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DEVELOPMENT OF A LEVANTINE ARABIC LEARNING GRAMMAR USING CLASSIC LEBANESE SONGS

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Author

Wright, Anabelle I

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DEVELOPMENT OF A LEVANTINE ARABIC LEARNING GRAMMAR USING CLASSIC
LEBANESE SONGS

By

Anabelle Irene Wright

A capstone project submitted for Graduation with University Honors

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APPROVED

Dr. Heidi Waltz
Department of Comparative Literature and Languages

Dr. Richard Cardullo, Howard H Hays Jr. Chair
University Honors

ABSTRACT

With the growing number of Heritage Language Learners in the United States the need for resources designed specifically for those learning their ancestral language is critical to mitigating language attrition by increasing the rates of transgenerational language transmission. This loss, especially by those whose families speak a Less Commonly Taught Language can lead not only to language endangerment but also ostracization of non-fluent individuals and a disconnect between elders and their descendants as traditional knowledge usually passed down from Heritage Language-only speaking elders to their grandchildren is lost.

Thus, in order to mitigate such losses, this capstone seeks to add to the existing body of Heritage Language Learner (HLL) pedagogy by exploring the use of song as a pedagogical tool especially suited for this application. This will include drawing from my own experience as an HLL by documenting some key considerations when designing song-based lessons for HLLs, as well as showing how these design considerations were used in the implementation of this technique on my own heritage language, Lebanese-accented Levantine Arabic, under the advisement of a linguist, Arabic-language pedagogist, and native speakers. Part 1 seeks to provide background about HLLs and the use of song in the foreign language classroom to better demonstrate the needs of the target audience and how those needs inform Part 2's design considerations. Part 2's design considerations also serve as a guide applicable to the pedagogy of any heritage language, and Part 3 details the specific manifestation of those considerations in an application to Lebanese-accented Levantine Arabic (LLA) pedagogy. It also includes an action plan for how the project will be expanded upon in future work. Finally, attached .pdf documents contain PowerPoints of the work done on four verses of a LLA song that demonstrate the application of the design criteria to a specific language.

In doing this, not only is a general guideline for teaching heritage languages through song generated but also a LLA teaching resource that utilizes the vocabulary, grammatical, and cultural lessons found in classic Lebanese songs, to contribute to the existing yet scarce body of teaching resources for heritage language learners of LLA.

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PART 1: HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNERS & SONG AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

1A. Heritage Language Learners:

With over one fifth of the US population speaking a language other than English in their home, the need for language resources that specifically cater to those learning their ancestral language, or Heritage Language Learners (HLLs), is greater than ever (“QuickFacts”). This need is particularly large for those wanting to speak a Less Commonly Taught Language (LCTL), as it has been shown that less than 10% of learners with only one immigrant parent were proficient or spoke the language at home (Rumbaut et al. 455). This disproportional language attrition can be linked to the reduced opportunities to practice such languages outside of the home, and thus, a greater percentage of HLLs of those languages versus native speakers (Li 281).

This lack of proficiency in one’s own heritage language can have large negative impacts, as it has been associated with both a sense of shame and struggles with identity on the part of the HLL (Bale 139; Seymour-Jorn 114). This can greatly impact their socialization with others of the same ancestry and their sense of community. Additionally, immigrant communities become unable to transmit knowledge and local histories traditionally passed down from generation to generation due to language barriers between grandparents and grandchildren or even parents and their own children (Li 278; Seymour-Jorn 117). The loss of this knowledge and fluency in LCTLs and rare colloquial dialects as a whole should be seen as a great tragedy for the US, as both the knowledge these speakers possess, as well as the skill of speaking these languages are great assets to the country as globalization continues (Carreira and Kagan 153). Thus, teaching resources geared towards HLLs, especially resources that are freely accessible to HLLs who lack the opportunity to pursue higher education, are critical.

In order to create accessibly HLL resources to better combat heritage language attrition, it is important to understand what makes HLLs different when compared with students learning a second language that is completely foreign to them, or L2s. For one thing, HLLs often have both different needs and different motivations than L2s (Carreira and Kagan 155; Kisseley et al.). HLLs are unique in that they have had exposure to the language since birth and thus often have a grasp on the skills learned in the early years of childhood (Montrul 11). However, HLLs often lack a strong understanding of complex grammar and other skills that would have been learned during a child's school years, the point at which many HLLs begin losing their heritage language (Kisselev et al.; Montrul 11). Due to the varying levels of exposure and language retention from early childhood, this results in HLLs with widely varying levels of proficiency in their language (Bale 138). This can mean that foreign language teachers can have a student who can speak about topics related to daily life in the same classroom as a student who only understands words related to food and their ancestral cuisine. This can make engagement of all students difficult, as it is very easy to make assumptions about HLLs' knowledge and either leave them behind or go so slow as to bore those with a more proficient knowledge. Likewise, online resources run into the same problem, as there may be many resources teaching the basics of a spoken language and just as many teaching the intricacies of the language in its most formal form, but very rarely are there resources in between that thoroughly explore the intricacies of a colloquial language in a highly accessible way. Thus, there is a need for resources that speak to language learners with an initially wide range of fluencies with seemingly no baseline that can be assumed.

