inayatullah (1942: pp52), Asmah (1975: pp.39-40), Jadwat (1987: p.71), Abukhudairi (1990), Massignon (1950).

The extent to which one language can assimilate with another, as reported by Sapir (1976: p.195) indicates the socio-cultural role that the particular language concerned will play in the development of the other. This factor is apparently seen in the influence of Arabic and South East Asian language such like Malay.

The prestige of the language of the Quran has brought about tremendous influence not only on the Malay language but also on Malay culture. The Arabic script has been adopted in the form of Jawi script and it represents an early form of Malay literacy. Arabic as reported by Asmah (1979: p. 62-65; 1982: pp.123-129; 1987:pp.4-11), has also enriched Malay on the phonemic, phonological, word; sentence level.

1.5. The Arabic language is a language of science, literature, politics, civilization, and beside all these is the language of religion and worship. The Arabic language was able to assimilate with different civilizations such like: Persian, Greek, and India, which are contemporary to Arabic.

2. Non-Indo-European Origin

For English-speaking learners of Indo-European languages, foreign language input (both written and spoken) is in some cases at least partially comprehensible because of cognate lexical items (e.g., French *industrie* for English "industry," the French verb *danser* for English "to dance", etc.), familiar word structure and grammatical processes (e.g., making nouns plural by adding a suffix such as '-s'). Arabic does not belong to the Indo-European language family; it belongs to the Semitic family, which also includes Hebrew, Amharic and Aramaic. It therefore has few cognates with English, and vocabulary learning is one of the biggest challenges in learning Arabic. Moreover, there are striking structural and conceptual differences (such as the internal plural for nouns and the existence of a "dual" category for nouns, adjectives, verbs and pronouns) that take time for English or French speakers to internalize.

2.1. Non-Roman Script

Arabic script is cursive and is read from right to left. Because it is cursive, letters within words are connected, somewhat like English handwriting, and for a beginner, the script may look impenetrable. Although it looks complicated, however, Arabic orthography is actually more systematic than English and French, with much better "fit" or consistency between spelling and pronunciation.

2.2. Description of Arabic

The Arabic and English phonological systems vary extensively, not only in the range of sounds used, also in the relative importance of vowels and consonants in expressing meaning. While English has 22 vowels and diphthongs to 24 consonants, Arabic has only eight vowels and diphthongs to 32 consonants.

3. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

Most Schools and Universities choose to focus on literacy in Arabic as the basic skill when teaching Arabic as a Second Language. The modern written language is called Modern Standard Arabic or MSA (in Arabic, *Fushaa*). It is the language of all contemporary Arabic written publications as well as the language of the Arabic broadcast media. It contrasts somewhat with classical Arabic, the Arabic of the Qur'an and classical Arabic literature, but the gap is reflected more in topic, vocabulary, and style than it is in grammatical structure. A range of excellent MSA materials is available with sophisticated video and audio support.

Arabic is an easy language to learn among many languages. You have always connection between words and their derivatives and the grammar laws are logical. The problem however is that most of the methods which have been in use over the year to teach Arabic leave a lot to be desired. There is what one may call an obsession and impatience to teach

Arabic grammar to people who lack even rudimentary knowledge of basic Arabic sounds and words (Al-aswaat- wa al-huruf). The result of this approach is that people are able to memorize complicated Arabic grammar laws and yet they remain unable to construct simple Arabic sentences in speech and writing. I have known renowned Muslim scholars, mostly from Africa, South East Asia, and those teaching in the Indo-Pakistan seminaries in the West, who have spent many years of their lives teaching difficult classical Arabic texts and grammar books through their own languages (Urdu, , English, Bahasa Melayu, African dialects etc) and yet are unable to speak a few sentences in fluent Arabic or write a simple Arabic letter or paper.

A person needs working knowledge of a language before she can start learning the grammar of that language. When a person is able to read and understand sentences in a given language, it becomes easier to study the grammar of that language. It is difficult enough learning to recognize the Arabic letters and sounds let alone understanding the grammatical concepts of a language which one is not familiar with. There are thus five stages that need to be followed in presenting Arabic to total beginners:³

Here I would like to emphasize little bit about the differences between Standard Arabic FUSHAA and Dialects Arabic AMIYYAH to provide a better understanding between the two for the acquisition of Arabic language.

4. Differences between Standard Arabic and Dialect Arabic

A- Arabic dialects

4.1. Dialect is derived from Classical Arabic, spoken daily across North Africa and the Middle East, which constitute the everyday spoken language.

2- Dialects are not typically written, although a certain amount of literature (particularly plays and poetry) exists in many of them. They are often used to varying degrees in informal spoken media, such as *soap operas* and *talk shows*. Literary Arabic or classical Arabic is the official language of all Arab countries and is the only form of Arabic taught in schools at all stages.

4.2. The main dialectal division is between the North African dialects and those of the Middle East, followed by that between sedentary dialects and the more conservative *Bedouin* dialects. Speakers of some of these dialects are unable to converse with speakers of another dialect of Arabic; in particular, while Middle Easterners can generally understand one another, they often have trouble understanding North Africans (although the converse is not true, due to the popularity of Middle Eastern- especially Egyptian – films and other media).

