

## **Effects of Global War on Terrorism on the Growth of Arabic Language**

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### **Abstract**

*The growth in the study of Arabic language and indeed Arabic literature has been fluctuating over time. Arabic has been a language of interest from the early stage of Islamic civilization for many individuals, groups and governments around the world since then. However, the episode of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre WTC at the United State of America has drawn more attention towards Arabic as a language spoken by most, if not all of the Caribbean suddenly became curious in understanding not only the language of Arabic, but also literature of the language as a means getting into the dynamics and under-currents inherent within the Arab culture and perhaps their religion that gingered some of its people into such a massive planned and courageous' act of violence on other peoples. For this many thing affected the language positively and negatively. Many enrolled themselves in different institutions to learn Arabic language. In addition to this, Arabic and Arab nations in Middle East are currently important factors influencing the trends in global politics today. This is because the economic, political and strategic importance they constitute to the interests of the so-called global powers of the world. This paper examines the impact of global war on terrorism on Arabic language with aim at proffering some solutions.*

**Keywords:** Terrorism, War, Arabic, Challenge, Language, Global, Military, Teaching

### **Introduction**

According to the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, "terror" is any act or method use in inflicting terrible fear into people's mind. This includes the use of terrorizing method of governing or resisting government of a tyrant or even that of a just government. The Encyclopedia Britannica on the other hand, described terrorism to represent the systematic use of terror or unpredictable violence against government's policies, or individual to attain a political objective (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 2004). Going by this therefore it could be said that the regimes of Nazi in Germany under Adolph Hitler and the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin fall into the category of state terrorism. Hitler ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945 terrorizing not only his people but subject others to the highest level of intimidation.

He was believed to have ordered his soldiers to "close your eyes to pity! Act brutally!" (Encyclopedia Britannica Micropaedia Vol. 2. P. 650). This method, though now contestable, was said to have been used by Hitler, to kill about six million Jews during the World War II. While Stalin used similar approaches by eliminating the enemies or opposition groups and uproot them to their family level. Similarly, during Spanish Civil War, General Queipo de Liana ordered that "anyone caught inciting others to strike or striking himself shall be shot immediately. Do not be frightened if someone tries to force you, kill him like a dog and you will be free of all responsibilities" (Harun 2002).

Terrorist activities are more prevalent in modern days in Europe and America than in other Continents. This is perhaps due to the influence these Continents exert on both political and economic systems of other Continents in the World. Terrorism today is expressed through elimination or frightening opponent through sponsorship engaging in the act to force religious views on others, murder, kidnapping, hijacking airplanes and setting off bombs (Muhibbu-Din 2006).

### **Conceptualizing Terrorism**

The words "terrorism" and "terrorist" still await proper definitions as to what is terrorism and who is a terrorist. This is because neither the UN nor the USA has defined clearly what the meaning of terrorism or who a terrorist is. All we can see around are some acts of killings, counter killings.

Bombing, and counter explosions, occupation and struggle for liberation here and there. As the most commonly used word on the world media today, terrorism is more often defined by description in such a way to move or shake the emotions and attract sympathy from the public. Such descriptions includes “Modern Barbarism, Political Violence or terrorism is a threat to Western civilization; Terrorism is a menace to western moral and values. These are not definitions rather descriptions. Indeed the Arab media posed questions as to whether the Israeli Government or the Freedom Fighters in Palestine i.e. The Palestinian Liberation Organization, (PLO), Kashmir, Philippine, Tamil Tigers of Sri-Lanka and all other freedom fighters are called what?

### ***A Cursory Look at the History of Terrorism***

The word terrorism is one of the most commonly used words in the media today. Terrorism has been in existence for a long time now though it firstly appeared during the French revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, between 1789 and 1799 (Harrison 1984: 123). The clear fact about terrorism is that it has no nation or nationality. It does not belong to any religion, culture or civilization. It cannot be attributed to a civilization nor blame its sins on one (World Book Encyclopedia 2001: 178). Terrorism has taken place in different countries of the world along the history of man.

