

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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**The Impact of Dictation Lessons on Improving the Quality of Arabic Language
Use in Algerian Schools - First Year of Middle School as a Model -
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ABSTRACT:

Paying attention to controlling The Arabic script and avoiding spelling errors has become an urgent necessity for the success of teaching the Arabic language and improving the quality of its use, especially among native speakers.

This research paper seeks to shed light on the status of spelling in the Algerian educational curriculum and to examine the extent of its contribution to the development of learners' written performance in Arabic. It also aims to identify the main causes behind the widespread phenomenon of spelling weaknesses among students and to highlight the most common spelling errors in their writings.

The study relied on a field component, which consisted in implementing a special spelling program in one first-year middle school class during the first semester of the 2024–2025 academic year, with spelling tests administered before and after the implementation. The results obtained led to a set of important conclusions, culminating in the proposal of several solutions and recommendations aimed at improving the quality of written performance in Arabic, alleviating spelling weakness, and preventing its aggravation in the future.

Keywords: Dictation, Spelling error, Spelling Weakness, Quality.

INTRODUCTION:

Language is the primary means of communication; it is the tool for expressing ideas, needs, and fulfilling interests and purposes. As Ibn Jinni stated in his book *Al-Khasa'is*: “Language is a set of sounds by which each people express their purposes.” However, the need to use language in daily life goes beyond the oral aspect to written performance.

The Arabic language is distinguished by its beautiful script and deep-rooted eloquence, setting it apart from other languages—how could it not, when Allah Almighty chose it to be the language of the Holy Qur'an. To preserve the eloquence and value of the Arabic language, it is necessary to combine the aesthetics of authentic Arabic script with the soundness of its written structure. Indeed, Arabic cannot

fulfill its aesthetic or communicative function if it is not built upon correct orthographic rules, free from errors, ambiguity, or confusion.

The dictation lesson holds a prominent place and great importance in the didactics of the Arabic language. It is the cornerstone and one of the most fundamental bases of written expression that conveys human thoughts when speech fails. Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun stated: (Dictation is the drawing and shaping of letters that indicate the heard words referring to what is in the soul) ¹. Dictation rules represent the law that organizes writing ². Who among us is unaware of the link between teaching dictation and grammar, morphology, phonetics, and other branches of the Arabic language? Each of these aims to preserve the language in one way or another. If grammar and morphology are tools to ensure the correctness of writing in terms of syntax and derivation, dictation serves it in terms of graphic form ³. For example: tanween, which requires the addition of an alif to many words, or writing the long alif (alif maqsura) by returning to its morphological or lexical origin, among other cases. These contribute to the correct understanding of the intended meanings, since a spelling error may alter the meaning and obscure the idea.

The Algerian school has given attention to teaching dictation activities to learners from the early stages of education, aiming to lead them towards linguistic correctness and writing accuracy. This is due to dictation's direct role in consolidating writing rules and improving the quality of Arabic language usage among learners. However, it has been observed that students at various educational stages continue to commit spelling mistakes, and the phenomenon of spelling weakness spreads with them into later stages, even reaching university level, which negatively affects their academic achievement. It is worth noting that dictation instruction in Algerian schools is introduced in primary education and continues until the first year of middle school at most.

Based on the above, and to clarify the important effect of the dictation lesson in ensuring the accuracy of Arabic and protecting it from errors and distortion, this study is entitled: (The Impact of the Dictation Lesson on Improving the Quality of Arabic Language Usage in Algerian Schools First Year of Middle School as a Model). This level was chosen precisely because it represents the outcome of what students learned during primary school. It is also the most suitable for investigating the extent of success of previously scheduled dictation lessons and their adequacy for learners' needs and levels, in order to identify the deficiencies contributing to the spread of spelling weakness, as well as the main difficulties in learning dictation among students.

Accordingly, this research attempts to answer the following main question:

What is the impact of the dictation lesson on improving the quality of Arabic language usage among first-year middle school students in Algerian schools?

From this main question arise a number of sub-questions, the most important of which are:

- What is the place of the dictation lesson in the Algerian educational curriculum?
- What are the difficulties of learning dictation in the first year of middle school?
- What are the main causes of recorded spelling weakness?
- What procedures and solutions are adopted to reduce the spread of common errors and improve the quality of written performances in Arabic?

