

## TRAINING WAYS OF ARABIC IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Prof. Dr. Luisa María ARVIDE CAMBRA  
lmarvide@ual.es  
Departamento de Filología, University of Almería  
04120- Almería. Spain

### ABSTRACT

This paper explains teaching and learning system of Arabic in five noted American Universities, according to the academic visits made by Professor Arvide. And it has also reference to the connection of these ways to the Higher Education in U.S.A. Thirteen conclusions are included.

**Keyword:** American Higher Education System.

This paper analyzes the Higher Education System in some American Universities into the Arabic field according my own experience as a Visiting Professor in order to make a study on the training ways of Arabic in some Arabic Language and Literature Departments.

I have the honour of having been a beneficiary of four scientific research grants from the Andalusian Government Program in order to do study on the training ways of Arabic into several prestigious American Universities [1].

The most important objectives of these academic stays were:

- 1) To know the performance of American prestigious Universities.
- 2) To compare their training ways with the Spanish Universities.
- 3) To contact with colleagues from abroad.

The visited Institutions were five:

- 1) UNIVERSITY OF BERKELEY: Department of Near Eastern Studies. California.

Professor of contact: Prof. Dr. James T. Monroe.

The American Higher Education system favours the free selection of matters thanks to a wide scale of optional subjects, and Berkeley University is an example of that. Arabic studied is Modern Standard Arabic. Redaction and translation from English into Arabic are methods very important in the training.

- 2) UNIVERSITY OF YALE: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. New Haven. Connecticut.

Professor of contact: Prof. Dr. Dimitri Gutas.

Arabic language studied is Modern Standard Arabic. Teaching and learning methods of Arabic are: knowledge of grammar, training of the spoken language –and, for that this Institution includes Arab teachers among its educational staff-, and the translation.

- 3) GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: Department of Arabic Language, Literature, and Linguistics. Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. Washington. Washington D.C.

Professor of contact: Prof. Dr. Karin C. Ryding.

Arabic language studied here is the Classical and the dialects are treated into some optional subjects.

The obligatory subjects are referred to three main contents: linguistics, language and literature, and the optional ones are referred to complementary contents, like Arabic and Islamic history, culture and civilization. The knowledge of Arabic is improved with the translation, the grammatical analysis of texts and audiovisual methods.

- 4) HARVARD UNIVERSITY: Center of Middle Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Cambridge. Massachusetts.

Professor of contact: Prof. Dr. William Granara.

Arabic language studied is Modern Standard Arabic. The obligatory subjects are language, literature and history. They used several methods of training, according to the different levels, and basically are: conversation, study of grammar and translation.

- 5) UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA: Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Philadelphia. Pennsylvania.

Professor of contact: Prof. Dr. Roger Allen.

Arabic language taught is Modern Standard Arabic. The dialects, like for example Syrian and Egyptian, are treated only in some optional subjects.

The study of the grammar is fundamental and the training ways take good care of phonetics and getting a competent vocabulary by means of the reading of texts and the talk in the lecture room using Arabic.

The most Anglo-Saxon Universities use the same basic textbooks and grammar methods, and among the grammars, manuals and textbooks used by these five American Universities for teaching the basic and the intermediate levels of Arabic are, for example: Peter F. Abboud & Ernest N. McCarus, *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic*; Kristen Brustad & Mahmoud Al-Batal & Abbas Al-Tonsi, *Alif Baa. Introduction to Arabic Letters and Sounds*; Kristen Brustad & Mahmoud Al-Batal & Abbas Al-Tonsi, *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya: A Textbook for Beginning Arabic, Part One*; Kristen Brustad & Mahmoud Al-Batal & Abbas Al-Tonsi, *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya: A Textbook for Arabic, Part Two*.

The experience obtained through these academic visits was remarkable and helped me in some respects to improve my own training ways.

Nevertheless, I could note that, with regard to Arabic studies, the differences between the methods used by the cited American Universities and the Spanish ones were small and they mainly referred more to academic system rules than to the aims of the subjects. I could verify, too, that the scientific care about Arabic is the same at all the Universities, in Spain as well as abroad.

## CONCLUSIONS

The most important results got in this research were the next ones:

- 1) Arabic studies are minority.
- 2) The length of the studies is four years and they are divided into two cycles, except Yale.
- 3) The academic year is divided into two semesters.
- 4) The speciality starts in the first year.
- 5) Arabic studies are enclosed into Departments of Oriental, Semitic or Islamic Languages, Cultures and Civilizations.
- 6) The openings of the graduates are: Universities, Council for Scientific Research, Embassies, International Agencies and Institutions, and National and International Companies, et cetera.
- 7) Teaching programmes encloses obligatory and optional subjects.
- 8) The obligatory subjects referred mainly to language, literature and history. The optional ones referred to diverse aspects in relation to philosophy, law, Islamic thought, et cetera, as well as other more specific and concrete sights of the obligatory subjects.

9) Arabic language studied was the classical Arabic, named also Modern Arabic Standard. The dialects were treated by chance in some courses.

10) The main goals pursued were:

10.1) An excellent knowledge and mastery of the written Arabic language.

10.2) A good training of the spoken Arabic language.

11) The stay of the students in Arabic countries is too advised.

12) The translation of classic and modern texts was a technique very used and quite habitual.

And it proves that:

12.1) Translation science was in expansion and today it is yet in progress.

12.2) Translation technique is very important in the training ways of any language.

13) All Universities shared the same view: the importance which has the grammar in the study of any language.

## REFERENCES

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