The Ku Klux Klan was a group in the USA, which was violently terrorizing the blacks in the US. Their activities were not only against the blacks alone but also against their supports in the late 1800’s and 1930’s (Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004:13). Adolph Hitler of Germany, Bento Mussolini of Italy, Joseph Stalin of Soviet union, as many as other dictators that ruled in their respective countries had at one time use violence and force to threaten and terrorize their subject and oppositions. This terrorism did not stop with politician alone; the Roman Catholic against the Protestant in the Northern Ireland also used it. A group described as BASF in Spain bombing several government agencies and buildings used it.

From the forgone, it is clear that different groups regardless of their political, cultural differences use terrorism. Even in Nigeria, some groups in the Niger Delta are using terrorism to achieve their financial goals and political objectives while in the North Easter Nigeria, a group is now terrorizing the region. It is pertinent to refer to the history to be able to identify the position of Arabic in the modern dispensation. This is because the future cannot be realized without the knowledge of the past. Arabic receives more attention through the Palestinian constant resistance of the Israel occupying their Territory.

In addition to this, there has been constant sponsoring of UN resolutions that have to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. When the US was attacked on September 11 2001, interest in Arabic Language received much attention than ever. Many of the interested groups and individuals enrolled themselves more in institutions where they can study Arabic. This was to enable them understand the language of the people who would accept to die in such a desperate manner. Though the suicide attack of September 11 on WTC was not the first suicide attack witness in the history, but it has a great impact on the status of Arabic studies. To this extent therefore, it could be said that learning of Arabic after the incident could be considered positive development that led to the growth of the Arabic language.

In addition, US established a television house called Al-Arabiyyah September 2002 in the Middle East with the aim of convincing the Arabs that they are liberating civilization which needs to be supported. Thus, the US occupation of Iraq and the dethronement of Saddam Hussein has been a factor in a way to the growth of Arabic. US appointed different people to rule Iraq but proved abortive and too difficult until a retired General Paul Bremer was tipped for the task. He was appointed for this assignment as a result of his fluency in Arabic language.

### ***Some Qualities of Arabic Language***

Arabic language is a language understood differently by different individuals, group, societies and government across the globe, Some understand Arabic just as any other communicable language. Some see it as a language of religions or language of religions or language spoken by extremist or terrorists. Some understand that Arabic is a strategic language in all aspects. It is a very important language in relationship with the Middle East. It is a fact that Middle East is the major center of interest to the so-called superpowers. This is true because of the strategic geographical and economic position it occupies on globe. This is demonstrated by the quantity of the crude oil it provides. Arabic is a language that can be used in all aspect of human endeavour. It can be used as a language of Science and Technology in all kind of description.

The ancient scientists, astronomers, historians and mathematicians mostly used Arabic as their medium of explanation of their findings in their fields (Fromkin 1974:2).

### ***Positive Effects of Global War against Terrorism on Arabic Language***

Global terrorism and the war against it have both positive and negative effects on the growth of Arabic language. The paper would like to look into positive aspects of terrorism as it affects Arabic. The paper is not saying that terrorism has any positive effects on human life, going by the foregone definition of terrorism

#### **Space Exploration**

This aspect of technology is one of the main items that assisted the rapid growth of other technology activities, which created or turned the whole universe into a global village. Arabs with Arabic language as the language of instruction was not left behind. They were able to penetrate into this aspect of technology in positive development to catch up with their counterparts in the developing world in this line<sup>10</sup>. There are Arabic satellites that are moving the world through their Arabic news, programs and information. All Arabic speaking countries have satellite stations that prove speakers of the language with news on current affairs, information, teaching and anything relating to space technology. This technology links people with the world through the medium of Arabic language.