This research paper adopts the descriptive method based on mechanisms of analysis and evaluation, to achieve the intended objectives, primarily reaching solutions that limit the spread of spelling

weakness and providing effective alternatives to enable Arabic language learners to attain linguistic accuracy in different contexts, particularly in written performance. A special dictation program was implemented in one of the first-year middle school classes during the first semester of the 2024–2025 school year, with dictation tests conducted before and after the implementation, and observations recorded regarding the extent of change in learners' levels.

1. CONCEPTS AND TERMS:

1.1. The Concept of Dictation:

a. Linguistically:

From *amla* a thing: to say it, then it is written. *Amlaltu al-kitab wa amlaytuhu*, meaning “I dictated the book and had it written down,” that is, I recited it to the scribe so that he might write it ⁴. Thus, dictation is the process of delivering a statement or text to a scribe or learner to write it down. It is derived from the verb *amla-yumli*. It is also said: *amlaltu* or *amlaytuhu imlalan*. Dictation has sometimes been used to mean the rules of writing and transcription.

b. Terminologically:

Dictation is the science by which the principles of writing Arabic letters are known in terms of their representation of what is spoken. It is said: “Knowledge is a prey and writing is its tether,” meaning writing secures what is spoken. In the past, dictation was called: writing, script, spelling, transcription, and hand correction. Today, however, this science is called dictation.

Dictation is the process of training learners in the written recall of letters and words that were previously presented to them by one of the types of dictation (aural, visual...). One of its definitions is that it is the science concerned with conventional rules by which the writer's pen is preserved from addition or omission ⁵. Another definition states: Dictation is equipping learners with both manual and mental practical skills, namely the ability to draw letters, write words either separately or within sentences, and retrieve them from memory in their correct form ⁶. In summary, dictation can be described as a process through which learners' written performance is monitored and evaluated, as well as their adherence to orthographic, grammatical, and morphological rules.

1.2. The Concept of the Spelling Error:

a. Linguistically:

In *Lisan al-Arab* by Ibn Manzur, *khatia* means “to err.” It is said *khatia* when done intentionally, and *akhtaa* when done unintentionally. It is also said of one who intends something but does something else instead, or does something incorrect ⁷. The one who errs intentionally is *khati'*, whereas the one who errs unintentionally is *mukhti'*. The word “error” appears in the Qur'anic verse: {أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا} (Al-Ahzab, verse 05). The verse confirms that error is of two types: deliberate error and error by forgetfulness.

b. Terminologically:

There are many definitions of error, old and modern. In the past, the meaning of error was synonymous with *lahn* (linguistic deviation), i.e., speech in which both commoners and elites make mistakes ⁸. Kamal Bashir defines it as: deviation from the formal rules and standards agreed upon by specialists and those concerned with language. Thus, anything departing from these rules, or

diverging from them in any way, is considered lahn or error, whereas what follows them and conforms to their principles is correctness ⁹.

It is worth noting that in the past, error synonymous with lahn was limited to spoken language among Arabs when they deviated from earlier norms of speech. Today, however, error may occur in language or action, both orally and in writing. Spelling errors, specifically, occur when the rules are violated in the written form of words.

1.3. The Concept of Spelling Weakness:

Spelling weakness refers to a deficiency or incorrect application of the rules acquired during dictation lessons, which leads to committing linguistic, grammatical, or structural errors that may distort meaning or weaken expression and impair its beauty. It is also defined as the student's inability to accurately write words in accordance with orthographic rules, whether through omission, addition, or alteration of the word's structure ¹⁰. This problem has become a source of concern for parents and teachers, as it persists with learners even into advanced educational levels. Correct writing reflects sound learning and mastery of the language, ensuring that speech is not diverted from its intended meaning.