While initial skill level may vary wildly, HLLs are still united in that they likely share similar goals. HLLs often have very different motivations for learning a language than their Foreign Language Learner counterparts (Carreira and Kagan 155; Montrul 4). HLLs, especially

in college and adolescence, are often learning their heritage language out of the desire to explore their identity and connect with their heritage (Carreira and Kagan 155). While addressing the practical needs of better communicating with extended family and navigating the unique social situations associated with their heritage is still necessary, students are not simply seeking fluency for the sheer practicality of it but also to establish a deeper understanding of who they are and where they come from. Many in diaspora may have never even seen the homeland of their ancestors and are eager to learn anything about it, while others, having been ostracized or mistreated because of their ancestry may have a shame associated with their culture that leads them to attempt to distance themselves from it (Seymour-Jorn 111). Either way, the deep desire of many HLLs who have taken the steps to seek out language learning resources is a healthy and deep connection with one of the most core aspects of their identity. Thus, in order to address the overall problem of heritage language attrition and the needs of the growing population of HLLs, resources that account for wide variations in initial skill level and address both language learning and cultural exploration are crucial.

1B. Learning Language Through Song:

One medium that is particularly suited to addressing both language and culture in a flexible and effective manner is song. When searching for source material, looking at music is an extremely important starting place since many heritage languages may be dialects or endangered languages with no written script or literature (Hinton 312). Thus, finding existing source material that can be used as an authentic representative of the language may be difficult if a particular language also has a limited presence in film and the classroom (Benmedjahed 25). Songs, however, bypass many of these concerns, as there are often freely accessible YouTube videos of songs from even obscure and sparsely spoken languages.

Songs have also been shown to be a quite effective teaching tool in foreign language classrooms, since complex grammar, conversational language, and cultural insights are readily packaged into a format that has been shown to improve information retention (Degrave 414; Spicher and Sweeney). The repetition, rhyming, and music of songs makes retaining new information significantly easier, and since songs often have a theme or convey some sort of story, information retention is further eased. Thus, songs prove to be both an accessible and effective language learning tool.

HLLs, in particular, benefit greatly from song-based lessons, particularly those with a connection to aspects of culture or history that personally connect with them as these satisfy their longing for identity (Aquil 84). For HLLs, songs not only serve as an effective tool in expanding vocabulary, teaching grammar, and exposing students to everyday slang and conversation, but they also paint a rich picture of their community and shared history giving them both a sense of pride and of belonging. Lebanese-Americans that have never been to the homeland can more deeply relate to relatives' stories of trying to drive long distances during the war (or after it for that matter) after learning songs like *Waadoni Wo Nataroni* written by Elias Rahbani and sung by Sabah that detail a woman's car ride up the coast. HLLs can also relate to the songs particular to or particularly treasured by communities in diaspora. Lyrics like,

It scares me, my heart,

Growing up in these foreign lands

And my homeland won't recognize me.

Take me, take me, take me to my country.

from Nassam Alayna el Hawa written by the Rahbani brothers and sung by Fairouz, touch deeply the hearts of those abroad and become a sort of anthem around which to build a shared community amongst all who experience these same feelings.

Such rich cultural conductance, coupled with the wide accessibility and efficacy of songs in the foreign language classroom are what has prompted this Capstone's use of them in addressing the great need for HLL-specific teaching resources. The following sections of the Capstone detail the results of work done in collaboration with linguist, Dr. Heidi Waltz, and Arabic language pedagogist, Dr. Huda Aljord, to create a song-based teaching resource of Lebanese-Accented Levantine Arabic. While Part 1 consists primarily of background, Part 2 contains the key considerations and strategies that should, based on my experience, be employed when teaching any heritage language through song, and Part 3 shows how those considerations have been applied by myself in the specific case of Lebanese-Accented Levantine Arabic pedagogy, specifically the accent of those in and around the capitol. In doing so, the hope is that this can be a launching point for a freely available Lebanese Arabic YouTube channel, as well as a guide and template for others to create resources teaching their own heritage languages.

PART 2: DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR SONG-BASED HLL-TARGETED LESSONS

Now that the target audience of HLLs and the methodology of utilizing song lyrics are better understood the next step is to determine the lesson design that best takes into account both the needs of the audience and the source material. In doing so, a general framework was derived applicable to any spoken language lesson targeting HLLs given the following seven areas of

consideration: song selection, transliteration, vocabulary, grammar, culture, lesson medium, and additional language-specific considerations not covered in this body of work.

2A. Song Selection:

The first point of consideration is song selection. This is crucial as the selection of the wrong source material can affect all other areas of consideration. The main factors that inform song selection when applying it to HLL pedagogy can be broken up into three main groups: accessibility, usefulness, and representation. The first factor, accessibility, relates both to the obtainability of an audio recording of the song by the student, as well as how clear and comprehensible the phonetics and individual words are to a beginner. While it is assumed that a HLLs family background will aid in their ability to distinguish and mimic certain sounds, in the beginning, to best facilitate learning songs should contain clearly annunciated words at a preferably slow pace with plenty of repetition both within the song and within the lesson. The second aspect of this, access to the audio recording, can be ensured by choosing songs easily found through free websites, such as YouTube, and by providing students with the common ways a song title and artist are transliterated into English to ensure no problems if searching for the song using a novel transliteration system created specifically for the lessons.