#### **Computer and Documentation**

It is difficult or even impossible for both teachers and students of Arabic language and literature, to lay their hands on some important reference books due to reasons such as high prices, lack of printing press. In addition lack of availability of the reference books, but through the advancement of computer technology, many voluminous books were documented on computer software which made the spread of the knowledge of Arabic to be easier and faster than it used to be. The problem with possession of books comes to be alleviated through computer software and programs. For instance, most of the books like *Alfiya bin Malik* ألفية بن مالك Al Mugni المغني *Albalagatul waadhihah* البلاغة الواضحة all are Arabic language books and many more of these types could be found through computer software. This means teachers and learners of Arabic language and literature can easily lay their hands on a whole language and literature library in a single CD Rom.

#### **Internet Exploration**

It is part of the advantages of this global terrorism and the war against it that most people from Arabic speaking countries or from war fields use the language to communication to the world through the internet. Any where you are as long as you are Arabic literate, one can pass a message across. It is being used by some evil minded people and the so-called terrorist. They have displayed pictures of their kidnapped victims on the internet using them to achieve their criminal goals. These acts have pushed many secret and intelligent workers to embark upon learning Arabic language to lead them to the root of terrorists. This has facilitated the growth of Arabic as a means of communication in commerce, education, technology, and general information and other fields of human endeavor across the world.

#### **Language Laboratory Devices**

Arabic language through the use of language laboratory is able to compete with other languages in the field of research in linguistics and language in the language laboratory. It offers better means of linguistics and phonetics in the field of teaching and learning the subject. This is because of audio-visual equipment in the laboratory that assists in alleviating problem of understanding to the students involved. The language laboratory encourages student to put more attention in the learning of the language. The use of telephone has also assisted the growth of Arabic language in the aftermath of the war against terrorism in the global village.

It was identified as the communication channel used by activists of September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States of America. This pushed many of the CIA and FBI intelligence staff to put more attention in learning of Arabic language (Sultan Salman Abdulaziz Al-Saud).

This assists the growth of the language, in addition; the use of GSM with Arabic alphabets is also seen as a new development that appeared to facilitate the learning and understanding of the language directly or indirectly, which could be another means of fighting terrorism in the global village.

### **Radio and Television Broadcasts**

More than Fifty Radio Station Broadcast news in Arabic Language (Qaboos HM <http://www.electronics.com/omam/gi/qaboos.Asp-31k>). All the European Economic Community (EEC) countries have Arabic programs with special time allocated to it in their radio station. There are also some independent televisions and satellite stations that show Arabic programs in addition to those of the Arabic speaking countries e.g. The famous American Cable News Network (CNN). Have an Arabic station. USA has also established a television station in Iraq known as Al-Arabiyyah that broadcasts its programs in the interest of its founder all in the name fighting against terrorism.

### ***Simplifying Arabic Language***

Arabic as a simple language has in addition to its adjectives; many features that make it easy to understand. One of these features is that many nouns and pronouns have many synonyms. Take example of Asad (Lion) in Arabic, has more than one hundred synonyms (Abubakre 2004:9), take a noun like Sayf (sword), which also has more than forty synonyms. There are many other example like dual pronoun, dual verb etc. These exist only in Arabic language. In order to continue to survive on this field there should be constant effort to improve on simplifying the terms and nouns of modern items used in the global village. It is part of the simplicity of Arabic language that you will read only what you write. In some languages, you will write something and read something different. The number of letters you write is exactly what you pronounce in Arabic.

### ***Making Arabic Current Affairs***

The growth of Arabic language and literature today through the global war against terrorism cannot be over emphasized this is true because it occupies a vital position internationally today. No one can deny the effect and the role of Arabic in the current world politics. Its position politically, socially, economically cannot be under estimated. These include the peace making, peace keeping and enforcement that are going on in Arab nations such as Iraq, Kuwait, Sudan (Darfur) and Somalia to mention but few. This can be witnessed even in Arab-Israeli conflicts, Arabic is playing a great role in these aspects, and this was viewed by Bidmos that:

.....Arabic as a language to absorb emerging issues either in relatively poor society which is anxiously grappling with development initiatives or in a fully developed economy where efforts are on to sustain and improve on the gains of such mature economy (2000:51).