2. THE DICTATION LESSON IN THE ALGERIAN EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM:

The Ministry of National Education has given special attention to dictation and handwriting lessons, due to their importance and major role in consolidating the grammatical and morphological rules of the Arabic language, and in writing its letters and words correctly. The primary stage of education is characterized by the richness and diversity of its curriculum in terms of prescribed dictation lessons, especially the fourth year of primary school. In this year, learners receive numerous lessons related to grammar, morphology, and dictation. It is noted, however, that this academic year includes many essential lessons that students need, yet their abundance and concentration in a single school year have negatively affected learners' ability to assimilate them, which has led to a decline in their academic level.

2.1. Dictation Lessons in the Arabic Language Textbook for the First Year of Middle School:

The Arabic language textbook for the first year of middle school is also rich in grammar and dictation lessons. It contains a comprehensive selection of grammar lessons, such as: the real adjective (*al-na'at al-haqiqi*) and the causal adjective (*al-na'at al-sababi*), the object (*al-maf'ul bihi*), the object of purpose (*al-maf'ul li-ajlih*), the absolute object (*al-maf'ul al-mutlaq*), the subject (*al-fa'il*), *kana* and its sisters, *inna* and its sisters, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, the passive verb and its deputy subject, among others. These are complemented by another set of dictation lessons, which students had already studied in primary school, but due to their importance were included once again in the first-year middle school program. These lessons are:

- **Punctuation Marks:** Two separate sessions are dedicated to this lesson. In the first session, students discover some punctuation marks (the period, comma, question mark, and exclamation mark), understand the meaning of each, then deduce the rule or summary. The lesson concludes with an application (p. 25). The second session is a continuation of the first, introducing quotation marks and their uses, followed by practice (p. 65).
- **The Hamzat al-Wasl (Connecting Hamza):** covering its cases and positions (p. 61).

- **The Hamzat al-Qat' (Cutting Hamza):** presented in two non-consecutive sessions. The first covers the general concept and some of its positions (at the beginning of the word, in the middle of the word) (p. 81). The second session is devoted to studying the Hamzat al-Qat' at the end of the word (p. 85).
- **The Solar and Lunar "Al" (definite article):** aimed at distinguishing between them and writing them correctly (p. 105).
- **The Open T (ta maftuha):** a separate lesson from the Closed T (ta marbuta), reviewing the positions where *ta* is written open, with examples and exercises (p. 121).
- **The Closed T (ta marbuta):** reviewing its positions and distinguishing it from the open *ta*, with practice on writing it (p. 125).
- **Omission of the Alif:** words where the alif is pronounced but omitted in writing, such as: *Allah, al-Rahman, lakin, ula'ika, yas ...* etc. (p. 145).
- **Omission of the Hamza of "Ibn":** students learn when the hamza of *ibn* is written and when it is omitted (p. 153).
- **Alif of Separation (alif al-tafriq):** distinguishing between the plural *waw* followed by the separating alif, and the original *waw* in verbs (p. 157).
- **The Soft Alif (1):** introducing the soft alif and some of its rules, particularly its writing in certain letters (p. 161).
- **The Soft Alif (2):** focusing on the writing of the soft alif in indeclinable nouns and foreign nouns (p. 165).

From what has been presented above, we can see that dictation lessons are diverse and include the most essential topics. This diversity contributes significantly to achieving the objectives set for the teaching of dictation.

2.2. Objectives of Teaching Dictation:

The Ministry of National Education has approved the teaching of dictation starting from the earliest educational stages in order to achieve a set of aims and objectives, which can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Training learners to write letters and words correctly and to avoid spelling mistakes.
- ✓ Developing learners' writing skills and accustoming them to speed in recording what they hear with accuracy, clarity, and legible handwriting.
- ✓ Helping learners to understand the content of texts.
- ✓ Enabling learners to use punctuation marks correctly.
- ✓ Consolidating grammatical and morphological rules through practical applications.
- ✓ Enabling learners to distinguish between word segments, letters, their forms, and diacritical marks.
- ✓ Dictation is training for both the auditory and visual senses; it increases learners' concentration, strengthens their memory and level of attention, and also trains the hand muscles for precise and coordinated movements.

- ✓ Accustoming learners to cleanliness, order, and clarity, and developing their aesthetic appreciation.
- ✓ Dictation exercises help in measuring learners' ability to write correctly and the extent of their spelling improvement, in order to take appropriate remedial measures.
- ✓ The dictation lesson contributes to endearing the Arabic language to our students' hearts and fostering pride in the authentic and beautiful Arabic script, especially as it is the language of the Holy Qur'an.

