

Arabic Phonetic Learning and Its Implications for Learners' Articulation Accuracy in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Arabic phonetic skills are an important aspect in achieving the accuracy of learners' articulation, especially at the university level. However, many students still have difficulty in pronouncing Arabic sounds correctly due to the difference in phonological systems between Arabic and their native language. This study aims to analyze the phonetic learning of Arabic and its implications for improving the articulation accuracy of learners in higher education. This study uses a qualitative approach through literature analysis related to phonetic studies and Arabic language learning. The results showed that systematic phonetic learning, especially those that emphasized makharij al-literacy and intensive pronunciation practice, contributed significantly to improving students' articulation accuracy. Therefore, the integration of phonetic learning in a more structured manner in the Arabic curriculum in higher education is important to improve students' phonological competence and language skills more accurately

INTRODUCTION

Learning Arabic in higher education not only emphasizes mastery of grammatical and vocabulary aspects, but also adequate phonetic skills so that students are able to pronounce Arabic sounds correctly. Phonetics is a branch of linguistics that studies how language sounds are produced, heard, and analyzed in the process of communication. In the context of learning Arabic, mastery of phonetic aspects is very important because Arabic has a distinctive phonological system and is different from many other languages, including Indonesian. These differences often cause difficulties for non-native learners to pronounce Arabic letters accurately (Larsson, 2020; Saeed, 2020).

In a higher education environment, proper articulation skills are an important part of language competence, especially in speaking and reading skills. The inability to produce language sounds correctly can affect the understanding of meaning and the quality of academic communication. Research shows that misarticulation in Arabic learners is often caused by the influence of the mother tongue as well as a lack of understanding of the phonetic system of Arabic that is significantly different from other languages (Mustaqim, 2021; Rahman & Hidayat, 2022).

Therefore, phonetic learning is an important component in the process of mastering Arabic comprehensively. One of the main concepts in Arabic phonetics is *makhārij al-ḥurūf* (مخارج الحروف), which is the place where the sound of hijaiyah letters comes out of the human speech apparatus. Makharij al-huruf describes the articulation position of each letter in the oral cavity, throat, or respiratory tract so that the sound produced has the right phonological characteristics. In Arabic phonetic studies, makharij al-huruf is generally classified into five main regions, namely al-jawf (oral cavity), al-ḥ alq (throat), al-lisān (tongue), al-shafatain (lips), and al-khayshūm (nasal cavity). Understanding the position of this articulation is very important because each Arabic letter has a specific sound character and does not always have an equivalent in other languages (Al-Qattan, 2019; Saeed, 2020).

In the Arabic linguistic tradition, the discussion of makharij al-huruf has an important role because mistakes in the pronunciation of letters can change the meaning of words significantly. Therefore, scholars of language and tajweed since classical times have placed the mastery of makharij al-huruf as the basis for learning Arabic and reading the Qur'an. Contemporary studies also show that learning makharij al-huruf systematically is able to improve the quality of the pronunciation of hijaiyah letters and help learners produce more accurate sounds (Hidayat & Rahman, 2021; Saeed, 2020).

However, in the practice of learning Arabic in college, the phonetic aspect often does not receive adequate attention compared to grammar or vocabulary learning. Many students still have difficulty in pronouncing certain letters such as ح , ع , ق , ض , ظ which do not have a direct equivalent in Indonesian. These difficulties suggest that learning phonetic Arabic requires a more systematic and integrated pedagogical approach with intensive articulation exercises. Without an adequate understanding of makharij al-huruf, learners tend to produce

inaccurate pronunciation and potentially change the meaning of words in Arabic communication.

In addition, the development of modern linguistic studies also shows that phonetic learning has a close relationship with the phonological awareness of learners. Phonological awareness allows students to understand the relationship between sounds, letter symbols, and the meaning of words in Arabic so that the language learning process becomes more effective. Recent studies show that systematic phonetic practice can improve learners' articulation skills as well as help them master foreign language sounds more accurately (Derwing & Munro, 2021; Thomson, 2022).

Although research on Arabic language learning has developed quite rapidly, studies that specifically address the relationship between Arabic phonetic learning and the accuracy of learners' articulation in college are still relatively limited. Some of the research focuses more on the methodological aspects of language teaching in general or on theoretical phonological studies. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the phonetic learning of Arabic and its implications for improving the accuracy of learners' articulation in higher education. This research is expected to make an academic contribution to the development of more effective phonetic learning strategies and strengthen understanding of the importance of makharij al-huruf in Arabic language education.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Arabic Phonetics in Language Learning

Phonetics is one of the fundamental aspects of language learning because it is directly related to the production of sounds that are the basis of verbal communication. In the study of linguistics, phonetics discusses how language sounds are produced by human speech devices and how the sounds are perceived by listeners. In the context of foreign language learning, phonetic mastery is very important because the difference in sound systems between the target language and the mother tongue often leads to pronunciation errors in learners (Celce-Murcia et al., 2020).