The second area, usefulness, relates specifically to the vocabulary, grammar, and themes conveyed throughout the song. The use of everyday language that contains minimal amounts of archaic or irrelevant language is vital in making the lessons applicable to the sorts of



Figure 1A (Left) shows a lesson slide of the first person, present continuous tense conjugations of the verb To Talk, which would occur commonly in daily life; whereas, Figure 1B (Right) shows a lesson slide of the first person, present continuous tense conjugations of the verb To Be Erased, which would likely not occur in everyday life.

situations a student finds themselves in day-to-day. It is also important that lessons be kept concise enough so as not to attempt to teach the entire language all at once using a single song. This was one of the gravest mistakes made in the initial lesson design for Lebanese-Accented Levantine Arabic (LLA), as not only were all conjugations of verbs in the relevant tense included for common and useful verbs like To Talk included in the lesson, see Figure 1A, but verbs like To Be Erased, see Figure 1B, were also elaborated on to the



Figure 2A (Left) shows a breakdown of the different conjugations of the word for Stories, which occurs in the song and a closely related word News, which both work together to achieve the lesson's grammatical objective of teaching the differences between masculine and feminine adjectives; whereas, Figure 2B (Right) diverts completely from the lesson plan to teach all words remotely relating to the word water.

same degree when the only conjugations included, if any, should have been the different forms of It Is Erased (he is erased, she is erased, and they are erased, since there is no neutral “It” in Arabic). Likewise, when extrapolating on the existing vocabulary in a lesson, while it may be helpful to show a word meaning the opposite of the one found in the song or to lexically theme the entire lesson around a group of related words, as seen in Figures 2A and 2B, in excess, this can distract from the overall theme or purpose of the lesson. In such cases, it is best just to teach vocabulary contained with the song and any critical forms of the word, such as the feminine, masculine, and plural forms, along with additional vocabulary that falls within the overall theme of the lesson. In doing so, lessons can be kept brief and relevant, keeping a student engaged and fostering a curiosity that encourages them to go out and explore more vocabulary outside of the lesson instead of exposing them to everything by default right out of the gate. Additionally, by keeping lessons using a song or song passage covered to one theme, content will be more readily absorbed by students, as they will not be overloaded with new information.

The last area to be considered is how representative a song or rather a body of songs is of the dialect being taught. A difficult balance must be struck between how wide an audience of HLLs can relate and also how true the vocabulary and accent are to the dialect being explored. Using Levantine Arabic as an example, a dialect that spans the borders of four countries, songs from all four countries may be able to reach a very large group of HLLs but may not be as helpful to them if in teaching even the basics, significant differences must constantly be addressed and the chances of a Jordanian HLL adopting a Syrian accent, Lebanese slang, and Palestinian verb conjugation increase. On the other hand, due to the many measurable differences and regional oddities that occur even within a single country or

region, lessons targeted at HLLs from a single village in Jordan may be even less ideal, as students are not exposed to a reasonable amount of variations in the language nor are the lessons applicable to many students to begin with. Thus, songs should be selected from a specific region of interest containing mutually intelligible dialects with limited grammatical differences. The inevitable variations in accent and vocabulary that do occur can be mitigated by selecting songs by singers and writers from a variety of areas and backgrounds, as well as by avoiding songs heavy with local slang and addressing anything that is non-universal to the region of interest when it inevitably does occur.

Additionally, time period can also have significant effects on the vocabulary, specifically the colloquialisms, students may encounter. Caution should particularly be exercised when using older “classics”. While they are wonderful for their ability to convey history, make students feel more connected to their culture and heritage, and connect students to diasporic communities that were still in the homeland during their release, they also have the greatest potential for containing outdated slang, causing students to sound quite odd if they begin to think such vocabulary is still popular. One can imagine the effects on Swedish students learning English if all they had to go off of was Jazz and Pop from the 60s and 70s resulting in the unnatural use of words like “groovy” in the modern day. Thus, while Classics are an important teaching tool and often have more sophisticated and useful vocabulary, it may also contain outdated terms that need to be used as either exclusionary criteria if peruse throughout the song or directly pointed out if present. It also will help to incorporate newer songs that, while not always as rich in vocabulary and history, may appeal more to a younger audience of HLLs, connecting them to the modern-day culture and teaching them common modern-day slang only found in the most recent songs.

2B. Transliteration System:

When a spoken language's corresponding written language, if it exists at all, either lacks phonetic consistency, uses consistently different phonetic sounds to the spoken language due to a significant divergence of spoken language pronunciation from the formal or written language, and/or uses a writing system that may be difficult enough to act as a barrier to beginners wanting to learn how to speak, then it may be necessary to use a transliteration system when translating the song and teaching new vocabulary.