2.3. Types of Dictation Lessons Adopted and Their Teaching Methods:

In the past, the teaching of dictation relied on selecting long or difficult words and testing students on writing them, rather than training them to write them correctly. This often led to many students graduating from secondary school still making mistakes in writing certain words.

The correct method of teaching dictation is based on training rather than testing. In other words, students should learn to write words after they have been visually presented, pronounced, and written, through the integrated use of listening, speaking, seeing, and writing. Accordingly, four types of dictation have emerged:

First: Transcribed Dictation (al-imla' al-manqul):

This means that students copy a passage from the book or the board after reading and understanding it, and orally spelling some of its words that they have previously practiced through reading ¹¹. In this type, the teacher writes the dictation passage on the board in clear handwriting, highlighting the words he intends to train his students on by writing them in a different color or underlining them. The teacher first reads the passage, then the students read it, with reminders of the meanings and training on reading and spelling the difficult words. After that, they are assigned to copy it in writing. Students may be trained to read and write what they read at the same time or in close succession ¹². This method is particularly suitable for the primary stage, especially the third and fourth grades.

Among the advantages of this type of dictation is that it develops in students a love of improving their handwriting and mastering writing, and it helps to fix the images of words in their memory, making them easier to recall.

Second: Visual Dictation (al-imla' al-manzur):

Visual dictation means that the passage is shown to the students for reading and understanding, and for spelling some of its words. Then it is hidden from them and dictated afterward ¹³. In this type, the teacher presents the dictation passage to the students, reads it clearly, then the students read it, understand it, explain the difficult vocabulary, and discuss its partial and overall meanings. They are then trained to write the forms of its words. After that, the passage is hidden or erased, and then dictated to them for correction. This type is also suitable for the primary stage, especially the fourth and fifth grades.

Among the advantages of this type of dictation is that it enhances students' attention and accuracy of observation, trains them to use their thinking and sharpen their memory in order to connect pronunciation with orthographic form.

Third: Test Dictation (al-imla' al-ikhtibari):

This means that the teacher conducts dictation tests for students to assess their level and the extent of their benefit from dictation lessons. It is carried out on two levels:

- a. Dictation prepared by the students at home, where they practice writing from a text they had previously studied in the textbook, without training in the dictation class.
- b. Dictation that tests students' ability to write words they had already practiced, aiming to diagnose points of weakness in order to remedy them. It is thus a diagnostic test of the mistakes made by students in what they have learned, enabling the teacher to re-emphasize what has been learned and what has not been mastered ¹⁴. This type is suitable for all grades.

Fourth: Auditory Dictation (al-imla' al-istima'i):

This means that the teacher reads a passage aloud to the students, then discusses its meaning with them by asking questions and asking them to spell its words or words similar to the difficult vocabulary contained in it. After that, the passage is dictated to them. This type of dictation trains the sense of hearing and enhances learners' use of memory and concentration. It is appropriate for all educational levels.

3. Methodology of Delivering the Dictation Lesson:

Dictation is taught using the same method applied in teaching grammar and morphology, namely the inductive method. This means that learners induce and derive the dictation rule by observing a text prepared for this purpose (separate sentences often taken from the previous reading text or one of its paragraphs). If the reading text does not serve the topic, the teacher is free to select other suitable supports. Afterward, an application is carried out, following these steps:

1. The teacher reads the text written on the board in clear handwriting with a model reading, followed by readings from the best-performing students.
2. A general discussion of the text and its content is conducted in order to overcome difficulties and ensure comprehension.
3. Moving from the general to the specific, focusing on the key words related to the dictation lesson, from which the rule is to be induced.
4. Writing these words vertically on the board, and gradually inducing the rule step by step.
5. Deducing the rule and writing it on the board with illustrative examples for each of its elements—preferably with the active participation of the students. This step builds learners' self-confidence, reinforces the rule in their memory, and encourages competition among them.
6. Reading the rule by the teacher, followed by some students' readings, in order to consolidate and fix it in learners' memory.
7. Writing the rule down in the students' notebooks.
8. Application: usually through a dictation exercise of the given text or another prepared text suitable for the lesson. Based on field experience, it is preferable to prepare another text specifically for dictation.
9. Correcting the application: there are several methods for correction, the most important of which are:

