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# The Effectiveness of the Noticing Hypothesis in Retrieving Data from Non-Arabic Qur'an Memorizers

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis as a teaching strategy for second language learners, specifically in the context of teaching Arabic to non-Arabic Qur'an memorizers. The noticing hypothesis suggests that nothing is learned unless it has been noticed, and the availability of data is not sufficient if those data are not processed by the language learner. Data for this study were collected by interviewing 10 instructors in the Arabic Language Institute for Non-Native Speakers at King Abdulaziz University, and 15 learners who are studying the modern form of Arabic in the same institute after having previously memorized a number of chapters from the Qur'an. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of the noticing hypothesis in retrieving data, including phonological, morphological, lexical and structural information from the learners' memories because of the learners' previous memorization of passages from the Qur'an, the classical form of Arabic, which does resemble, to some extent, the modern form of the language. However, this knowledge is inactive as the learner, in most cases, cannot use it or refer to it until someone brings it to his/her attention. Thus, the language is not acquired because of noticing, but it is the starting point for the noticed item to be patterned, controlled and lexicalized.

Keywords: Arabic, Conscious Learning, Long-Term Memory, Noticing Hypothesis, Qur'an Memorizers.
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## 1. Introduction

Learning the Qur'an is essential for all Muslims from all linguistic backgrounds, in order to perform religious duties and to preserve the holy book, which is the classical form of Arabic. Accordingly, the need to establish the science of recitation stemmed from the importance of preserving the original form of the Qur'an as revealed to Prophet Mohammad. Memorization is one of the approaches to the process of preserving the Qur'an. Most non-Arabic speaking Muslims tend to recite and even memorize the Qur'an without comprehension, as it forms a major part of religious practices, knowing that the Qur'an consists of 30 chapters of around 20 pages each. Non-Arabic learners may find reading Arabic letters without vowel diacritical marks and special symbols, called *Tashkil*, difficult. The diacritical marks

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determine the vowels, leading to different meanings when attached to the root word; for example, the word "كتب" can be read as *Kataba* 'wrote', *kutiba* 'was written', or *kutub* 'books' if no diacritical marks are used (Mahmoud & Wightwick, 2005). Saleem (2015) indicates that most Arab speakers can produce most of the phonemes used in different languages since they use the front, the middle and the inner parts of the mouth when pronouncing Arabic phonemes. He adds that learning *Tajwid,* the art of recitation, involves decoding Qur'anic orthography into Qur'anic phonology.

In Saudi Arabia, an Arabic-speaking country, teaching recitation and memorization of the Qur'an for non-Arabic speakers takes place in mosques, institutes and cooperative centers for community awareness and guidance, or with private tutors. To identify each letter of the Qur'an with vowel diacritical marks that enable reciters to read it easily, Al-Nuranic rule, which contains many of the most important *Tajwid* rules that are indispensable in reading the Qur'an, is used. This rule is the easiest way to teach novices and beginners how to read and memorize the Qur'an as quickly as possible without difficulties. The main purpose of this approach is "to teach Qur'an and reserve it in the hearts of Muslims in the same way the Prophet and his companions did" (Ramadane & Suad, 2017:148). They add that Qur'an memorization is based on pure repetition and rote memorization, which has received criticism due to the exclusion of reflective thinking that is needed to learn Islam itself, the main objective of learning the Qur'an.

The questions being asked here are how non-Arabic speakers can memorize the whole, or several chapters, of the Qur'an without understanding the language, and how they can maintain these memorized passages in their long-term memory as forms without sense. These questions will be addressed in the literature review, followed by an evaluation of the noticing hypothesis to find out whether it is helpful in retrieving phonological, morphological, lexical and structural information from learners' memories while studying Arabic after having mastered the basic skills of Qur'an recitation and memorization.

## 2.    Literature review

The behaviorist perspective of learning a second language stresses the importance of using the audiolingual approach in teaching by employing memorization and repetition as the primary processes in learning the second language. According to the behaviorist perspective, "Learning a second language would start off as habits formed in the first language and that these habits would interfere with new ones needed for the second language" (Lightbown & Spada, 2013:104). It views a second language as a set of habits that can be learnt by repeating those habits (Cook, 2017). Accordingly, the methods followed in classroom activities are based on mimicry and memorization of dialogues and sentences until the learners know them by heart. However, many scholars have disagreed with this perspective because language learners produce many novel sentences that they could not have heard before (Lightbown & Spada, 2013), learners' developing interlanguage systems show similarities regardless of their background, and these scholars believe that errors are a natural and valuable part of learning a second language.