If no standard transliteration form exists that meets the needs of the lessons then it may be necessary to create a new one. Some key design considerations for this system should include the use of a phonetically consistent transliteration script that is intuitive to the target audience, the ability for the script to be typed on a widely accessible keyboard, and the ability to represent both proper pronunciation and grammar within the same script (e.g. conveying both the "I dunno" pronunciation of a phrase and the distinct "I do not know" parts of the sentence).

The first and most crucial aspect of a transliterated script is that it must be phonetically consistent, thus being clear and conducive to learning without becoming an overly complicated thing to learn on top of the language itself. As a result of this criteria such a transliteration script may not exist to-date for particular languages, and it might be necessary to create one from scratch. If this is the case, every attempt to borrow from existing scripts should be used that way the novel script also serves to help teach transliteration methods used by native speakers when texting or online. These, however, should be borrowed from with caution, as they can be unintuitive in their character use. For example, the transliteration system used almost universally by Arabs online involves replacing characters that have no

English equivalent with a similar looking number. For example, 3 replaces the ξ sound, and 7 replaces ح. This is something a HLL with no writing experience will not intuitively understand, and connecting the ح sound to the 7 may just serve as an additional barrier to understanding. It is more beneficial in these cases to just take the English letter closest to representing the appropriate sound, in the case of ح, the letter “h” and then modifying it in such a way to make it distinct, for example “H” to show emphasis. For languages like Arabic that contain no capitals, a lot can be done using the capital forms of familiar letters. Other languages may have to resort to underlining or some other form of distinction.

Vowel sounds, in particular, should have distinct sounds as they can often be a point of confusion, since they are extremely susceptible to change across accents and can change significantly in the spoken form of a language compared with the more formal form, if it exists. This can be achieved by using paired vowels to increase the possible number of combinations. It is most important here to keep in mind the HLL’s native language. While both a French and English speaker may be able to use a transliteration script based in the Roman Script, a French speaker may find the representation of ū as “eu” (as in “un peu”) most intuitive; whereas, an English speaker may find “ou”, “oo”, or “u” (as in could, look, put) more intuitive.

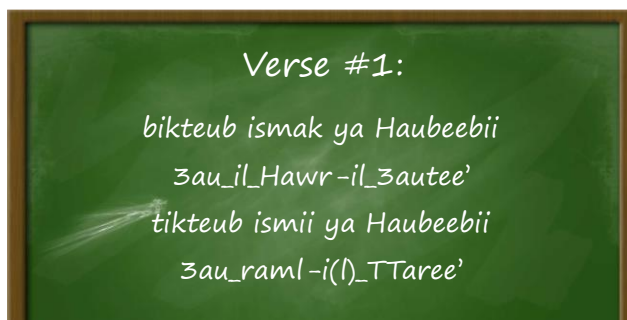


Figure 3: Depicts a transliterated verse from Bektob Ismak ya Habibi written by the Rahbani brothers and performed by Fairouz

After all phonetic sounds in the heritage language are accounted for, the next step (after keeping in mind that there may be lone words used in song and speech that also have to be represented with the script), is the need for ways of visually

representing unpronounced words that are key to understanding grammar or words pronounced in a slur. This can be done using italics, dashes, parentheses, and any other character that seems useful in addressing this need. For example, in Line 4 of Figure 3, underscores show the separation between prefixes that act as prepositions or articles and the main noun, dashes show where two separate words are pronounced as a single word, and parentheses show the parts of the word that aren't pronounced but are still technically there affecting grammar. In this way, one can make their transliteration system much more robust, since it conveys both proper pronunciation and proper grammar visually for the student.

2C. Teaching Vocabulary:

Here it is important to recognize HLLs distinct strengths, weaknesses, and needs in this area. While HLLs likely understand vocabulary more grounded in the concrete day-to-day tasks of informal home life, nothing can be assumed as to the degree of which this vocabulary was retained, and thus, for a general resource, even the most basic of words should be reviewed for the sake of thoroughness. These can be taught, however, in a quicker and more advanced way by introducing potentially familiar words in unfamiliar contexts to ensure students have a robust understanding of their definitions, as well as a practical understanding of how to speak and engage in more formal settings. A Levantine Arabic HLL may have heard the word *dakhlak* (dəxlək) whenever someone asks for something or seems distressed but would not understand its meaning as “I beg of you or I am pleading with you or as a strong please” if not explicitly taught or exposed to its use in a variety of cases that make it clear all instances where its use is appropriate.