In learning Arabic, phonetics plays a very important role because Arabic has a distinctive phonological system, including the existence of consonant sounds that are not found in many other languages. Sounds such as ḥā (ح), 'ayn (ع), qāf (ق), and ḍād (ض) require more complex articulatory control compared to common consonant sounds in other languages. Therefore, learning Arabic phonetics not only serves to improve pronunciation clarity, but also to ensure that learners are able to accurately produce sounds according to the Arabic phonological system (Watson, 2020).

Recent research shows that systematic phonetic practice can significantly improve foreign language learners' pronunciation skills. Through exercises that focus on sound production and articulatory position, learners can develop awareness of language sound differences so that they can produce more accurate pronunciation (Kang & Moran, 2021). Thus, phonetic learning is an important component in the process of mastering Arabic in higher education.

Makharij al-Huruf in Arabic Phonetic System

In the Arabic linguistic tradition, the study of phonetics is inseparable from the concept of *makhārij al-ḥ yourūf*, which is the place where letter sounds come out of the human speech apparatus. This concept explains how each Arabic letter is produced through a specific articulatory position resulting in a different sound character. The understanding of *makharij al-huruf* is the basis for learning Arabic phonetics because each letter has a specific articulation location in the Arabic phonological system (Al-Sharkawi, 2021).

In general, Arabic phonetics classify *makharij al-huruf* into five major regions of human speech. These areas include *al-jawf* (oral cavity), *al-ḥ alq* (throat), *al-lisān* (tongue), *al-shafatain* (lips), and *al-khayshūm* (nasal cavity). This classification shows that the phonetic system of the Arabic language has a complex articulatory structure and requires special training so that learners are able to produce sounds appropriately (Al-Sharkawi, 2021).

In the context of Arabic language education, understanding of *makharij al-huruf* plays an important role in improving pronunciation accuracy. Learning that emphasizes the articulation position of letters can help students understand how sounds are produced and how to distinguish sounds that have phonetic similarities. Research shows that the phonetic approach based on *makharij al-huruf* is able to significantly improve students' pronunciation skills, especially in distinguishing emphatic and non-emphatic consonants in Arabic (Al-Tamimi & Khattab, 2021).

Articulation Accuracy in Second Language Learning

Articulation accuracy is one of the important indicators in the success of foreign language learning. Proper articulation allows learners to produce language sounds that are clear and understandable to other speakers. In applied linguistics studies, articulation accuracy is often associated with learners' phonological ability to recognize and produce language sounds consistently (Levis, 2020).

In learning Arabic as a foreign language, the accuracy of articulation is a challenge because of the significant differences between the phonological system of Arabic and other languages. Many learners have difficulty pronouncing emphatic consonants, throat sounds, and uvular sounds that are not present in their native language. This difficulty shows that phonetic learning must be accompanied by intensive articulatory exercises so that learners are able to master sound production appropriately (Alghamdi, 2022).

In addition, research in the field of language teaching shows that continuous phonetic practice can improve learners' phonological awareness. Phonological awareness helps students understand the relationship between sounds, letter symbols, and word meanings thereby improving the quality of pronunciation and fluency in speaking in the target language (Gordon & Darcy, 2021).

Phonetic Instruction in Arabic Language Education

Phonetic learning in Arabic education requires a systematic pedagogical approach so that learners can master sound production effectively. Effective phonetic teaching methods usually involve a combination of theoretical explanations of articulation positions and practical practice in the pronunciation

of language sounds. This approach allows learners to understand the mechanisms of sound production while practicing articulation skills directly (Derwing, 2022).

In the context of higher education, the integration of phonetic learning into the Arabic curriculum can help students improve their speaking and reading skills more accurately. Several studies have shown that the use of audio-based phonetic exercises, articulatory exercises, and the use of learning technology can significantly improve students' pronunciation skills (Thomson & Derwing, 2021).

Thus, learning Arabic phonetics that emphasizes understanding of makharij al-letters as well as intensive articulation exercises can be an effective strategy in improving students' pronunciation accuracy. This approach not only improves the quality of pronunciation, but also strengthens students' phonological competence in using Arabic communicatively and academically.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research design to analyze Arabic phonetic learning and its implications for the accuracy of learners' articulation in higher education. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand in depth the phonetic concept of the Arabic language, the principle of makharij al-huruf, and its implications in the practice of learning Arabic in the academic environment. This approach allows researchers to conduct conceptual and interpretive analyses of various literature sources relevant to the study of Arabic phonetics and language education (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2022).