In the case of learning the Qur'an, producing errors is not tolerated since the Qur'an must be read and memorized exactly as it is in order to preserve its original form and meaning. In the early days of Islam, due to low levels of literacy, native speakers memorized and orally transmitted the Qur'an. After the spread of Islam to non-Arabic societies, memorizing the Qur'an was important for the sake of exact recall when performing religious rituals such as daily prayers, leading to a separation between meaning and form (Saleem, 2015). As mentioned above, Al-Nuranic rule is used to teach non-Arabic speakers to read and write Arabic by gradually introducing the basic Arabic alphabet followed by reading words, phrases and verses of the Qur'an. However, learners can only read the letters with vowel diacritical marks and special symbols because different symbols in the same word can indicate different meanings. An Arabic speaker can read Arabic texts easily without diacritical marks based on the meaning of the word in a particular context and its position in the sentence, so Arabic speakers depend highly on context as the main factor when reading any text.

Saussure (1966) notes that a linguistic sign consists of a signifier (form) and a signified (meaning). Form refers to physical properties, including orthographic, phonological, acoustic, and syntactic representations of a text, whereas meaning refers to contextual and pragmatic data; in other words, form is concrete and meaning is abstract. According to Kitsch & Van Dijk (1983), meaning lasts longer in

memory than phonological forms or syntactic structures due to semantic integration, so that meaning is important in transferring information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Saleem (2015:29) indicates that short-term memory is "a conscious, immediate, or primary memory system of limited storage for a short duration of time," more of a processing mechanism, whereas long-term memory is considered a storage unit for an unlimited amount of information. For non-Arabic Qur'an memorizers, other factors must contribute to the enduring memory of the whole or parts of the Qur'an memorized without comprehension. Saleem (2015:16) suggested that "Words encoded with sound patterns such as alliteration and rhythm may provide an extra/additional pathway" for recall alongside semantic encoding. She added that even though noticing alliteration, rhyme and rhythm may help with recall, the absence of meaning risks recalling the wrong word. Accordingly, non-Arabic Qur'an memorizers' successful encoding and retaining of the Qur'anic text over time could result from multiple factors such as "episodic memory (i.e. location and time of learning, people they were with, etc.), short term memory (i.e. repetition), sensory memory (sound, auditory, visuals, etc.) and associative memory (such as mnemonics, images, etc.)" (Saleem, 2015:78). The skill of memorization begins with conscious and deliberate efforts to store information in short-term memory. Practice and repeated rehearsals convert conscious declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge and then to automatic performance (Ullman, 2004). In addition, Saleem (2015:76) cites the objective of the learner as another important factor in the memorization process:

If the target is to remember meaning as is the case in most every settings, then all the cognitive efforts will be directed at remembering the meaning, and information will be semantically processed and elaborated. In contrast, if the objective is to remember the form, then all the cognitive efforts will be focused on processing the surface features.

Although the behaviorist perspective on second language learning was not an adequate explanation for many scholars, it does provide the necessary mechanism for memorizing the Qur'an through deliberate repetition and long-life rehearsal in addition to the other means mentioned above, as there is no room for modifications, deviations, or reconstructions.

Unfortunately, non-Arabic memorizers of the Qur'an cannot use this reservoir of Arabic vocabulary and language structures because their focus was on form and not on meaning, as if the Qur'an was stored in an isolated room in the brain. Accordingly, this article seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the noticing hypothesis, developed by Schmidt (1990, 2001), in retrieving and using these data. Noticing in this sense refers to "private experience which is brought about by drawing learners' selective attention to a certain linguistic form" (Iwanaka, 2007:56). The role of noticing in language learning has become an increasingly popular subject among many linguists who are interested in cognitive psychology. This hypothesis suggests that nothing is learned unless it has been noticed; therefore, growth in language skill takes place when the learner becomes aware of a particular language feature, rather than as a result of comprehensible input, as Krashen's (1985) model suggests. In other words, the availability of input is not sufficient if it is not processed by the language learner. As a learner of Portuguese, Schmidt noticed that, after he had taken classes in Brazil for months, certain features in the language began to enter his second language system only when he had noticed them, even though they had been present in the environment for the whole time. This was because these features were brought to his attention in class or made salient by other experiences (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). According to Schmidt (1990), paying attention to key grammatical elements with subjective awareness is essential for input to become intake. The findings of a diary study conducted by Frota & Schmidt (1986) show that noticing while interacting with native speakers resulted in an increase in the amount of the Portuguese language learned, as reflected in the learners' diaries. These observations indicate that it is not enough for a verbal form to be taught and drilled in class without conscious awareness of what is present in the input. Noticed linguistic forms are more likely to receive further processing for comprehension, which subsequently leads to interlanguage development (Schmidt, 2001). Doughty (2001) and Skehan (1998) believe that noticing linguistic forms, including phonology, grammatical structures and lexical items, is the first stage in second language processing stages that produce comprehension and integration. Skehan (2002) proposed four processing stages: noticing, patterning, controlling and lexicalizing, which are the developmental sequences that convert input to comprehensible output. Furthermore, according to Iwanka (2007: 60):