When specifically considering how to teach vocabulary through song the fine line



Figure 4A (Left) shows the transliteration in the white letters above the red arrows, direct translation through the yellow words below the red arrows, and an oblique translation through the large white letters at the bottom. **Figure 4B (Right)** depicts a picture included at the end of a verse lesson to show the overall meaning of the passage visually.

discussed in the song selection section becomes very pertinent. New words that arise in a song should indeed be taught alongside words of the same categories, opposites, and alternate conjugations, but this should only occur if such extra-lyrical vocabulary fits with the overall theme of the song and lesson. Otherwise, great confusion can arise on the part of the student as they are bombarded with a multitude of new words that may not even be useful or relevant to them. Thus, to avoid this and to maintain an overall cohesive theme the following multi-scope system was derived. In it students are first introduced to the song's overall theme, message, and historical context to get a feel for the song's meaning as a whole. Questions can be asked pertaining to the meaning of the title or what can be inferred about the song from the title before a brief explanation is given. Next, the layout of the song, a one sentence summary of what each verse means, how they relate to one another, and the overall poetic structure of the song can be used as a roadmap for the rest of the lesson. Then each verse can be introduced after which each line in that verse can be translated both thought for thought, as shown by the translation of a whole line as "I talk about you, my love" in Figure 4A, and word by word, as shown by the yellow words in Figure 4A. Finally, after the verse has been reviewed with the occasional inclusion of an antonym to the word in the song,

conjugations of key verbs, cultural lessons, etc. the full untranslated and full translated form of the verse can be shown followed by a “Song Picture”, as seen in Figure 4B, allowing students to understand the full message of the verse and how it relates to the overall meaning of the song, building comprehension and cultural appreciation. One can also include replacement exercises, in which students are encouraged to exercise their vocabulary, apply new grammar rules, and/or practice skills by attempting to change the meaning of the song. Instead of “I talk about you, my love”, for example, students can be asked to change the sentence to “You talk about me, my love”, thus requiring the conjugation of the verb “To Talk” in the present continuous tense, as well as the ability to apply the correct object pronoun suffix to the preposition “About”. This can also be made more engaging by asking students to make their own changes or making silly changes, similar to a Mad Libs game.

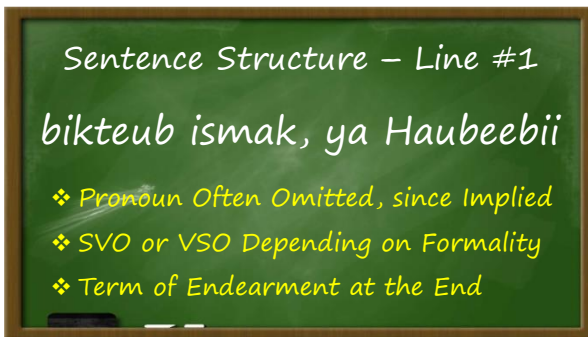
2D. Teaching Grammar:

When teaching grammar, it is equally important as with vocabulary to draw from the song only a few main points for the lesson. One can easily teach a year’s worth of grammatical concepts using just a few verses of a song, and while it may be tempting to explain the intricacies of every single aspect of the sentence construction in a song, students



Figure 5A shows an instance of a feminine plural adjective that naturally occurs in the song, and Figure 5B shows the related grammatical lesson that pulls from that word to teach an important concept.

will absorb much more if perfect accuracy is sometimes sacrificed for the sake of clarity and simplicity. Just as in first grade integers were taught as though that's all there is, then fractions and then negative numbers and then irrational numbers, etc. it is not always possible to teach grammatical concepts one hundred percent accurately right off the bat. Thus, grammar should be taught primarily by focusing on specific key ideas, such as the ability to omit the subject pronoun in Arabic, and introducing them at multiple points throughout the lesson. One way of doing this is by occasionally taking the time to break down the structure of a particular line in the song and using it to drive home a particular point. One can also ask students to rearrange the words of a sentence to change its meaning or introduce them to an incorrectly ordered sentence and ask them what makes it wrong and how it can be corrected.



Once a particular rule is introduced, students can be asked about that rule moving forward as it relates to other parts of the song. For example, if

Figure 6: A sentence breakdown that is used to demonstrate the fluidity of sentence structure in spoken Arabic and the ability to admit subject pronouns.

an adjective comes up in a sentence conjugated in the feminine plural form, the word can be highlighted and an aside taken to explore those concepts before moving on and then asking about the appropriate gender and number of additional adjectives that appear in the song given what was learned about the first adjective.

As many verbs will likely occur within a single song, handling them deserves special attention. As was mentioned in the Song Selection section, due to the large number of verbs, it is important to only further explore those that are both useful and common and those that

relate directly to the overall theme of the lesson. This means that a lesson using a song containing the verb To Be Erased may never delve deep into this verb, unless specifically pointing out how to say “It is Erased” about an object with the opposite gender than the one in the song. When a verb is introduced as part of the lesson vocabulary, keeping introduced conjugations to the tense of the song is key to reducing excess vocabulary and delving into the verb’s usage in the specific context of the song is critical to keeping the lesson grounded.