The research method used is literature analysis conceptually and thematically. This study examines various academic sources related to Arabic phonetics, the theory of makharij al-huruf, and a pedagogical study of Arabic language learning in higher education. The literature sources analyzed include scientific books, international journal articles, as well as recent research that discusses Arabic phonology and pronunciation learning methods in foreign languages. Literature analysis is used to identify key concepts related to phonetic learning as well as how these concepts contribute to improving learners' articulation accuracy (Snyder, 2019).

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data come from scientific works that discuss the phonetics of Arabic language and the theory of makharij al-huruf in the study of Arabic linguistics. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from journal articles, academic books, and empirical research that discussed phonetic learning in Arabic language education as well as phonological studies in foreign language learning. Literature selection was carried out selectively by considering the relevance of the topic, the academic quality of the source, and its contribution to the development of the research conceptual framework (Hart, 2018).

The data analysis process was carried out using qualitative thematic analysis. This analysis is carried out through several stages, namely the process of collecting literature, identifying key concepts, grouping theoretical themes, and interpreting the relationship between Arabic phonetic learning and learner

articulation accuracy. Thematic analysis allows researchers to identify conceptual patterns in the literature as well as understand the relationship between Arabic phonetic theory and language learning practices in college (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

In addition, this study also uses a phonetic linguistic analysis approach to understand how articulatory positions in makharij al-huruf play a role in the production of Arabic sounds. This approach helps explain the relationship between the articulation position of letters and the learner's level of pronunciation accuracy. In the study of Arabic phonetics, understanding the mechanism of letter articulation is an important factor in improving the pronunciation ability of Arabic learners as a foreign language (Watson, 2020).

To ensure academic validity, this study applies triangulation of literature sources, which is by comparing various different academic sources to ensure the consistency of the concepts and interpretations produced. In addition, the researcher also conducts a critical evaluation of the literature used so that the resulting analysis has a strong methodological basis and is relevant to the development of Arabic phonetic research in the context of higher education (Flick, 2022). With this methodological approach, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of Arabic phonetic learning and its implications for improving the accuracy of learners' articulation in higher education.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the literature analysis show that Arabic phonetic learning has an important role in improving the accuracy of learners' articulation in college. Based on a thematic analysis of various studies of Arabic phonetics and language pedagogy, several main themes were found that explain the relationship between phonetic learning and students' articulation skills. These themes include understanding makharij al-huruf as the basis for articulation, the role of phonetic exercises in improving pronunciation accuracy, the influence of mother tongue on articulation errors, and the importance of pedagogical approaches in learning phonetic Arabic.

Table 1. Summary of Thematic Findings

Theme	Description	Implication for Learning
Makharij al-Letter Mastery	Understanding the position of letter articulation	Improves pronunciation accuracy
Phonetic training	Systematic pronunciation exercises	Improves phonological awareness
Native language interference	Influence of mother tongue	Causes articulation errors
Pedagogical strategies	Phonetic teaching methods	Supports improved articulation

Makharij al-Huruf as the Foundation of Arabic Articulation

The results of the study show that the understanding of makharij al-huruf is the main foundation in learning Arabic phonetics. The concept of makharij al-huruf explains the articulation position of each hijaiyah letter in the human speech apparatus so that it allows learners to produce language sounds appropriately. The literature shows that students who have a good understanding of the articulation position of letters tend to be able to distinguish sounds that have phonetic similarities but are phonetically different.

In learning Arabic in college, understanding makharij al-huruf helps students identify differences between consonants that have different articulatory characteristics, such as between the letters ṣād (ص) and sīn (س) or between ḍād (ض) and dāl (د). Awareness of this articulation position allows students to produce sounds more accurately and avoid pronunciation mistakes that can affect the meaning of words in Arabic.

These findings show that phonetic learning that emphasizes the understanding of makharij al-huruf can improve students' ability to control articulation organs so as to produce sounds that are more in line with the Arabic phonological system.