Different parts of linguistic knowledge are at a different point on the sequence. While some linguistic forms may have already reached the lexicalized stage, other linguistic forms may not have been noticed yet. Learners gradually deepen their target knowledge by analyzing noticed input, making generalizations, achieving extensions and gaining control of form. As a result, their interlanguage system is restructured gradually. Teaching grammatical rules directly out of context has not been successful because it tries to offer target language knowledge as one without taking the processing stages into consideration.

Among the activities that have been proposed in order to raise consciousness about form meaningfully are deducting grammatical rules from samples of the language, comparing two expressions with the same meaning and observing differences between learners' own understanding of a linguistic item and its counterpart in model input. Schmidt (2012) further framed the term consciousness to include intention, attention and awareness. Consciousness as intention refers to deliberately paying attention to linguistic items in the second language in order to process them. Consciousness as attention represents a variety of means, such as alertness, orientation, detection, facilitation and inhibition (Tomlin & Villa, 1994). Baars (1997) indicates that although learning can occur without attention and consciousness, the question arises as to whether more attention would result in more learning. For example, to learn vocabulary, one must attend to form such as pronunciation and spelling, and use any cues in the input that may indicate the meaning of the word. To learn morphology, one must attend to both the forms and meanings of the morphemes (Schmidt, 2012). Consciousness as awareness in second language acquisition reflects an interrelated meaning between awareness and attention; in other words, "what we are aware of is what we attend to and what we attend to is what determines what enters phenomenal consciousness" (Baars, 1988, in Schmidt, 2012:725).

Some scholars who have argued against the noticing hypothesis believe that learning can be incidental without paying attention to what is being learned (Krashen, 1985; Seliger, 1883). It is true that people can learn incidentally without deliberate attention in the case of learning vocabulary when reading for pleasure. However, Schmidt (2012) proposed that wholly unconscious learning of grammar is not possible, especially for adults who "seem to have lost the still mysterious ability of children to acquire the grammatical forms of language while apparently not paying attention to them" (Schmidt, 1983:172). This is illustrated in Schmidt's (1994) case study of Wes, a 30-year-old Japanese immigrant to the United States, whose acquisition of English Schmidt observed over a period of several years. If language is perceived as a medium of communication, Wes was a very successful learner despite the limitations of his interlanguage. He could develop his language in terms of fluency, lexical growth, listening comprehension and communicative competence. However, he was limited in areas related to grammar, morphology and syntax, due to overreliance on learning through interaction, an implicit learning strategy, with no attention to language form. In contrast, Loup et al. (1994) reported that Julie, a native speaker of English who was married to an Egyptian and moved to Cairo at the age of 21, could display grammatical and communicative competence similar to those of a native speaker in her second language. Julie would pay conscious attention to grammatical structures, morphological variations and other aspects of the language related to lexical items. She would appreciate corrections and feedback received by native speakers and she had a notebook to document new vocabulary, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. Her experience confirms the importance of conscious attention to linguistic features of one's input in order to learn the forms successfully. Although both Wes and Julie were naturalistic learners, Julie's experience was more successful due to her use of conscious attention in the learning process.

Other scholars' objections to the methodological issue were due to the difficulty of measuring consciousness precisely. Schmidt (1990), for example, defined noticing as the availability of verbal report. Although some researchers have argued that some learners are better than others at putting noticed linguistic forms into words and at verbalizing the content of awareness (Jourdanais, 2001), using learners' verbal report is the best way, so far, to provide evidence of noticing (Schmidt, 1990).

Despite contradictory views of the role of conscious attention in input processing while learning a second language, many scholars believe that employing conscious attention to linguistic features is significantly influential on success in second language learning. This article attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of the noticing hypothesis as a teaching strategy in retrieving and using the stored data of passages of the Qur'an memorized by non-Arabic speakers. The following section discusses the methodology used in this article to analyze Arabic language instructors' and learners' perceptions of the

role of the noticing hypothesis in learning standard Arabic, followed by discussion and conclusion in relation with the literature review.