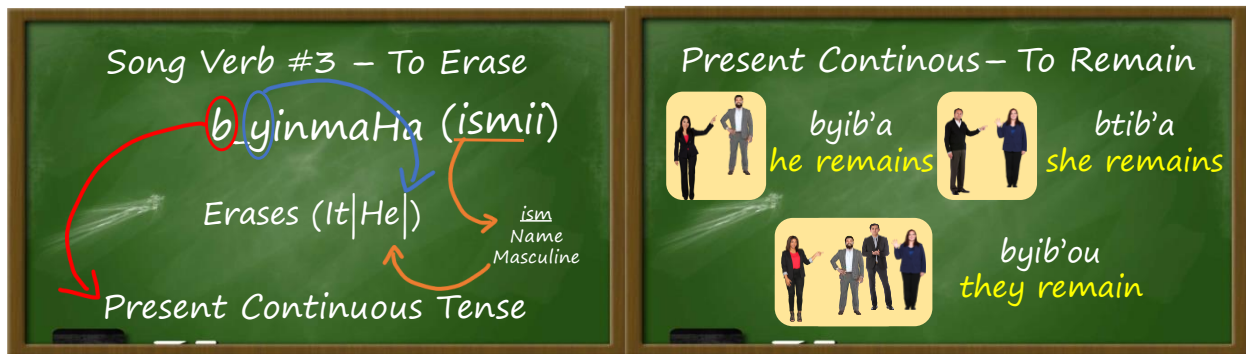


Figure 7A (Left) demonstrates a direct analysis of tense, gender, and conjugation of a verb that naturally occurred with in the song. Figure 7B (Right) shows the various third person, present continuous verb conjugations of the verb To Remain that occurred in the song initially as It (He) Remains.

2E. Teaching Culture, History, & Geography:

In here lies the true strength of using songs to teach a heritage language, particularly “classics” as they often have very clear and strong cultural, historical, and geographical themes, whether intentional or not. By centering a lesson’s theme around a particular cultural or historical topic, the related vocabulary, and the grammar used to convey that theme, one can ground the song-based lesson using one unifying topic, which helps to avoid the potential vocabulary bombardment that can take away from the message of the song itself.

When designing the lesson itself, occasional anecdotal asides related to the content of a song can help flavor the song analysis and language lesson with richer meaning. If, for example, the verses:

I write your name, my love, on the old Poplar tree.

You write my name, my love, on the sand of the street.

And tomorrow it will rain upon the painful tale.

Your name will remain, but mine will be erased.

from the song *Bektob Ismak ya Habibi* by Fairouz is being analyzed, taking the time to explain

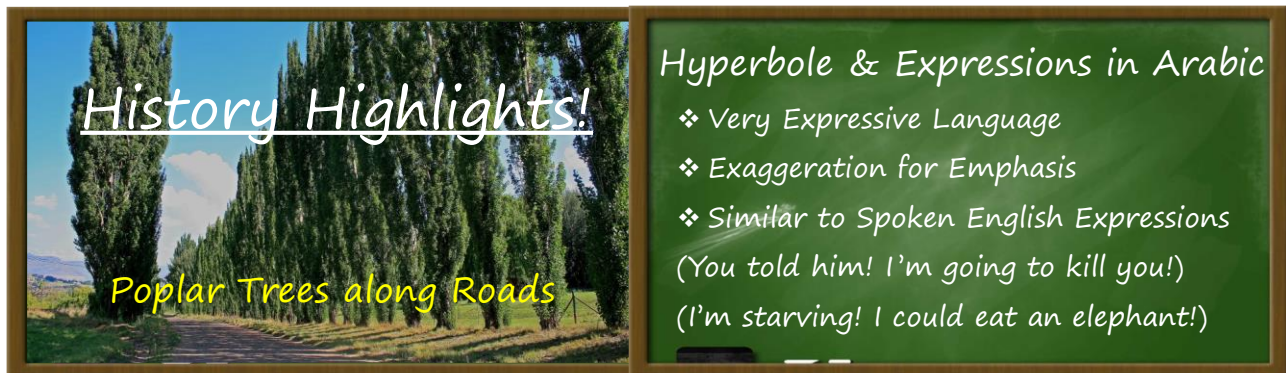


Figure 8A (Left) shows a slide that can be included for time to be set aside to anecdotally discuss the presence of Poplar Trees along non-mountain roads in the countryside of Lebanon. Figure 8B (Right) shows a comparison being made in response to hyperbole that is used in the song in a very casual manner.

the common practice of planting White Poplar's along roadways can make it apparent that they were writing the names in visible places and avoid the mental picture of the singer writing his name in an obscure location in a forest, undermining the overall theme of the song.

Cultural and historical lessons are also not limited to the story the song writer is trying to tell but can also draw on the way in which the song writer chooses to tell it. The use of “wa”, meaning “And” in Arabic, continuously throughout a song to move the story forward can be just as useful a way to teach things like storytelling and common speech patterns to students. Comparisons can then be made to English's “and then __ happened”, and the HLLs can share if such practices resonate with their experiences, instances where they have heard this done by family members, and other things they have seen that might be different from the style in

the song. This can both help concepts stick, as well as build a sense of community and connection to the culture and themes.

2F. Potential Mediums:

The last area of consideration for this Capstone was the potential ways of applying this information to a particular language and making it accessible to HLLs. Three possible modes were identified and one was pursued. The first is a written lesson book that begins with a song synopsis containing the song background, artists, summary, & list of the key grammar, vocabulary, and culture topics covered in the song. This is followed by the song lyrics transliterated and translated line by line. Next, an annotated vocabulary to describe in depth the meaning and conjugation of individual phrases and words is included followed by a section on relevant grammar, and finally a section with additional cultural, historical, and geographical notes. Finally, exercises like identifying the parts of a sentence, changing the meaning of a verse by replacing words, and journaling about what was culturally familiar in the song would be included at the end.