Table 2. Classification of Makharij al-Huruf in Arabic Phonetics

Articulation Area	Description	Example Letters
Al-Jawf	The oral cavity as a place for long vowels to come out	ا، و، ي
Al-Halq	The throat as a place where the throat letters come out	ع، ح، غ، خ
Al-Lisan	The tongue as the articulation place of most Arabic consonants	ت، د، س، ر
Al-Shafatain	The lips as a place of articulation of the labial letters	ب، م، ف
Al-Khayshum	The nasal cavity that plays a role in the buzzing sound	ن، م

Table 3. Common Pronunciation Difficulties among Arabic Learners

Arabic Letter	Articulation Place	Common Mistakes
ع ('Ayn)	Stuart O'Neill	Is pronounced like regular vowels
ح (Ha)	Stuart O'Neill	Pronounced like a regular "h"
ق (Qaf)	Back of tongue	Replaced with "k"
ض (Dhad)	Side of tongue	Pronounced like "d"

The Role of Phonetic Training in Improving Articulation Accuracy

The results of the analysis also showed that systematic phonetic exercises had a significant influence on improving students' articulation accuracy. Phonetic exercises that involve repeated letter pronunciation practice help students develop awareness of articulation positions and control of speech organs. In the study of language learning phonetics, articulatory awareness is an

important factor in improving the pronunciation skills of foreign language learners (Derwing & Munro, 2022). Therefore, phonetic learning that emphasizes understanding the point of articulation and how to produce sounds is an important part of the second language mastery process.

In the process of learning Arabic, phonetic exercises usually involve several activities such as individual letter pronunciation exercises, repetition of words containing certain sounds, and oral Arabic text reading practice. This activity helps students internalize Arabic sound patterns so that they are able to produce clearer and more accurate pronunciation. Research in the field of language learning phonology shows that repetition exercises and direct articulation practices can significantly improve sound production abilities as learners gain motor experience in controlling the speech organ (Saito & Plonsky, 2022).

The literature also shows that students who receive intensive phonetic training tend to show significant improvements in pronunciation skills compared to students who only learn the grammatical aspects of the language. This shows that phonetic learning has an important contribution in improving the phonological competence of Arabic language learners. Recent studies in second language teaching also confirm that explicit phonetic training is able to improve the accuracy of articulation as well as the phonological awareness of learners in the long term (Lee, Jang, & Plonsky, 2023).

Influence of Native Language on Articulation Errors

The findings of the study also show that the mother tongue has a significant influence on the articulation errors of Arabic learners. Many students have difficulty pronouncing certain letters because they are not present in their native language's phonological system. In the study of second language acquisition, this phenomenon is known as phonological transfer, which is the influence of the phonological system of the first language on sound production in the second language (Odlin, 2021). This influence often causes learners to replace foreign sounds with sounds closer to their native language's phonological system.

Some Arabic letters that often cause difficulties for learners include ḥā (ح), 'ayn (ع), qāf (ق), and ḍād (ض). These sounds require articulation positions that are not common in many other languages so learners often replace them with sounds that are more familiar in their native language. Research in the field of language learning phonology shows that consonants resulting from the throat or the back of the oral cavity are often a major source of difficulty for non-native Arabic learners (Alosh, 2020; Watson, 2022).

This phenomenon suggests that the articulation errors are caused not only by a lack of phonetic training, but also by the differences in the phonological

system between Arabic and the learner's mother tongue. Therefore, Arabic phonetic learning needs to be specifically designed to help students overcome the phonological interference of their native language. A pedagogical approach that emphasizes phonological awareness, articulation exercises, and the use of clear pronunciation models can help learners develop more accurate sound production skills (Saito & Plonsky, 2022).

Pedagogical Implications of Arabic Phonetic Instruction

The latest findings suggest that pedagogical approaches in phonetic learning have an important influence on students' success in improving articulation accuracy. Effective phonetic learning not only emphasizes the theoretical aspects of makharij al-huruf, but also integrates intensive practical practice into the learning process. In language pedagogy studies, the combination of theoretical comprehension and direct articulation practice has been shown to improve sound production skills in second language learners (Derwing & Munro, 2022). Therefore, the phonetic learning of Arabic needs to be designed with an approach that balances phonological knowledge and practical skills in pronunciation.

The use of interactive learning methods, such as audio-based pronunciation exercises, the use of language learning technology, and hands-on articulation exercises with the guidance of teachers, can help students understand the mechanism of Arabic sound production more effectively. Research in the field of language teaching shows that the use of audio media and learning technology can improve phonological awareness and help learners identify difficult sound differences in the target language (Levis, 2021). In addition, phonetic exercises that involve direct feedback from teachers have also been shown to speed up the process of improving learners' pronunciation (Saito & Plonsky, 2022).

