Teaching of Syntax in Foreign Language from Educators Perspective
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ABSTRACT
It was well known that syntax is a part of language which must be absorbed by the learners. By that way they can use the language in the proper manner. However, the teaching of syntax is not really meeting the objective of learning since it leads the teachers to give detail explanation of the language and create negative perception of the language learning itself. Thus this article will discuss the educator’s perspective on teaching of syntax in foreign language. To obtain a data of the study, researchers have constructed a set of structured questions for interview purpose. Eight respondents were agreeing to participate and to be interviewed. Findings demonstrated that syntax is very crucial for teaching and learning of foreign language. In the other hand, learners cannot avoid this part of language and in the same time, teachers must know how to gradually help learners in their learning process.

Objective
This study has determined two objectives to be achieved;
1. Does syntax is the major problem for Arabic learners of Malay?
2. What is the most suggested approach to teach syntax to Malay learners?

Definition of Manṣūbāt
Arabic language is an inflection language, where changes at the end of the word will affect the meaning of the sentence. Verbal and nominal sentence have a great deals with the inflection. Some scholars in rhetoric (‘ilm al-balāghah) affirm that inflection in Arabic is not merely for the meaning purpose; moreover it can make the construction of sentence and texts more beautiful in term of pronunciation and rhythm. There are four signs of inflection in Arabic language named as raʃf (nominative), jār (genitive), naʃš (accusative) and jazm (jussative). All these signs in detail will derive into several patterns in according to grammarian’s description.

Attribute of Manṣūbāt
The term manṣūbāt is used by grammarian to classify the word constitution in the sentence that will be inflected as accusative. To specify, only verb and noun are categorized into this sign. Basically, the sign of inflection derived from fathah. In this study, seven manṣūbāts were selected for it significant in meaning and function in the sentence, namely maf‘il (five items), ḫal and tamyīz. These examples were demonstrated as follow:

Maʃ‘il
i. Maʃ‘il mulaqāت
The word word appears in accusative functioning to describe action of  ضریبته صریح ‘I hit him’. According to grammarian, maʃ‘il mulaqā is derived from root word. In this regard, the meaning of ضریبته صریح may deeply explain the level of hitting in performance.

ii. Maʃ‘il bīḥ
The word  الأجز الرز is accusative and used to answer the question of the transitive verb  كُل. In English, this is called an “object” and in Malay it is known as "objek penyambut." This style is not complicated to be understood since it has similarity to English or Malay.
iii. Maf'ul li ajlih:

This style of syntax has a special function, namely “to explain” the reason of action. The sentence above intends to give more detail why the action “come” on purpose. In this style “reason” of action is given to clarify and justify the action done.

iv. Maf'ul fih:

To mention “time” in the sentence, this style is used. However, reader or listener will soon understand the word as it lexically understood by it single. Some lexical items such as “تاميمي” meaning of the phrase can be demonstrated as follow:

The use of "y" in this structure is to mention “togetherness” between the action and the intended time of that action. However the function of "y" is in the most case used to indicate connectivity.

v. Maf'ul ma'ah:

The use of "u" is to answer the question using "how" (Maghâlahash 1995). As the sentence above demonstrates "مانثينة" is intentionally to give the answer to the listener/reader when the information of "Muhammad came to the class" but “how” he comes? (does he drive?/does he come alone? or etc.). Therefore when u is used, extra information can be attached.

1. Hâl:

 hardship which is not translated to the same in Malay.

The use of māth is to answer the question using "why" (Maghâlahash 1995). As the sentence above demonstrates "ثانية" (second) is intentionally to give the answer to the listener/reader when the information of "Muhammad came to the class" but “why” he comes? (does he drive?/does he come alone? or etc.). Therefore when māth is used, extra information can be attached.

2. Tamyz:

The function of tamyiz is as general noun that describes a vague word, or detailing the general meaning of the sentence (al-Râjih, 1988). The vague word can be numbers such as example above "اثنتين" following with “ثانية” functioning as tamyiz where it was not understood if the sentence does not followed with tamyiz. While the function to elaborate general meaning of the phrase can be demonstrated as follow: زاد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد Mohammad in the particular. Then the word "ثانية" has directly what we mean by the phrase زاد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد Mohammad.