The benefits of this mode would be its structure and accessibility to those outside a classroom setting. It was decided against, however, as it would likely be a paid resource to allow for printing, and it would be more difficult to convey the proper pronunciations associated with the script, especially sounds not found in the HLLs native language.

The second option would be a lesson plan that could be distributed foreign language teachers and professors for use in HL pedagogy. While this is still being considered for the future, it was not initially pursued, as more work would need to be done to understand HL

pedagogy in the classroom, and the resource would not ultimately be available to as wide an audience, since it would require enrollment in a foreign language class.

The third option that was ultimately pursued was the development of video-based lessons, as they can be made freely and widely accessible via platforms like YouTube, and the scripts and PowerPoint slides can be easily translated into lesson plans, if the second option is ever pursued further. Additionally, the recording aspect of the videos makes teaching non-English sounds significantly easier. Thus, given all of the considerations outlined throughout this section a song-based lesson plan was developed for teaching Lebanese-accented Levantine Arabic through song.

PART 3: APPLICATION TO TEACHING LEBANESE-ACCENTED LEVANTINE ARABIC

3A. Spoken Arabic Background:

The Arabic Language is composed of two main spheres. The first, Proper Arabic, includes the Arabic found in the Quran and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is spoken in formal situations, taught in schools, and used when writing. The second is Spoken Arabic, which includes all the dialects found throughout the Maghreb, Egypt, the Saudi Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and the Levant. The Levantine dialect spoken in Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon could then be further divided into distinct accents associated with each country and even the individual governates or local regions within that country.

Despite being considered the same language, the Proper Arabic and many spoken dialects are not mutually intelligible, meaning that someone who has studied only MSA will not be able to understand Spoken Moroccan Arabic and a Moroccan man who never went to school will be unable to understand MSA or even lightly formal Arabic like the Arabic used by

news anchors, which is often a mix of formal and informal forms of Arabic. Thus, despite the many resources available to teach MSA or a commonly taught dialect like Egyptian Arabic, there is a gap in the field for those that speak the other forms of Arabic. Additionally, when other forms are taught, they may teach Levantine Arabic in general, which may include vocabulary and grammar used by people from many different countries. This can result in HLLs who may be using a mixture of Palestinian and Lebanese slang with a Syrian accent to try and speak to family. Thus, in order to provide a more specific teaching resource of a non-MSA, non-Egyptian dialect geared towards HLLs, the accent I was most familiar with, Lebanese-accented Levantine Arabic, was chosen to develop the song-based resource.

3B. Song Selection Criteria:

Song selection was as follows: four songs were selected for the initial creation and launch of the online teaching resource. The first is Bektob Ismak ya Habibi (transliteration of all titles was done such that internet results will appear) written by the Rahbani Brothers and famously performed by Fairouz in 19. The second is Wa3douni w Natarouni written by Elias Rahbani and performed by Sabah. The third is La Ma Rah Ez3al 3a Shi by Majida el Roumi. Finally, the fourth is Kenna Ana w Inti written by Elias Rahbani and performed by Mohammad Jamal.

Each song contains verbs conjugated in a different tense: the definite past tense, the present continuous tense, the future perfect tense, and the past continuous tense. The pool of singers contains both males and females, Christians and Muslims, those with varying levels of study in proper Arabic, and those originally from within the capital and just outside the capitol to ensure properly universal representation of the region of interest and an appropriate variety of voices and accents. The songs also had a variety of key basic verbs including, To

Walk, To Talk, To Write, To Drive, and To Ask. Finally, their themes and key cultural and historical lessons included, village life, driving in Lebanon, the war's effect on daily life, major coastal towns, and relationships.

All songs are also easily located online through tools, such as YouTube and can be located using the transliterations they were written in above. They also all meet the annunciation and speed requirements outlined in Section 2A and contain minimal use of slang distinctive of a single area in the region of interest in and around Beirut. While time period may of be some concern with this particular pool of song, no outdated slang was noted in any of the songs and their vocabulary and themes were useful and historical enough, in my opinion, to justify the lack of modern day representation, though in the future more recent songs will be considered.

3C. Transliteration System Explained:

The full transliteration system can be found in the Appendix under _____. It was devised by surveying the existing methods of transliterating Arabic, choosing the most intuitive aspects of each system for an English-speaking Arabic learner, and then adjusting vowels to make it phonetically consistent and phonetically exhaustive.

The key aspects of the system include representation of sounds not found in English and the vowel representation which was novel. Two classes of phonetic consonant sounds were handled in different ways. The first, the glottal sounds corresponding to the Arabic letters ġ and ħ were represented using “gh” and “kh” as is common in existing transliteration systems. The alternative would have been to use numbers like in the system used by native Arabic speakers on the internet, but these were deemed too unintuitive for the learner who does not

know proper Arabic and cannot read the Arabic script. The next group of consonants was represented by capitalizing an English letter to show that it is a more emphatic form of that letter. Thus, د was “d” but ض was “D”, and so on and so forth. While doubling the lowercase was briefly considered, it was eventually ruled out, as doubles also exist in Arabic and change the pronunciation, so they needed to be separately represented. Adding “h” to the consonant, as was done with the first group, was also considered, but instances where a “d” or “t” or “s” sound was followed by an “h” would make such a system too confusing.