Thus, the systematic integration of phonetic learning in the Arabic curriculum in universities can improve students' articulation skills and support the mastery of speaking and reading skills in Arabic more accurately. These findings suggest that phonetic learning of Arabic has important implications in improving the quality of Arabic language learning at the higher education level. Recent research also confirms that structured phonetic teaching can contribute to significantly improving the phonological competence of foreign language learners, especially when learning is focused on articulation exercises and awareness of language sound systems (Thomson & Derwing, 2022).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that Arabic phonetic learning has an important role in improving the accuracy of learners' articulation in higher education. The findings of the study show that understanding of makharij al-huruf and systematic phonetic practice are the main factors in helping students produce more accurate Arabic pronunciation. In the study of Arabic phonology, the position of the articulation of letters has an important role in determining the clarity of the sound produced. Therefore, mastery of makharij al-huruf is an important basis in learning phonetics in Arabic (Watson, 2022). Understanding the articulation points of letters helps learners control speech organs such as the tongue, lips, and throat so that they can produce Arabic sounds more accurately.

These findings also suggest that systematic phonetic exercises can improve learners' phonological awareness of Arabic sound production. Repeated pronunciation exercises allow students to develop motor skills in controlling the speech organ. In the second language learning study, repeated articulation practices are an effective strategy in improving sound production skills because learners gain hands-on experience in producing the sounds of the target language (Derwing & Munro, 2022). Therefore, phonetic learning is not only theoretical but also needs to emphasize intensive pronunciation practice in the Arabic language learning process.

In addition, the results of the study also show that the mother tongue has a significant influence on the articulation errors of Arabic learners. This phenomenon is known in linguistics as phonological transfer, which is the influence of the phonological system of the first language on sound production in the second language (Odlin, 2021). When a sound is not present in the learner's native language, they tend to replace it with the sound that is closest to the first language phonological system. This explains why letters such as ḥā (ح), 'ayn (ع), qāf (ق), and ḍād (ض) are often a source of difficulty for Arabic language learners. These sounds have different articulation characteristics from many other languages so they require more intensive phonetic training (Alosh, 2020).

The findings of this study also confirm the importance of a proper pedagogical approach in learning phonetics in Arabic. Effective phonetic learning does not only focus on theoretical explanations of the Arabic sound system, but also needs to integrate a variety of interactive learning methods. The use of audio media, technology-based pronunciation exercises, and direct guidance from teachers can help learners understand language differences more clearly. Research in the field of language teaching shows that the use of learning technology and audio media can improve phonological awareness and help learners correct pronunciation errors more effectively (Levis, 2021).

In the context of higher education, the systematic integration of phonetic learning in the Arabic curriculum is of great importance. The Arabic curriculum in college often places more emphasis on grammatical aspects and understanding of the text than on phonetic exercises. In fact, the ability to articulate is an important part of communication competence in Arabic. Recent research shows that structured phonetic teaching can improve speaking skills as well as strengthen students' reading skills in foreign languages (Thomson &

Derwing, 2022). Therefore, phonetic learning needs to get greater attention in the design of Arabic curriculum in college.

The results of this study show that Arabic phonetic learning has important implications in improving learners' phonological competence. Mastery of makharij al-letters, intensive phonetic training, and an interactive pedagogical approach are important factors in improving the accuracy of student articulation. Thus, strengthening phonetic learning in Arabic language education can contribute to improving the quality of Arabic language learning and help students achieve more effective communication skills in Arabic.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research shows that Arabic phonetic learning has an important role in improving the accuracy of learners' articulation in college. Understanding of makharij al-huruf, systematic phonetic exercises, and intensive pronunciation practices have been proven to contribute to improving students' ability to produce Arabic sounds more precisely. In addition, the results of the study also show that articulation errors are often affected by phonological interference from the learner's mother tongue, so a phonetic learning strategy is needed specifically designed to help students overcome the differences in sound systems between Arabic and their first language.

Based on these findings, this study recommends that Arabic phonetic learning in higher education be integrated more systematically in the Arabic language learning curriculum. The use of interactive learning methods, such as audio-based pronunciation exercises, the use of language learning technology, and direct articulation guidance from teachers, can help improve students' phonological awareness and pronunciation accuracy. With the right pedagogical approach, phonetic learning can make a significant contribution to improving the quality of Arabic language learning and students' communication competence.

FURTHER STUDY

This study still has limitations because it focuses on a conceptual analysis of Arabic phonetic learning and its implications for the accuracy of learners' articulation. Therefore, further research can develop empirical studies involving field data to analyze more deeply students' articulation errors in Arabic language learning. In addition, future research may also explore the use of language learning technologies, such as digital phonetic applications or sound analysis devices, to improve the effectiveness of Arabic phonetic learning in college.

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