## 3.    Methodology

The data for this study were collected from interviews with 10 instructors in the Arabic Language Institute for Non-Native Speakers at King Abdulaziz University. All of them teach adults above the age of 18 years, and most of their learners have memorized several chapters of the Qur'an in order to perform religious rituals. Interviews were also conducted with 15 learners, who are studying the modern standard form of Arabic. Most of these learners are from Pakistan and India, while others are from Bangladesh, and all of them are studying in a two-year diploma program in Arabic. Although they began to memorize the Qur'an at an early age, they could only read and write Arabic letters with diacritical marks when learning standard Arabic, as they memorized the Qur'an without comprehension. All the interviews were tape recorded after obtaining the permission of the interviewees.

This qualitative approach is used to obtain in-depth information about instructors' and learners' perceptions of the topic of the study. Unlike observations, face-to-face interviews provide the researcher not only with what the learners do, but also with the reasons behind the learners' preferable approach to learning, and provides more insights into their cognitive and psychological perspectives.

The questions of the interview were semi-structured: "Although there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format is open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate in the issues raised in an exploratory manner" (Dörnyei, 2016:136). The instructors and the learners were interviewed to find out if they share similar perceptions about the role of the noticing hypothesis in making learners pay attention to samples of the language that they memorized.

## 4.    Analysis

The results of the study show that the religious motivation for learning Arabic is instrumental for most learners, which is considered a strong predictor of successful learning in order to fulfill their immediate goals. The short-term goals for these learners are simply learning how to read and memorize several chapters, or the whole Qur'an, in order to perform religious practices, knowing that Islam has 1.6 billion adherents worldwide, whereas their long-term goals are to learn Arabic and Islamic Studies. The Arabic Language Institute for Non-Native Speakers at King Abdulaziz University offers learners who earn their diploma with distinction the opportunity to join a four-year bachelor's degree program in any major in the College of Arts and Humanities in the University. When the interviewed learners were asked about their motivation to learn the Qur'an, the majority of them answered, "We find peace and joy in reciting and memorizing the Qur'an because we look forward to our rewards in the life hereafter as promised by Allah." Three of the learners expressed, "Apart from our religious duty towards the Qur'an, the ability to memorize the Qur'an is a gift from Allah as it is not an easy task for many Muslims because it needs dedication and constant rehearsal." Another learner said, "I feel that I am so close to God when I read His words," while yet another said, "Our lives evolve around Qur'an because it is the answer to any matter in life." Most of the learners are planning to join the Islamic Studies Department after completing the diploma to obtain a bachelor's degree for qualification to teach Arabic and Islamic Studies when they return to their countries. When asked about the importance of learning Arabic alongside the Qur'an, the majority of the learners said that the path of learning both the Qur'an and Arabic is so long and time-consuming that they would not fulfill their immediate goals in a timely manner. They also believe that they will be rewarded for reciting and memorizing the passages even without knowing their meaning, as they could feel the impact of the Qur'an through the power of its words, rhyme and rhythm. In addition, they expressed that, after having learned the basic skills for reciting and memorizing the Qur'an, they are working on learning Arabic to improve their understanding of the content of the Qur'an.

Three of the Arabic instructors in this study pointed out that "Although most non-Arab Muslims are highly motivated to recite and memorize a number of chapters of the Holy Quran, it is only mere identification and connection between the written symbols. They would not reach the level of comprehending what they are reading, which excludes the basic objective of learning Qur'an; understanding the words of Allah." However, they started learning Arabic after developing three skills:

reading, writing (to an extent) and listening, but they lack the skills of comprehension and communication. As one Arabic instructor explained:

Al-Nuranic rule is used in teaching the Qur'an, which emphasizes the importance of producing the correct pronunciation by intensive training through repetition and practice and by using different activities. These activities focus on phoneme identification, training on a group of words that include the target sound, where learners have the opportunity to listen and repeat after the instructor or after the recording device. Sometimes meaningless words are deliberately used in order for the learner to focus on form, not on meaning. Another example of these activities is phoneme recognition practice in order to recognize the difference between two similar phonemes by listening and repeating words that have these two phonemes until recognized and pronounced perfectly.

