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Researching linguistics and dialectology in a relatively obscure and complex language such as Arabic poses many challenges as these unwritten dialects are largely understudied. Taking this a step further and exploring dialectology and various linguistic components such as onomatopoeia and sound symbolism drastically narrows the scope of available resources. With the gracious help of the library staff as well as the comprehensive online guides and strategies I was able to successfully navigate the vast databases and pinpoint exactly what sources would be most useful for my research.

As an Arabic studies major aspiring to work in the field of linguistics and translation, I find understanding how various linguistic concepts are expressed in different dialects intrinsically interesting. Developing an understanding of dialectology and how the language works in its colloquial registers will greatly augment my language aptitude and in turn career prospects in the field of linguistics. Within the Arabic language there is an enormous degree of variation between the common written language and the dialects. Understanding how onomatopoeia works in colloquial registers versus in Modern Standard Arabic, and how certain sounds from the environment are expressed was a topic of great interest to me.

Prior to this research project I had extensive experience researching in several subjects and had used the plethora of printed materials for Arabic language and linguistics but never had I researched such a specific linguistic aspect situated on the fringes of the field of linguistics. Throughout the entirety of the class for which I conducted this research the professor continuously encouraged each of us to use Mckeldin library sources in addition the readings he assigned. In addition he gave us several sources and mandatory readings, but always for the formation of a solid foundation of understanding we were encouraged to take advantage of the resources available to us.

At first I was hesitant to approach the library staff due to the complexity of the topic I had chosen. I didn't initially expect the esoteric nature of Arabic linguistic materials to be within the realm of an average staff member's knowledge but within minutes I was lead to the materials containing precisely what I needed. First we looked together on the online databases while I described my research project and what sort of information would be useful. We located where the books were held and where the bulk of the Arabic reference materials are kept. Not only was I directed to the general area where the Arabic language materials are situated, the library staff member diligently helped me scour through the materials determined to help me find exactly what I needed. The beauty of this project and situation as a whole turned out to be the fact that I didn't need a vast amount of different sources, merely a handful that contained precisely what I was looking for.

During breaks of pouring over the printed sources I was directed to by the library staff, I would search by keywords in online databases to find relevant articles. I would also search for additional print sources, often times returning to the area I was first lead to by library staff. My personal preference when conducting research was and still is reading from books and encyclopedias. I understand that research online is sometimes easier and quicker as we can quickly locate a needle in a haystack, but with the wealth of print materials that we as students have available to us I feel obligated to use those resources.

Throughout the entirety of this research project I learned how to better navigate the university's immense database, made accessible with a user friendly interface, and how to take advantage of the resources available to a much greater extent. The amount of information I was available to find on a

specialized subject such as onomatopoeia in unwritten Arabic dialects, from both online and print sources, reflects the truly limitless range of information made available through the library sources and its' extensions at the University of Maryland. A library the size of McKeldin may sometimes feel overwhelmingly large, but with the help of the easily navigable online databases coupled with generous efforts of the library staff, conducting research on even the most obscure subjects is made possible.