

English Language Exam

Part one: Reading

Score: 11/20

Read the article below which appeared in Outlook Newspaper and issued in March 2010 in which the writer sheds light on the situation of Arabic language in American communities. When you are through with the reading, answer the questions that follow.

Arabic Among Second Generation Arab Americans

- 1- Dr. Robert Myers, the director of the center for American Studies and Research (CASAR), announced a series of lectures to be hosted by CASAR throughout the month of March. Audience seated in West Hall, Auditorium A, saw the kickoff to CASAR's mini-lecture series with the invitation of Professor El Abbas Benmamoun to hold a lecture entitled, "Language Maintenance and Loss: Arabic in the USA Among Second Generation Arab Americans."
- 2- At 6:00pm on Tuesday, March 2, Dr. Lina Choueiri, a Professor at the English Department, took the floor following Dr. Myers, to introduce Dr. Benmamoun, a Professor and Head of the Linguistics Department at the University of Illinois. She commended his expertise in the field of Arabic syntax and described him as a multitalented linguist.
- 3- Dr. Benmamoun began by discussing the knowledge of a language and what it means when one says that they "know" a language. Native speakers know the sound inventory of their language, how to form words with those sounds, how to combine words to form phrases, phrases to form sentences, and finally, sentences to carry out complex conversations. Beyond the grammatical aspect, native speakers also know how to navigate their way through difficult social interactions and cultural contexts on a sociolinguistic level.
- 4- The lecturer mentioned the main types of speakers in terms of linguistic knowledge: native speakers who reach full fluency and second language learners who do not usually reach that same level of competence. The lecturer, however, focused on the third type of speakers –Heritage Speakers. These speakers are close to native speakers however there are certain "gaps in their knowledge," said Dr. Benmamoun. These gaps include a grammar slip-up or a social blunder. Heritage Speakers are those that are exposed to their parents' language as a child but that exposure get disrupted by another dominant language in their adolescent years.
- 5- Dr. Benmamoun and his team have devoted their current research on a few projects. They are trying to characterize the knowledge of Arabic language held by heritage Arabic speakers. They are also attempting to grasp how language is acquired and lost. Dr. Benmamoun said that the research has been put to use by, "providing insights to the Arabic language teachers who get these speakers in their classrooms."
- 6- Dr. Benmamoun carries out his research at the University of Illinois. Illinois hosts the second largest Muslim population in the states, according to the US Census in 2000. According to the US Census in 2000, 47% of Arab Americans were Lebanese. The lecturer predicts that this year's census will greatly differ though.
- 7- Dr. Benmamoun's research demonstrates the motivations behind Arab Americans learning Arabic. Two figures stood out – 38% of Arab American's choose to learn Arabic due to their ethnic identity and a meager 5% learn Arabic out of parental influence and advice. The speaker laughed

as he spoke of this figure because most people tend to think that it is by parental instruction that Arab Americans go out and learn Arabic.

- 8- The questions that Dr. Benmamoun posed to the speakers were psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, pedagogical, and institutional. The psycholinguistic questions are related to the psychological factors that allow humans to attain language. The sociolinguistic aspect deals with where their language is used and amongst whom. The pedagogical questions deal with the type of heritage language and the size of the community using the language. The institutional questions that arise are related to the instructional materials needed to meet these heritage speakers' special needs and assessment resources for their classrooms.
- 9- The speaker elaborated upon the main research projects being conducted. In one of the projects, Dr. Benmamoun is studying the lexicon knowledge of heritage Egyptian and Jordanian Arabic speakers. He is testing the knowledge of plural formation and whether heritage speakers grasp the notion of a root. The results revealed that the most common error in plural formation is the incorrect usage of the feminine plural. The studies also showed that Heritage Speakers have a limited concept of roots.
- 10- Another project undertaken by Dr. Benmamoun focuses on narratives. The Heritage Speakers were asked to simply speak and Dr. Benmamoun's team recorded their findings. Some characteristics were pointed out amongst the subjects. Overall, the speakers had mastered the phonetic inventory of their specific language. They had native-like usage of tenses and phrases agreement. They barely used relative clauses and did not use standard Arabic. Problems with tenses came up time and time again.
- 11- Dr. Benmamoun concluded by stressing on the differences between Heritage and Native Speakers. Heritage Speakers know the basic patterns of their heritage language but tend to struggle when it comes to more complex forms. The speaker concluded that it is both the environment and nature of input (which is the language that a child is exposed to in their early years) that play a role in language competence and the lack of mastery of different Arabic registers.

