

English as lingua  
franca in Arab  
countries : a  
conversational  
analysis



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

FILE DETAILS Audio Length: 12 minutes Audio Quality: High Average Low

Number of Facilitators: One Number of Interviewees: One Difficult

Interviewee Accents: Yes No

Other Comments: Additional speakers spoke only briefly so have not been included in speaker count.

START OF TRANSCRIPT

Female: Autograph, Maha, autograph.

Male: Oh yeah, yes, they made me sign all of these.

Maha: This is [unclear] certificate from Al-Quds University and this is my signature. Are you happy?

Male: Yes.

Maha:[Unclear]. You really deserve it, you passed the exam.

Male: Samirs signature is better.

[Laughter]

Male:[Unclear], I prefer yours.

Male:[Unclear].

[Laughter]

Female: They wanted some questions.

Male: No, they did. I [unclear].

Female: Im still taping yeah, bye.

Maha: Merhaba.

Samir Bitar: Merhaba.

Maha: Im here with er, [unclear] Samir Bitar, Samir is an Arabic teacher just like myself but he teaches in the university and hes much more successful than me so were going to make an interview with him and see his approach,

[1: 00] his methods, his um, Arabic students like a - yeah tell us about <https://assignbuster.com/english-as-lingu-franca-in-arab-countries-a-conversationl-aanlysis/>

yourself. [Laughs].

Samir Bitar: Shokran Maha. Id like to thank Maha for her wonderful introduction. Er, my name is Samir [Ibrahim Muhammadi] Bitar or Samir Bitar. In the US it is customary to ask people whats your last name so I only have two names, Samir Bitar, however in the Arab world we get named these four names, Samir Ibrahim Muhammadi Bitar. I am Palestinian by birth and experience. I am American by naturalisation and experience and most of the er, all I love to teach. Er, Maha how about you, you like to teach?

Maha: I love to teach and Ive been to one of your classes and I fell in love with the method you use thats why I decided to er, get more er, how to say er, get more um, [claps] ideas from your method of teaching and apply them maybe in my future lessons [2: 00] in the university degree in Italy. And er, I love your - the fun you - that you - you pass to your students, you give them - actually I loved one thing that you give them Arabic names at the first day.

Samir Bitar: Yes, yes, yes all the er, students er, that come into Arabic class with me become part of my extended family. And the first thing we do is we have everyone adopt an Arabic name so we can all get used to the sounds of Arabic names both males and females. Er, I work with the principle of the four Ls. I feel - tell my students we need to live, learn, laugh and love, okay? With love we can attain the highest in human existence.

My methodology is basically I am in it for the students; I like to create what I call a learner centred environment. Er, I love to teach er, many people ask me oh Samir you [3: 00] - you are a teacher, you teach, I say teaching is not what I do, teaching is who I am. And thanks to the interest and passion by all the students that have been with me over the years and the things I learned from them I always have new ways to engage the students.

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I like live language um, and I like to also bring many examples from our everyday life into the classroom because thats what the students are interested in and thats how they excel. Um, we start with Arabic from the beginning er...

Maha: Do you always have beginners?

Samir Bitar: Yes I - I always - Ive taught first years, second year, third year Arabic, I - I have experience with six graders, er, high school students, er, university students, er, non-traditional students but the majority of time I have spent at the [4: 00] University of Montana and the next year will be my sixteenth year.

Maha: Wow.

Samir Bitar: So the majority of time I have with er, the er, the er, students at the university level. And Ive taught multiple levels Ive had the honour and privilege of teaching both the dialect and the standard - I mostly teach standard.

Maha: Yeah me too. And whats er, like um, whats the highest level your teach - your students um, who have started with you from the beginning reach like within one year, like what are your expectations from somebody who starts learning Arabic today in a year what - what can he say in Arabic, what can he understand?

Samir Bitar: Er, okay. Usually the first semester I focus mainly on the oral skills, O, oral with an O, aural with an A because we are as you imagine we basically learn language by listening to strings of sound and repeating them.

[5: 00] So the first two semesters the main focus is communicative er, the students by the end of the first week are able to meet and greet. Um, and er, the second semester we switch and we focus on writing and reading. But <https://assignbuster.com/english-as-lingu-franca-in-arab-countries-a-conversationl-aanlysis/>

whatever activity we are engaged in class I like to hone in all the four skills.

And I always add the new skill, we have er, reading, writing, speaking, listening.

And I like to add viewing because viewing is a skill. We all now have Smartphones, iPad, laptops and thats very important and I try to bring all the skills together. I make sure all the students are engaged all the time er, so as I am the one who speaks the least in the class. I am very animated in the class, I use...

