

The Islamic rhetoric about the rights and duties of men and women in marriage has gained more influence. The idea of the male as the main provider was not very salient in 1965; it is now. The rule of the husband's right and duty to sanction the woman's movements is stated very explicitly now; there is nothing in my old field notes to indicate that this was as clear in the 1960s (p. 289).

The impact of Islamic revival in the 1980s is hinted at as something regressive in this passage. However, the book is useful in the sense that it records changes in Malay women in Kelantan over the period of 20 years. The issue to be raised here is Rudie's simplified and often inaccurate accounts of certain Islamic religious practices. The methodological and theoretical framework used by Rudie may not be relevant or sufficient to interpret certain norms and behaviours of Kelantan Malay women. Rudie's misconceptions of the business transactions done Islamically (doing the *akad*/statement of intention) or the position of female family members in a mass prayer led by a male family member (on pages 220 and 247 respectively) are a couple of examples which illuminate the limitations of anthropologists who spend a few months or years in between flights home but often emerge triumphant as an authority on a people and/or a location.

The book nonetheless makes an interesting reading. The language is clear and there are diagrams which help make an argument lucid. Rudie's affection for and fondness of Kelantan and Kelantan Malay women is nicely conveyed in this book. The title may be a little bit misleading for the book does not sing the praises of visible women in East Coast Malay society as one would have expected. The book also speaks of why Malay women remain invisible in Kelantan.

The book will be most useful for researchers who are interested in the study of gender relations and construction of identities in a complex and changing society.

Study on Second Language Learners of Arabic: An Error Analysis Approach by Jassem Ali Jassem. Kula Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 2000, pp 410. ISBN 983-065-093-6.

Reviewer: Haja Mohideen Mohamed Ali, Department of English Language and Literature, IIUM.

The learning of Arabic as a second or foreign language has gained much importance among Muslims, emphasizing the importance of

Arabic to emerge as a *lingua franca* in the Muslim world. In Malaysia, the International Islamic University Malaysia had made a pass in Arabic at various levels compulsory for its students depending on their areas of specialization. There are many religious schools in every state in the country, both government administered and privately run, which conduct classes in the Arabic language. How successful have these courses been in teaching Arabic to students? Jassem Ali Jassem's work is a contribution in this respect. The book is based on the doctoral thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education, University Kebangsaan Malaysia in 1999.

The author has investigated the use of certain aspects of the Arabic verb phrase by Malay pupils at a Malaysian Islamic religious secondary school. The subjects who comprised 54 learners were required to produce two written tasks and the author's findings and conclusions are based on this study. This seven-chapter book deals with the status of Arabic in Malaysia, a country whose Muslim population is approximately 60%, the plausible causes of language errors in the subjects' written medium and suggestions for the teaching methodology and learning of, in particular, the tense and subject-verb agreement in the Arabic language.

The verb system is a very difficult grammar item not only for language learners of English, but also for those learning Arabic and Bahasa Melayu (BM). The verb system is in fact the central area of grammar in terms of its frequency of occurrence and importance. Therefore, the study is a relevant one aimed at helping learners of Arabic.

Error Analysis (EA) in language studies is the study of errors to find out the plausible causes of errors in order to bring about error awareness among language learners and reduce the occurrence of errors. The investigation adopts an error analysis approach. According to Corder¹, an authority in applied linguistics, the study of errors made by language learners needs no justification. The errors are "a major element in the feedback system of the process we call language teaching and learning. It is on the basis of the information the teacher gets from errors that he varies his teaching procedures and materials, the pace of the progress, and the amount of practice which he plans at any moment."

The author has given an extensive review of the literature on the subject of EA and a short discussion on contrastive analysis. He has made numerous references to scholars and investigators in the field

who had studied learners of various language backgrounds involved in the second language learning of English and Arabic. The writer has dedicated an entire chapter to describe the linguistic structure and function of the verb phrase in standard Arabic. The categories of errors produced are described in detail in chapter 5.

The explanation of errors which is the “ultimate object of error analysis takes up the whole of chapter six.² The major sources of error in the Arabic language output of the subject, with specific reference to the tense and subject-verb agreement are identified. Jassem believes that the possible major causes are mother tongue interference, inherent difficulty of the Arabic language, overgeneralization, simplification, the dictionary, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, incomplete mastery of Arabic, the text book, the teacher, teaching method, false analogy, lack of vocabulary and hypercorrection. The above sources have earlier been identified to be the plausible major causes by many error studies including that of Haja Mohideen.³

Jassem has made many useful suggestions with regard to teaching Arabic grammar, the verb phrase in particular. These include adopting a communicative approach to teaching Arabic, using graded teaching materials, employing both deductive and inductive approaches, having linear and spiral syllabuses, emphasizing all the four basic language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening and exposing the learners to them, encouraging the use of Arabic both inside and outside the classroom, reviewing and editing current textbooks, seeking the expertise of qualified native Arab speakers and forming Arabic language societies in schools.

No published work is perfect or above even minimal criticism. The book has obviously been published without proper editing. A thesis does not become a book automatically for the consumption of those involved. But the author himself has admitted “In this book few changes were made by the writer” (p. vi). Some more changes would have added to the quality of the book. Unfortunately, the book contains many language mistakes, and not errors themselves, that have escaped the attention of the author. A few examples of language deviations are:

Is there any spelling errors of the verb? (p. 10)

The population of Malaysia is around 21 Millions (p. 13)

Some of the headings and sub-headings have not been properly

thought out. Section 1.6.7.4 is a case in point. Those who intend to publish their theses in future should clearly do some serious editing themselves, or have them edited professionally before proceeding to publish them.

In conclusion, despite the criticisms mentioned here, the book remains a valuable source of reference for language learners and educators. It helps students to recognize their potential sources of errors, and educators to focus on the possible causes for purposes of remedial teaching and achieving overall proficiency in language use.

1. S.P. Corder, *Errors Analysis and Interlanguage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)
2. *Ibid.*, 34.
3. Haja Mohideen, *An Error in the Written English of Malay Students at Pre-University Level, with Special Reference to Students at the Matriculation Centre, International Islamic University Malaysia*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff. 1991.