

The Challenges Encountered by Iraqi Students in Learning Italian Language and Creating New Methodology in their Learning

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Abstract

Through my experience in teaching, I usually make an investigation to know whether the students face any difficulties in comprehending the Italian language, and especially in grammar. This is mainly because the sentence structure in the Italian language differs from the sentence structure in the Arabic language, since it is a totally different language that contains different roots, like cultural roots. Therefore, the student faces some difficulties with the verbs, and the use of the auxiliary verbs, prepositions, and so on.

Among the main difficulties related to the pronunciation are: sometimes, the Arabic speaking student whose mother tongue is the Arabic language is not able to distinguish between the vowels (p, b) or between the letters (o and u).

This difficulty is a result of not using new methodologies in learning the Italian language in addition to the absence of the student and his wrong way of learning the language.

One of the basic solutions that motivates the students to learn and understand the Italian language proposes to apply new and modern teaching methods and among the most important ways are: the use of modern sources related to modern technology, for example, the use of textbooks approved by Italian universities to teach Italian language to foreigners, in addition to allocating great time to practice the language in a class of intensive exercises and dialogues between students, creating plays and other activities. Moreover, I also find it useful to organize intensive summer classes courses to Italy in schools or institutions to teach Italian for the purpose of motivating students and learning and mixing with Italians and foreign students who speak the Italian language as a result of the practice of many various activities across the Internet and mobile phones and by this the student will feel self-confident in expressing himself.

Keywords: *language learning, grammar, teaching methods;*

The history of the Italian language in Iraq

The Department of Italian Language was founded in 2002 at the University of Baghdad - College of Languages, and is considered as the first department to learn the Italian language all over Iraq. It was founded by a professor and an Iraqi painter who had lived many years in Italy and studied the Italian art and culture, in cooperation with the Italian Embassy in Baghdad.

The report includes learning the Italian language and the difficulties faced by the Iraqi students, in addition to establishing modern and sophisticated methods in learning it. The Department of Italian Language was founded in 2002 at the University of Baghdad - College of Languages, and is considered as the first department to learn the Italian language all over Iraq. It was founded by a professor and an Iraqi painter who had lived many years in Italy and studied the Italian art and culture, in cooperation with the Italian Embassy in Baghdad, equipped with books, laboratory equipment and furniture for the department, which led to the success of the department as well as it graduated a lot of Iraqi students with superiority from this department. The Italian Embassy has also provided scholarships for outstanding students to Italy to complete postgraduate studies and to take intensive courses in Italian universities to teach Italian language to foreigners. After the war in Iraq in 2003 the building was destroyed in Baghdad, and the Italian department suffered from the destruction of teaching staff, where they burned the library and stole and vandalized laboratory equipment. In addition to that, the Italian language teachers were threatened by terrorists, who prompted them to leave the country and travel abroad. It was also difficult to practice the language or meet the Italians or provide Internet, however, despite the sabotage, the Italian Embassy re-equipped the Department with equipment, books and scholarships for outstanding students to Italy to complete their postgraduate studies, and took intensive courses in the language in Italian universities to teach Italian language to foreigners.



In 2012, the department was suspended by the University of Baghdad because of the lack of cadres of its professors specialized in Italian linguistics and literature.

In May of this year, the Ministry of Higher Education and the University of Baghdad approved the reopening of the department, after the return of Iraqi professors specialized in the Italian linguistics and literature of the Italian students graduated from the former Italian department, who received a doctorate from Italian solid universities. The laboratory was re-established by Iraqi efforts and financial and moral support from the Italian side.

Through my own experience in teaching the Italian language, I realized that the Iraqi student faces many difficulties in learning the Italian language than learning English or any other foreign language for some reasons, including: it is a new different language that has never been looked at or taught in schools like the English language, the Italian syntax and rules differ radically from the rules of the Arabic language, so it results from encountering difficulties, especially in the conduct of verbs, the use of auxiliary verbs, pronouns and prepositions. One of the other fundamental problems faced by the Iraqi student in learning the Italian language is the voices and the pronunciation of letters: we can note that a lot of students, for example, cannot distinguish between the vowels or between the letters (b, p o, u), like the word (*repubblica*) which means (*republic*) or the word (*perché*) which means (*why*), in addition to the pronunciation of the letter "C" that sometimes utters "*chi*" and sometimes utters "*k*".

Some of the important reasons behind these difficulties are the lack of new methods and equipment in the teaching of the language, especially after the suspension of the section and the neglect of the equipment and educational books available in the library of the department. It is also because of the absence of the student's role and his wrong way of studying the language, which is based on memorizing sentences and texts without understanding them, resulting from the aim in success or transit phase only, because the curriculum previously was not in the required level, most of it was a text to memorize and written only.

Solutions needed to overcome these difficulties

One of the basic solutions that motivates the student to learn and understand the Italian language proposes to apply new and modern teaching methods and among the most important ways are: the use of modern sources related to modern technology, for example, the use of textbooks approved by Italian universities to teach Italian language to foreigners. For example, a book entitled "*Perugia University accredited to foreigners*", allocates great time to practice the language in a class of intensive exercises and dialogues between students, creating plays and other activities.

I find it necessary to organize intensive summer courses to Italy in schools or institutions to teach Italian for the purpose of motivating students and learning and mixing with Italians and foreign students who speak the Italian language as a result of the practice of many various activities across the Internet and mobile phones:

assigning lectures to make quizzes and games on the display in the grammar and composition of sentences where students are shared by phones. In addition to courses for professors in order to strengthen their scientific skills and develop their competencies. Those methods work to encourage students to easily comprehend the composition of the sentence as well as they make the students interested in the language and enjoy it without feeling bored and tired. Among the modern technology methods currently used in teaching language are: creating a video conference with any Italian university to teach the Italian language to foreigners and to make an online lecture, through communication programs, that makes students listening to the lecture especially in subjects related to the Italian culture and civilization.

Using the image to learn Italian

The image usage is a very important educational tool, as it is a major means of communication and it helps in reflection especially at the present time, images are considered very important in self-presentation, for example in social networking sites as well as it is considered as a tool for knowledge and entertainment, where it allows the student to express a particular thing and thus enrich his meaning. It is possible to perform simple exercises around a particular image, for example a picture of



a child's room and create a variety of questions for the students about the description of the picture and then ask each of the students to write a word or a sentence related to the image and give the synonyms, for example, book, bed, table, etc. Moreover, it is possible to do another exercise related to comprehension, for example creating a short story and describing the situation of people with the creation of a title and suggesting some hypotheses in addition to the establishment of exercises related to grammar and so on.

The use of Italian radio as a means to learn the language

The Italian professor Nicolita Santiosiano of the University of Perugia for foreigners confirmed that the use of radio is an essential part of the teaching of Italian language to foreigners, especially for advanced stages. It helps to tame the student's mind to understand and comprehend the dialogue and learn basic linguistic terms, namely the language of journalism and media. It is possible to prepare dialogues on various topics and listen to them by the students and then prepare exercises related to the comprehension and grammar of the language, which allows to enhance the student's ability to comprehend and the ability to express and write. After that, it is possible to do a simple oral or editorial examination.

Finally I can point out the importance of literature in learning Italian language, of what it owns of thought and knowledge of Italian civilization and history. Moreover, it constitutes an important means of cultural, political and social exchange between the West and East, and is a bridge between different cultures, through the great literary works of many Italian writers whose works have been translated into Arabic and vice versa. Therefore, their literary production is considered a major means of identifying the history of language for the student as well as his important role in translation. There is hope that the department will return and rise to the best and becoming a main reference for all students studying the Italian language in Iraq.