Methodology

To ensure the success of the study with limitation of time and expenses, qualitative approach was designed. By constructing a set of structured question (research protocol) which then used as instrument to collect the data of study. Then several educators who have an experience of teaching Arabic with different academic background from professor to teacher of the school were identified. Firstly they were contacted and asked whether they agree to participate in the interview. Once the decision is made, the date and time were set up. The interview takes about 30 minutes to one hour. The recorded interview result were then transcribed into essay and used as a data of study.

Findings and Discussion

This section discuss on findings of interviews with eight respondents from different institutions. The most related points will be highlighted regarding these sub-sections as follows:

Students Knowledge of Syntax

Generally speaking, student’s knowledge of syntax especially “مانشِبات” can be categorized into three, weak, moderate and good (Mohammad Najib R7). And the highest number of students is categorized as moderate, and this view supported by Tg. Ghani (R5). Meanwhile other respondents believe that students know the manšibât concept, however they do not really good to differentiate and use in their practice (Ab. Halim, R3), they do understand the meaning but do not sure the actual function of syntax (Mohammad Fauzi R4). According to Zakaria (R8), many students in Islamic school which around 60% to 70% can identify “مانشِبات” but find difficulties to understand the use of it. The main category that students obviously cannot adopt is “تاميمي” as mentioned by Tg. Ghani (R5) and Zakaria (R8). The reason is the ability to choose a proper lexical to be “تاميمي” in term of number, gender etc. Nordin (R1), however believed that students are not in need to learn syntax which has huge gap from their mother tongue. They should only be exposed to the syntax elements that have close familiarity to their own language such as maf'ul bih.

Reason of Difficulty

All respondents agree that “مانشِبات” becomes difficult because of the concept is absent in Malay language. To avoid students’ perception of this difficulty, Nordin (R1) suggests that any aspect of syntax that has similarity to student’s language must be given a priority. Some students are not sure when to use this form of “مانشِبات”, and they must at beginning to learn a basic sentence before they start to use “مانشِبات” (Zaki, R2). Zakaria (R8) support the notion as he mentioned “مانشِبات” concept can be acquired even its concepts are absent in Malay language. While Ab Halim (R3) asserted that knowing Arabic morphology is the critical where lexical derivation takes place. He stressed on students were misunderstanding of the exact meaning from each derivation of root word. This will lead to difficulties in determining the meaning and function of “مانشِبات”. This stand also supported by T. Ghani (R5) who mentioned that student’s problems back to their vocabulary insufficient. In the other hand some “مانشِبات” concept is not frequently used in learning context, therefore it is no wonder why students cannot understand the concept of “لَح” and “تاميمي” for example (Muhammad Fauzi, R4). Mohammad Najib (R7), however explained that “مانشِبات” concept is not really difficult if students were given an enough exposure and students in the most times are confused to differentiate among “مانشِبات” concept even they can understand the context. This situation needs some time and effort to improve with helps of teachers (Alwi R6).

Possibility to Translate into Malay Language

In term of translation, most of respondents believe that manšibât can be rendered into Malay even the difficulties are remained. The complexity of manšibât concept may need additional explanation when translating a related sentence (Ab Halim, R3; Muhammad Fauzi, R4; Tg. Ghani, R5). More ever the actual meaning of source text could be missing in translation process (Nordin, R1; Zaki, R2; Alwi, R6). Therefore it is vital to learn carefully Arabic syntax before embarking on translation of Arabic text and etc.

Suggestion to Learn Syntax

The respondents look into syntax from different perspective, but in the end they strongly agree that syntax is purely important to understand Arabic. However different approaches must be applied accordingly to different group of students. One of the respondents (Nordin, R1) suggests it should be better to teach syntax that has a similarity to the students tongue. In the other hand, gaining an enough vocabulary (Muhammad Fauzi, R4; Tg. Ghani, R5; Mohammad Najib, R7) will help student to learn syntax. By that way, students can easily understand the concept and function of the subject.

Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding of syntax in Arabic classes is really important. Teaching of syntax to non-speaker of Arabic needs a great attention especially when the concept is rare to the target students. It also crucial to provide the content of Arabic course depending on the level of the learners and their objectives of learning. Moreover, increasing student’s
vocabulary will enhance their language skills and accommodate their acquiring of syntax.

For translation purpose, manṣūbāt as part of syntax is possible to translate into Malay. Therefore it is worth giving a special treatment to manṣūbāt in text translation especially if there is not word to word equivalence. It is possible to make some modification in the Malay’s sentence structure as long as it may bear the exact meaning from Arabic text.

Reference