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A) Answer the following set of questions using your own words.

- 1- What career qualifications does Dr. Benmamoun have? (1.25 pt)
- 2- Classify the kinds of speakers mentioned in the article and tell their knowledge. (1.5 pt)
- 3- Why, according to Dr. Benmamoun will the census greatly differ this year? (0.5 pt)
- 4- Based on the information presented in paragraph 8 fill in the chart with the questions and to what they relate. Copy the chart on your booklet. (2 pt)

Question	Related to

- B) 1- Identify and explain the writer's purpose behind writing her article. (0.5 pt)
2- How does the writer achieve credibility in her article? (1.5 pt)
3- Scan paragraphs 3+4+11 to pick up figures of speech and identify their kind. (0.75 pt)
- C) 1-The following statements are false because they misinterpret ideas presented in the text correct them. (0.5 pt)
a- The sociolinguistic aspect targets the place of the language used.
b- Heritage speakers cannot grasp the notion of the root.
- 2-Is the title appropriate to text? Show how. (0.5 pt)
- D) Find words in paragraphs 1+2+10+11 which likely have the meanings of the following. (1 pt)
a- Carried out
b- Focusing
c- Declared
d- Deep knowledge
- E) What do the following pronouns refer to? (1 pt)
a- They (paragraph 3)
b- Their (paragraph 4)
c- They (paragraph 5)
d- Their (paragraph 8)

Part Two: Writing

score: 9/20

Language is the key to understanding and the greatest possession of the human race that must be protected. How can we, the Arabs, protect our own language against the western invasion in daily life issues? Discuss your ideas in a 250-300 word essay of three body paragraphs and support them with reasons and examples. Start with an introduction in which you present your thesis statement that must be backed up with relevant details in the body paragraphs and end with a conclusion. Draft, revise, and proofread your essay before you hand it in. your writing will be assessed as follows: 5 pts for content and organization; 3 pts for language and style and 1 pt for tidiness and legibility.

Good Work

Answer Key

A)1- Dr. Benmamoun is a professor, Head of the linguistic Department at the University of Illinois, has a great expertise in the field of Arabic syntax, multitalented linguistic, and a devoted research.

2-Three kinds of speakers are mentioned in the article:

- a- Native speakers: have full fluency of Arabic.
- b- Second learners: do not have the same level of Arabic competence with the native speakers.
- c- Heritage speakers: close to natives but have certain gaps in their knowledge of Arabic.

3-According to Dr. Benmamoun, the census will greatly differ this year for two reasons:

- a- Illinois hosts the second largest majority of Muslims in the States.
 - b- US census in 2000 showed that 4790 of Arab Americans were Lebanese.
- 4-

Question	Related to
Psycholinguistic	Psychological factors that allow humans to attain language.
Sociolinguistic	Where language is used and amongst who.
Pedagogical	1) Type of heritage language. 2) Size of community using it.
Institutional	Instructional materials needed to meet these heritage speakers' special needs and assessment resources for their classroom.

B)1- The writer's purpose is to inform the reader about the situation of the Arabic language uttered by different kinds of Arab speakers in the USA and the factors that affect their native language.

2-The writer uses different methods of support to achieve credibility in her article ex:

Names of:

- 1) People: Dr. Robert Myers
- 2) Institutes: CASAR

Place: West Hall

Date: March 2, 2010/ 2000

Percentages: 47%; 38%; 5%

Examples: Lebanese, Jordanian, Egyptians

3-Paragraph3: metaphor: ... native speakers know how to navigate their way...

Paragraph 5: personification: They are trying to characterize the knowledge.

Paragraph 11: personification: Environment ... play a role...

C) 1-a- The place of the language and amongst whom.

b-They have limited concept.

2-The title " Arabic Among Second Generation Arab Americans" is appropriate to text since it sheds light on the Arabic language with all its constituents in terms of grammar, gaps, plurality, root, phonetics, syntax, sound... which are well-studied among three different speakers of Arabic who are defined as "Second Generation Arab Americans" living in USA and are exposed to its environment.

D) a-Undertaken (paragraph 10)

b- Stressing (paragraph 11)

c-announced (paragraph 1)

d-expertise (paragraph 2)

E)a-Native speakers

b- Heritage speakers

c-Dr. Benmamoun and his team

d-Humans