Maha: I saw that.

Samir Bitar:...all the gestures, in order to convey the meaning without having to actually er, say the word or write it on the board. [6: 00] Er, the students by the end of one year are expected to reach er, the enormous high level according to the American er, Standards of Foreign Language teaching but over the years Ive had students test intermediate even after one year. You know language is...

Maha: It depends...

Samir Bitar: Yeah, it depends.

Maha: It depends on the student.

Samir Bitar: Language is very individual.

Maha: Yeah.

Samir Bitar: It is a high intensive but er, some do - they take a longer time. I always explain to the students that different individuals go through the threshold and they open their eyes, threshold, whats that Samir, I said its just a metaphoric way of explaining to you that you will go through that threshold at different times so be patient, confident, trust your God and most of all...

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Maha: Trust your God [laughs].

Samir Bitar: Yes. Remember what [Sanchez] says okay, Sanchez says, and this is just a figure I use he says er, look, memorisation is like going to the bathroom, okay no one can do it for you, okay. [7: 00] So you have to memorise, all right?

Maha: Great and er, what - oh I wanted to ask you something um, who has always been your favourite student [laughs] and you can [say it live] in front of [laughs] a lot of people. Like I have one - one kid that has always been my favourite student ever and - up until now of course. His name is Geoffrey, hes a nine-year-old kid, he used to learn nine languages. With me he used to learn Arabic and Hebrew and he spoke them fluently at the end of the course. And he learned Japanese and Chinese as well. What is your...

Samir Bitar:[Unclear] I have to admit and say I have many favourite students, okay? I have many of them over the years I have been blessed, you know, for seven years I was the Arabic [department] okay, and I had the honour of working with hundreds of students but I have several very favourite students. [8: 00] One of them is actually now the Arabic language teacher for a local high school in Missoula Montana. Er, so...

Maha: That reminds of something er, yeah I used to teach of um, a university professor called Karla and Karla became er, she studied with me Arabic for two years and she er, started teaching Arabic beginners at the University in North Dakota so yeah its also - its accomplishment, its this...

Samir Bitar: Its this sense of accomplishment to see these students um, I was [unclear].

Maha: Start learning and start teaching once youve told them.

Samir Bitar: They are amazing. I have one student though shes now working <https://assignbuster.com/english-as-lingu-franca-in-arab-countries-a-conversationl-aanlysis/>

with an NGO in Washington DC, she was I mean exceptional, er, her name was er - Arabic name was [Arusha] and I told her when she took the name I said you know who Arusha is now, you have to live up to the name, she was, yes I know who Arusha is. [9: 00]

Maha: So Professor Samir what are your tips for somebody who wants to start learning Arabic? What do you advise them from your own like - your own - what to do first?

Samir Bitar: Okay, the first...

[Over speaking]

Samir Bitar: Yeah, the first thing you - you thing you have to do is act like a baby okay because - and I really take it to heart okay? You have to remember how you acquired your mother tongue, okay you were a baby okay and this is basically how we learn language. We hear it, we say it, we get corrected and then we can speak it, all right? So take that to heart, first act like a baby (2) er, you need to be disciplined, okay? You need to put in the time and most of all like the rest of us humans you need to learn how to listen well, you have to be an active listener okay. And I can tell you after years of experience you can do it okay. [10: 00]

Maha:[Laughs].

Samir Bitar: Yes you can do it so when I give my students a test I say you can do it so now do it. Okay. There is no need to think about it, okay, we dont acquire language by thinking, we acquire language by listening and talking, so do it.

Maha: Do it.

Samir Bitar: Yeah, just do it.

Maha: Shokran, thats - are you going to share with us some of your lessons <https://assignbuster.com/english-as-lingu-franca-in-arab-countries-a-conversationl-aanlysis/>

are - are we going to do some collaborations from my channel in the future?

Samir Bitar: Yes, I consider myself very fortunate that I met Maha now I am all enthused about sharing what I do in class with as many people as I can reach.

Maha: And youre welcome.

Samir Bitar: Yeah, I love teaching, I love my students.

Maha: I know it, I saw it.

Samir Bitar:[11: 00] And I love the fact that now I have the opportunity to partner up and share and give the world what they deserve.

Maha: Thank you, shokran [spoken in Arabic].

Samir Bitar: Shokran Maha, thank you so much.

Maha:[Spoken in Arabic].

Samir Bitar:[Spoken in Arabic]. We love you.

Maha: We love you [laughs].

END OF TRANSCRIPT