These are just few of the advantages of the global war on terrorism that has assisted the growth of Arabic language and literature. Arabic is the language being used by more than twenty-six independent countries in Africa and Asia (Syed 1998:195-196). It is also being used by other different developed and under developed countries across the global village. It is an official language of many international organizations such as United Nations Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Africa union (AU), to mention but few. Arabic is affected partially with some negative aspects that stand before its growth.

### ***Negative Effects of Global Terrorism on Growth of Arabic***

There were some negative effects of the global war against terrorism as discussed below:

#### **Restriction of Movement of Arabic Scholars**

Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 event, there have been changes in the US foreign policy. There was a serious restriction on those coming into US. Many conditions were put before those people coming from the Middle East or Arab and some Asian countries. This has made it difficult for the Arabic scholars to move around easily. In fact it be safely said that the global war against terrorism has restricted movement of Scholars and seems to be an excuse for censorship globally.

#### **Baring of Arabic Literature Production**

Many organization sponsoring book projects and researches were attacked by frozen their accounts, because they were suspected of sponsoring terrorism. It became difficult for many of those that have interest in literature work to get sponsors

#### **Destruction of Schools and Learning Centers**

In the process of war against terror, many schools were closed down in places like Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia.

In addition to that, on Friday 29, December 2006 a bomb exploded in the University of Baghdad during which many lecturers and students of Arabic lost their lives. The NATO military operating in Pakistan border towns with Afghanistan bombed an Arabic school, with claims that it is a hiding place for the Taliban militias. This is in addition to the Libraries and Museums that were affected by the global war against terrorism in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Somalia. Likewise in recent war against terror, the suspected terrorist burnt down a popular Museum known to be containing hundreds of thousands of Arabic Manuscripts.

### ***The Challenges Ahead of Arabic in the Face of the Global War***

The American-led war against terrorism has posed many challenges on Arabic language. The challenges include but not restricted to making Arabic language as a language of instruction in school and military formations. This enhances the efforts towards translations in the field of learning, making constant improvement of modern technology in the teaching techniques and many more of these challenges. Some of them are:

#### **Improvement in Teaching and Learning Techniques**

The major of which is how to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic in the non-Arab countries. It has become imperative that who so ever wants to grow with time on the global terrain must have sufficient Arabic knowledge at governmental level. It will be as well imperative for Arabic to measure up to the maximum level and standard in certain aspects to walk shoulder to shoulder with other international languages that are minimizing the universe into a global village in the economic and the American led war on terrorism.

There has to be improvement in the following as observed by (Kamil: 1968) long ago that modern terminologies is never a problem to Arabic. Some names and terminologies of other inventories in the globalize village must be improved by the Arabic. This includes in the fields of War and Weaponry, Agric and Agricultural equipments, trade, commerce and its facilities, communication and its gadgets, education and its instrumental techniques. No stone should be left unturned in these aspects.

#### **Translations**

The western civilizations came about through translation of many scientific books in Arabic and other languages into the western languages. Books of Medicine, Anthropology, Astronomy and others were translated from Arabic language into English, German, Latin and other European languages. There are some other aspects of this challenges that could be traced to the followings: lack of qualified teachers, effect and current teaching aids, suitable learning environment, language laboratories, textbooks, and inferiority complex of some teachers of Arabic language, particularly in Nigeria.

#### **Teaching/Learning of Arabic in the USA and Elsewhere**

Statistical research on the Internet in the United States Military Academy indicates that foreign languages including Arabic on the top priority takes the highest portion of units. This is because US plays the dominant role as an international police and has a peculiar interest in the Middle East economically and politically. Arabic language and literature is being taught in the United States Military Academy of West Point and it is encouraged and backed up with an Arabic language club in the said Academy. United Kingdom Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria has Arabic as one of the requirements.