Although these activities exclude reflective thinking, "they encourage learners to pay attention when pronouncing Arabic phonemes to realize that some of the sounds are not identical to what they are familiar with in their own language. On the phonological level, this realization is important as it leads to more practice and better performance," reported by six of the instructors. This finding agrees with the objective of the noticing hypothesis, which entails the importance of noticing in language acquisition. In this way, Qur'an memorizers can learn to pay attention to details because producing errors is not permissible in order to preserve the Qur'an in its original form and sense. Another interesting point raised by two instructors, who taught three non-Muslim Chinese beginners, was the learners' inability to produce certain Arabic phonemes correctly due to their late exposure to the Arabic language.

On the semantic and syntactic levels, a number of the instructors confirmed that these learners have some knowledge of Arabic vocabulary and linguistic structures, but this knowledge is inactive because, in most cases, the learners cannot use it or refer to it until someone brings it to their attention. As one of the instructors further explained:

We as instructors cannot ignore the fact that the learners have saved in their long-term memory huge samples of the Qur'an, the classical form of the Arabic language, which resembles to an extent the modern standard form of Arabic. Referring to these samples results in activating these data by making use of different strategies, for example, by drawing learners' attention to some extracts from the Qur'an that contain synonyms or antonyms of the word list that they are studying, or to some linguistic structures relevant to the subject matter. This practice is also important to correct the misconception of the sense and use of a word that might be misperceived by the learner.

Three of the instructors added that most of the learners usually ask them to bring examples from the Qur'an, especially when they learn about the semantic and syntactic aspects of the language. It makes it easier for them to comprehend and remember these rules and structures. They further noted:

When we come across a word in standard Arabic, we refer to its synonyms and antonyms, and we refer to its usage in the colloquial form of Arabic to enable the learners to understand and use the language in any context whether oral or written. We also provide the learners with the word and how it is inflected for number, gender and case. Sometimes when the learners come across a word in its plural form, they would not know that it is the same word, which they memorized in its singular form, until the instructor brings that to their attention by giving examples from the Qur'an. Sometimes we make the learners deduct a grammatical rule after extracting a particular form from the Qur'an, for example, the mute and the audible *hamza*.

Most of the learners in this study mentioned that these examples help them understand Arabic grammar when they try to use cues, in most cases diacritical and grammatical markers, to signal specific functions.  One of the learners said that it is difficult sometimes to differentiate between two similar verbs with similar forms but different meanings. When the instructor explains the meaning of these two verbs, it makes sense to them, and the chances of confusing them are reduced to zero. Similarly, the Arabic word for "the sun" /ashams/, is a singular feminine noun, but it does not display any explicit sign of femininity. If they considered the word for the sun a masculine noun, all of the verbs and adjectives in their writing would be wrong as these parts of speech must agree with the gender of the noun, so the learners try to remember any verse from the Qur'an that contains this word in order to remember its gender from the context. In addition, the learners expressed a preference for explicit methods of teaching, especially when learning vocabulary and grammar as such methods help them to relate to their inactive knowledge with the assistance of the instructor. This observation illustrates the importance of conscious attention in the learning process. The learners also added that the implicit approach of learning

is useful in communication to encourage them to talk and express their thoughts after they have developed their basic structures of the language. In other words, language proficiency leads to communication efficiency.

The interviewees expressed different views of learning the Qur'an, the classical form of Arabic, before learning modern standard Arabic. The majority of the instructors indicated that they perceived no problem when non-Arabic speakers start to learn Qur'an, and then learn Arabic because "the learners have the privilege of acquiring, in most cases, native-like pronunciation in addition to the memorized chapters of the Qur'an to which we, as instructors, can easily refer and make them pay attention to its content and structure. We find it easier to deal with Qur'an memorizers than with learners who do not have a background of Arabic." Another instructor said, "Learning the Qur'an before learning Arabic absolutely facilitates learning the language if the instructor knows how to refer to this knowledge effectively. It is the mission of the instructor to assess the level of the learners and their background in order to make a positive contribution to their learning process."

However, two instructors declared that it is best for learners to learn both the Arabic language and the Qur'an at the same time as it is possible to refer to verses from the Qur'an when teaching Arabic to non-native speakers for the purpose of reciting and comprehending the meaning of these verses. This approach allows students to learn both the form and the meaning, which is considered to them an ideal situation for learning Arabic and the Qur'an simultaneously. These two instructors expressed this view because a high percentage of non-Arabic Qur'an memorizers tend to learn how to recite and memorize the Qur'an by focusing only on form, so that they may miss the main objective of learning the Qur'an in terms of comprehension. However, as mentioned earlier, this view does not meet the short-term goals of most of the learners in this study. In addition, most Qur'an institutions focus only on teaching recitation and memorization of the Qur'an. Specialized programs that teach the Qur'an along with the Arabic language are available only in some universities and Qur'an memorization public schools, whereas all of the learners in this study had attended international schools.

