

SORBY, Karol R.: *Moderná spisovná arabčina. Diel II. (taʿlīm al-luġa al-ʿarabīya)* (Modern Written Arabic. Part II). Bratislava, Slovak Academic Press, s.r.o. 2006. 509 pp. ISBN 80-89104-98-3.

*Modern Written Arabic. Part II* is the second and final part of an ambitious manual of MWA, the only fully codified variety of Arabic used as a written and, in some communicative situations, as a prestigious oral medium throughout the Arab world. Designed for the college-level instruction of Arabic, the book, together with the first part (*Moderná spisovná arabčina. I. Diel* /Part I, 2005/), will be used at Slovak and partly also Czech universities as a reliable teaching and learning device. Both parts constitute an organic and well-balanced whole based on the author's long teaching experience as well as the most recent results attained worldwide in the field of the second language instruction. As the first manual of MWA ever written in the Slovak language, it is a pioneer work that fills a serious gap on the Slovak book market.

The present edition of the Part II is a thoroughly revised version of the Banská Bystrica edition *Moderná spisovná arabčina. II. Diel*. Univerzita Mateja Bela 1999. Both parts of the manual have been efficiently used in the five-year instruction of Modern Written Arabic at this University. In a few introductory lessons of the Part II, the long term teaching experience at this university motivated the rearrangement of some grammatical topics as to their level of complexity. The Part II, like Part I, appears in a newly devised page setting and is equipped with more clear and more easily readable Arabic characters.

As against Part I, designed for an introductory course (phonology, graphical system, verbal and nominal morphology, and basic syntactic structures), Part II has to cover the needs of more advanced students. Both volumes, each on its level, are designed to develop communicative competence in written Arabic and to foster, as well, a reliable speaking proficiency at the prestigious level of oral communication. This goal is supported by the well-planned organization of grammar, careful selection and graded provision of the lexical material (Part I: cca 1400; Part II: cca 3,000-3,500 lexical units), and by expertly planned exercises and drills of various types.

Part II, designed for an intermediate and partly also an advanced level of instruction, offers 18 lessons organized in the following way:

- grammar: each lesson deals with a limited number of specific aspects of the Arabic grammar as related to the sentence structures just analysed; morphological topics treated are based on widely expanded and systematized data introduced in Part I, constituting material basis for an integral system of syntax from very basic syntactic relationships up to the involved structures of complex sentences;

- drills: despite a variety of drill types in each lesson (translation, transformation, substitution, etc.), all of them substantially follow a unique scheme: input – output – correction – recurrent drilling. The MWA-orientation of the manual can perhaps most convincingly be felt in the drill sections and in the

textual parts of the book. Here, the Arabic studied is quite patently presented as a modern and really living medium of prestigious communication;

– texts: in tune with this general orientation, the texts included reflect very various aspects of the present-day Arab reality: Arab countries; social and cultural life; cultural heritage; glorious events of the past; daily news; scenes from everyday life; etc., etc.

In order to offer some preliminary information about the phenomenon of diglossia, typical of the Arabophone space, Part II presents some short true-to-life conversation texts in a slightly analyticized version of MWA. The deviations from the synthetic norm are restricted to phenomena typical of prestigious oral communication: deletion of the *'iṣrāb*-type inflectional markers, represented by short vowels in the pre-pausal position (case and verbal mood), as well as some other less outstanding features. The number of potential users of this manual will, no doubt, markedly increase on account of the carefully compiled Key to exercises and accompanying tape recordings. The clarity of exposition, the overall neatness of presentation and easy accessibility of data would make of this manual a reliable self-teaching device, as well.

In spite of the fact that Sorby's manual offers a number of highly interesting innovative features, some grammatical phenomena, though correctly treated in the book, would perhaps deserve a more tight cross-referencing. In the case of transitivity, for instance, the particle *bi-* is presented, correctly once again, as a transitivizer/causativizer of verbal predicates involving intransitive/reflexive verbs (V intr./refl. + *bi-* > V trans./causat.), as in: *taqaddama* "to present oneself" > *taqaddama bi(hi)* = *qaddama (hu)*). In view of the relative complexity of this feature, it would have been perhaps helpful to the student to be cross-referenced back to the derivational rendering of causativity (II/IV derived verbal stems). The same holds for the verbs of the type *ġa'ala*, operating as both inchoative (*ġa'altu 'uġannī*) and causative/factitive verbs (*ġa'altuhu yuġannī*) verbs. When cross-referenced, the phenomenon would have been presented as part of a trichotomous system of derivational, syntactic and lexical procedures.

Of course, remarks of this type reflect only a rather subjective point of view and an alternative solution of the problem, and they do not lower the soundness of the methodology applied by the author or the merit of the general arrangement.

The Appendix of additional texts, at the end of the manual, deserves special attention. The excellent selection of authors, prominent Arab intellectuals and men of letters, guides the reader to the understanding of those intellectual and literary values of the Arab cultural heritage that are bridging the past with the present-day and future perspectives.

The manual will be of invaluable help to the Slovak and Czech university students of Modern Written Arabic as well as to anyone who is ready to spend time and energy to become acquainted with this exciting language. With the Key to the exercises and tape records, provided by the present edition, the manual can be used as an excellent teach-yourself device, as well.

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