There were also three exceptions when representing glottal sounds. The first was representing the non-voiced glottal stop (occurs in the dash in “uh-oh”). This was done using the existing system of an apostrophe to try and convey that it is non-voiced and similar to sounds found throughout English that occur but are not considered letters. Next was ح, the voiceless pharyngeal fricative, which was represented using “H”, which could be found as an alternative to the common “7” and appeared most intuitive, though it is not technically a more emphatic “h” sound. Lastly was the voiced glottal stop corresponding to ع. This was by far the most difficult as it was often depicted using “3” by native speakers, due to the characters’ similar appearance, or “A” or “A’ ”). The problem is that the use of “A” makes it seem like a vowel when the vowel-like qualities it possesses are just the short vowels that often follow it, which can change and deserve independent representation. Thus, while numbers were avoided in all other cases, the number “3” or typing ع itself was chosen due to the difficulties encountered in finding a unique and intuitive alternative.

Ten distinct vowel sounds were identified in spoken Levantine Arabic. This was one of the main factors in using transliteration as the same long vowels in Arabic can be pronounced in a number of different ways based on the surrounding letters and does not have vowels that

correspond to the many loan-sounds adopted by Levantine Arabic from colonizing languages and indigenous languages prior to Arab colonization. Thus, vowel digraphs (combinations of two vowels like “ou”, “eu”, etc.) were used to increase the number of possible combinations and derive a usable script. Additionally, more digraphs and underlining were used to show common variations based on regional accent or individual variation. For example, the first-person possessive pronoun in Arabic corresponding to “my” in English takes the form of a suffix. If house is “beyt” then my house is “beytii”. Double “ii” is used in this case, since some may pronounce it like the double “ee” in “bee” and some may pronounce it like the “i” in “it”. Thus, being common enough and even being pronounced in both forms by the same person this method of representation was made. Likewise, a word like “shams” meaning sun may be extended to “shamis” making the need for an underlined “i” in the word to show that it is optional and may be heard pronounced in both ways. While there are far too many of these types of variations, even within the smallest region, including provision for some of the most common and distinct ones was important in making the script as representative of actual speech as possible, though not entirely exhaustive.

3F. Levantine Arabic Project Medium & Plan

Using the transliteration system above, a Transliteration Method PowerPoint was created that could be used in the classroom by instructors or uploaded online with a voice over to convey the system being used before proceeding to song analysis. Next the first verse of the song, Bektob Ismak ya Habibi was broken down and analyzed in PowerPoint form and the song Waadoni Wo Nataroni broken down in book form for comparison. The PowerPoint medium with voice over was determined to be most conducive to thorough teaching and

distribution; thus, Bektob Ismak ya Habibi was further broken down in separate PowerPoints for each verse.

Feedback for each translation and transliteration was received from a minimum of three native Arabic speakers, thanks be to Professor Aljord and my family members for all of the help, to ensure that the appropriate representation of the Arabic was always performed. Methods of teaching these words and particularly grammar were taken from the advice and observation of Dr. Aljord as she taught these concepts in a foreign language classroom composed primarily of HLLs, as well as from input and advice by my faculty advisor, linguist Dr. Waltz, thanks be to her for the many pedagogical insights. Dr. Waltz was also consulted on how to teach the phonetics properly with occasional input from Dr. Aljord.

The final product consists of five PowerPoint presentations and the feedback from experts, such as Dr. Aljord and Dr. Waltz, as well as native speakers and non-speakers of Arabic on the clarity and usefulness of the resource. With this feedback and these resources a plan was devised for future implementation of the resources using YouTube. The size and scope of each song's analysis will first be reduced significantly, as the current scope distracts from the overall themes of the song and lacks room for the numerous exercises that would be beneficial in student retention of the material. Once this step is finalized and a new template formed 7 hours a week will be spent translating, creating the PowerPoint presentation, recording the voiceover, and uploading to YouTube. As the scope of the PowerPoints will be significantly trimmed, each song will now fit into a single PowerPoint. Finally, Fair Use disclosures will be included at the bottom of each slide, as the primary use of the lyrics is educational with value added through the custom lessons and analyses, and all stock images are free to use per Microsoft's contract so long as the photos themselves are not being sold

for profit. Finally, the channel will be test run with an open comment section for feedback on the format and song selection, which will be taken into consideration at the 3-week mark and then every three months after that to ensure enough people have weighed in before making any major pivots.

Through this the hope is that anyone desiring HLL-geared Lebanese-Accented Levantine Arabic lessons will be able to freely access them and HLLs from across the US and English-speaking world can be reached. Equally so, the hope is also that through this initial detailing of the methods I used, as well as their full implementation through the channel, others can be encouraged to design language pedagogical tools for LCTLs and keep their heritage languages alive no matter how far from the homeland they are.

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