Arabic is also taught in the United State Air Force Academy and a window is open to build learning and teaching of Arabic, Chinese and Korean languages on its own. British Academy Portal is another military Institution that teaches Arabic language and literature and other European languages (British Military Academy Portal [www.britac.Ac.Uk/polrtal/misc/areads.html](http://www.britac.Ac.Uk/polrtal/misc/areads.html)). Equally, Department of Diplomacy and Applied languages in United Kingdom, teaches Arabic as one of the core course in the Academy of Humanities. In addition, a publication furnishes people with awareness of teaching of Arabic language and the best teachers available for the language. In Canada, St. Mary's University is offering Arabic language and literature in the Language Department and Information.

There is another institute called "Understanding Arabic", which teaches Arabic and oversees the teaching of Arabic language at Georgetown University and at Edmonton, Albert. In Republic of Chekhov there are various types of enhancement courses in Arabic with well equipped language laboratory and other teaching materials that encourage both the teaching and learning of the language.

### ***Arabic Language and the Nigerian Armed Forces***

The paper is discussing the issue of Arabic and its status on global war against terrorism in which Nigerian is a regional black power and one of the leading countries in that respect. While Nigeria is contributing her own share in the ongoing war against terrorism globally, it is also facing serious and series of challenges at home in combating terrorism from area where more five million inhabitants are native Arabs (Shuwa Arabs in Maiduguri and Yobe in the North Eastern Nigeria). The UN has agreed to send thousands of soldiers to assist in restoring peace in Darfur, Southern Sudan.

Nigeria's President has since indicated his interest when he send a Memo to the National Assembly seeking their blessing to send Nigerian troops to the Sudan as part of the African Union forces, which was approved on Tuesday 17, August 2004. Darfur region is a place where the armed Arab Janjawis are killing the non-Arab black citizens without religious consideration rather tribal sentiment. Nigeria is not only sending the troops there, but it will lead the Peacekeeping Army of African Union (AU) that is going there. This is because Nigeria is on the seat of leadership of the African Union (AU). Definitely, the Nigerian Army going on this assignment will need Arabic language to boost their morale on this important national duty in Sudan.

Nigeria is assisting and cooperating in the global current war against terrorism and is not left out in the issue of Somalia. The importance of Arabic language does not lie only on diplomatic ties, but it is also very crucial to solving problems of terrorism. The American-led war against terrorism albeit unplanned for, is enhancing more and more the growth of Arabic language and literature. The advancement of modern technology is another factor contributing immensely to the growth of Arabic language e.g. computer software including an Arabic tutor and interpreter. The United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and other developed nations are not only studying Arabic but are enhancing its teaching because of many reasons, among which are the global status of Arabs after the September 11<sup>th</sup> incident and general strategic importance of the language. In teaching the language, Military Institutions are focused on, because of their strategic place in producing leaders who have much influence in the military-diplomatic activities of their countries. What the World is seeing now is just a beginning; the future will see the growth of Arabic larger and larger and will attract more and more attention on the global terrain socially economically and politically beyond any estimation and above every expectation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### ***Conclusion***

Arabic should be used as a language of instruction in the teaching of other subjects as other languages do in their domain. Thus given the necessary opportunity, it will go deeply in making the language to contribute immensely in the global village. A place where terrorism and the so-called war against terrorism is doing a lot of harm to the human development. Those who view Arabic as merely a language of religion should have a rethink and change their misinformed impression. Arabic is a member of the Semitic languages. Though it is influenced by the religion of its people just as other religions, Arabic and Semitic languages are today global languages to reckon with. There are quite a number of Arabs and speakers of Arabic that are not Muslims. In fact, the famous and one of the most senior professors of Arabic in Nigeria is a Christian of Catholic denomination. He has trained many professors of Arabic in Nigeria. Beside him, there are also many non-Muslim Professors of the language in Europe, Australia and America.

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