These findings are discussed below in relation to the literature review to evaluate the effectiveness of the noticing hypothesis on non-Arabic Qur'an memorizers' ability to retrieve memorized data in order for this input to be intake.

## 5.    Discussion and conclusion

Reciting and memorizing the Qur'an is essential for the world's 1.6 billion Muslims as a worship practice in order to perform religious rituals. For non-Arabic-speaking Muslims, the Qur'an is their first exposure to Arabic scripts. Accordingly, the learners' religious motivation is a driving force that enables them to learn recitation and memorization of several chapters or the whole Qur'an. Almost all of the learners in this study have been driven to learn Arabic for the same reason, which is mainly religious, as most of them declared that they intended to be instructors in Arabic and in Islamic Studies when they return to their own countries. Therefore, the objectives of the learner are essential in the use of their cognitive resources to meet those objectives. Because many of the learners indicated that their objectives in learning the Qur'an were to earn the rewards promised by Allah and to contribute to the preservation of the Qur'an as revealed to the Prophet Mohammad, they employed their cognitive efforts to focus on processing the surface features (form) of the passages they memorized. After having developed their basic skills of learning the Qur'an, they became motivated to learn the Arabic language in order to understand the content of the Qur'an, so that their focus has changed from form to meaning. Gardner (1988) indicates that motivated learners learn better that unmotivated learners because motivated learners are active learners, leading to more understanding of the importance of the noticed language and reaching high levels of awareness and enhanced learning.

As mentioned earlier, the learners started learning by paying attention to and being conscious of what they are learning for the sake of producing an error-free output. Having mastered the basic skills of learning the Qur'an, they developed the skill of paying attention during the learning process, which has helped them to refer to and use the memorized data when brought to their attention by their instructors. Paying attention is considered the first stage of their learning process, as Schmidt (1994) has indicated. The observations of this study demonstrate that the Arabic instructors usually refer to the stored data and try to make the learners notice linguistic forms, including phonology, grammatical and syntactic structures and lexical items. Such noticing is considered the first stage in the second-language processing

procedure, that eventually leads to comprehension and integration. Therefore, in this case, noticing is important so that the noticed item can be patterned, controlled and lexicalized, according to Skehan's (2002) proposal of the information processing stages. In other words, learners gradually deepen their target knowledge by analyzing the noticed input, generalizing, achieving extensions and gaining control of form. Growth in language takes place when the learners become aware of a particular language feature.

According to Schmidt (1990), second language learners cannot begin to acquire a language feature until they become conscious of that feature in the input. All the learners in this study confirmed their inability to use the stored data of the memorized portions of the Qur'an without the help of the instructor, who makes them pay attention to these features in order for them to become intake. Schmidt (2012) expands the term consciousness to include intention, attention and awareness. The examples given by the instructors and the learners in this study show that the learners are being guided to deliberately pay attention to linguistic items in order to process those items. For example, when they are learning vocabulary, they are expected to learn the word and how it is inflected for number, gender and case in addition to learning its synonyms and antonyms so that they can recognize and use that words in different contexts, knowing that Arabic is a highly inflectional language. This approach results in processing the learners' inactive knowledge and making it available for use as they become aware of it. The observations of this study show that the learners confirmed a preference for explicit ways of teaching, especially when learning grammar, as these approaches help them to relate to their inactive knowledge. This ties neatly with Schmidt's (2012) proposal of the importance of conscious learning when acquiring grammar, especially for adults who "seem to have lost the still mysterious ability of children to acquire the grammatical forms of language while apparently not paying attention to them" (Schmidt, 1983:172).

Despite of the contradictory views regarding the role of the noticing hypothesis in language learning, it can be concluded that the learners and the instructors in this study shared a positive view regarding effectiveness of the noticing hypothesis in retrieving the knowledge from non-Arabic Qur'an memorizers. Accordingly, this teaching approach should be adopted, particularly in this context, to facilitate the learning process. The learners do know many words and linguistic structures, but they need to learn how to relate to and use that knowledge with the help of the instructor. Future studies can be conducted to find out whether advanced Arabic language learners can rely on themselves to make links between the language and their stored knowledge, and whether they can read by relying on the context without diacritical marks; in other words, whether they can become independent learners.

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