³ Introducing Arabic Michael Mumisa. P10-11

The major groups are: ⁴

- Egyptian Arabic
- Maghreb Arabic (Algerian Arabic, Tunisian Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, Maltese and western Libyan)
- Levantine Arabic (Western Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian and Western Jordanian, Cypriot Maronite Arabic)
- Iraqi Arabic (Khuzestani Arabic) – with significant differences between the more Arabian- like *gilit- dialects* of the south and the more conservative *geltu-* dialects of northern cities.
- Gulf Arabic (Saudi Arabian, Western Iraq, Eastern Syrian, Jordanian and parts of Oman)
- East Arabian Arabic (Bahrain, Saudi Eastern Province, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, and Oman)

Other Varieties include:

- Hassaniyyah (in Mauritania and Western Sahara)
- Andalusí Arabic (extinct, but important in literary history)
- Sudanese Arabic (with continuum into Chad)
- Hijazi Arabic (West coast of Saudi Arabia, Northern Saudi Arabia, Eastern Jordan, Western Iraq)
- Najdi Arabic (Najdi region of central Saudi Arabia)
- Yemen Arabic (Yemen to Southern Saudi Arabia)
- Maltese, which is the spoken Mediterranean island of *Malta*, is the only one to have established itself as a fully separate language, with independent literary norms. It falls within the Maghreb Arabic group although numerous sound changes have rendered it phonologically very different from its nearest relative, Tunisian Arabic. It also contains a large number of *Italian* and English borrowings.

Among all these dialects the famous one is the Egyptian dialect, because of its broad exposure in entertainment across the Arabic world.

B- Standard Arabic

4.3. The Standard Arabic or MSA (in Arabic, FUSHAA) Is the language of all contemporary Arabic written publications as well as the language of the Arabic broadcast media. It contrasts somewhat with classical Arabic, the Arabic of the Qur'an and classical Arabic literature, but the gap is reflected more in topic, vocabulary, and style than it is in grammatical structure.

4.4. The Standard Arabic is the universal language of all Arabic-speaking worlds which is understood by all Arabic speakers.

⁴ Arabic dialects Dr Ibrahim Anees, Egypt Cairo

4.5. Classical Arabic is the language of The Holy Qur'an and classical literature. It is differs from standard Arabic mainly in style and vocabulary, some of which is archaic.

4.6. Standard Arabic is not acquiring as a mother tongue, but rather it learned as a second language.

4.7. Standard Arabic is written in Arabic script. The earliest Arabic inscriptions is date back to the 4th century AD, but the basis for Standard Arabic was laid down with writing down of the Qur'an (probably 7th- 8th Centuries AD). In the course of the 8th and 9th Centuries the Holy Qur'an underwent standardization as a result of extensive work by medieval Arabic grammarians.⁵

⁵ Bakalla 1994, Belova1998a &1998b, Holes 1994, Suleiman 1994

Conclusion:

Language is a human phenomenon, identity and the result of the human brain and body. It's a way of expressing oneself, our surroundings and communicating with each other. There is no doubt language has connection with all human activities and has effects on them.

It's impossible for someone to be proactive in a society without language to express himself. Language is a distinctive human phenomenon amongst the creations of God. Besides, animals use language as well but in a different way. Human beings have been endowed with the power of speech. God has singled them with the power of thinking, which makes them different from the rest of the creatures. God has given human beings the power of mother tongue language acquisition, which usually takes place between the age of two and five. There is an exception in case of illness or isolation which upsets the language acquisition process.

Language is like a library you meet him in the society where God prescribe you to live. If you live in a French society, you'll speak French; if you live in an Arab society you'll speak Arabic.

Language is a voice. Voice is an auditory effect and the result of one's articulation parts from gesticulation or motion. That will appear in a form of vibration in the outside air from the mouth to the nose with correspond to those gesticulation, and the audition will receive those vibration, then move through nerve to the brain to strengthening all the symbols and to drawing out the meaning.

Language is rules and words like drawing, music, dancing, signals, motion etc.....

Language changes from time to time and place to place. The changes occur according to laws. The changes happen in the sound or voice in words in sentences in its semantics words.

Language is a social phenomenon, which society imposes on one. It is a way of thinking and behavior. Thus the language acquisition of an individual in a given society affects the way he or she thinks and behaves.

Language has a relation with the values, cultures and beliefs of society.

Language has a strong relation with mind and culture. Without language there will be no mind. Language provides one a picture of a particular society.

Language has a relation with the mind because when we talk we express ideas, also when we think we talk but without words. It's impossible to have ideas without words to express those ideas.

De Saussure "tries to give the difference between "speaking and language".

Speaking is an act or performance and language is the border of that movement.

Speaking is a behavior and language is the measurement of that behavior.

Speaking is a movement and language is the law of that movement.

There is a relation between language and culture “Dr Ahmad Amin”. Language shows the mind of a particular society. Language of each society shows the lifestyle of that society.

Here are some of the points of this assignment

- 1- The Glory of Arabic Language is that; The Holy Qur’an has been revealed in Arabic language.
- 2- The Arabic language is the key to understanding a group of 22 nations and over 200 million native Arabic speakers.
- 3- There is also over 1.5 billion Muslims who use Arabic as their liturgical language
- 4- Arabic is a Semitic language close to Hebrew Aramaic
- 5- The Arabic language is a language of business, development and communication
- 6- Arabic is the richest of all the Semitic family of languages.
- 7- Modern Standard Arabic MSA (in Arabic, FUSHAA) is the language of all contemporary Arabic written publications as well as the language of the Arabic broadcast media.
- 8- Classical Arabic is the language of The Holy Qur’an and classical literature it is differs from standard Arabic mainly in style and vocabulary, some of which is archaic.
- 9- Dialects are not written and there is no dictionary for dialects

This introduction provides a basic understanding of Arabic language to non-Arabic speakers. It gives also a clear understanding between MSA and Dialects Arabic

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