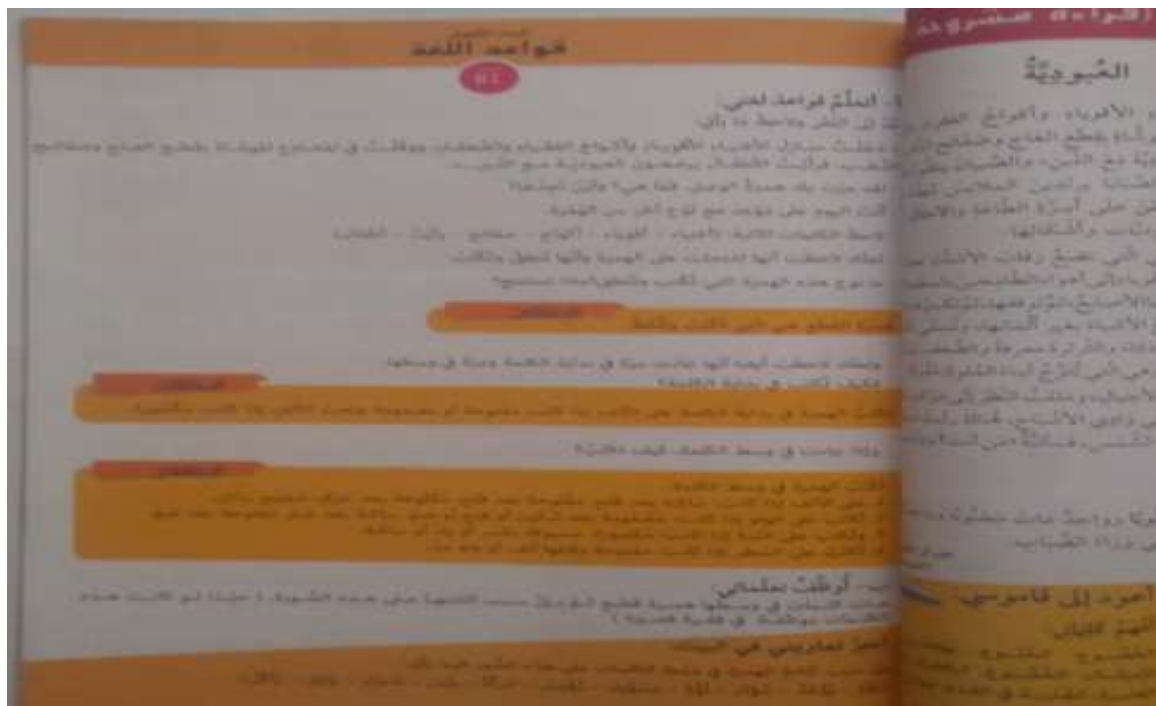
- a. The teacher corrects the students' notebooks himself, recording the mistakes in a special notebook, then explaining the correct form on the board. This method is tiring for the teacher and not beneficial for the students, since they do not witness the correction process and only see the final grade or remark.
- b. Each student corrects his own mistakes after the dictation text, free of errors, has been written on the board. This is the best and most effective method.
- c. The teacher leaves the notebooks in front of the students, then rereads the dictation, stopping at the difficult words or those that apply the lesson. He asks the students about the correct spelling and reminds them of the rule, while students correct their mistakes. This method requires the teacher to review and monitor students' corrections to prevent errors from remaining in their notebooks. It is also a successful method because it encourages students to recall the rule, stimulates participation, and promotes active thinking.

Another method sometimes used by teachers, depending on their students' characteristics, is to exchange notebooks so that each student corrects another's work. However, this method is rejected for several reasons: first, it exposes students to their peers' mistakes, which may become fixed in their minds; second, it casts doubt on students' integrity by giving them the impression that they are not trusted; and third, it may teach some of them dishonesty, favoritism, and cheating ¹⁵.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the optimal method for correcting dictation is either the second or the third.

4. The Most Common Spelling Errors Among First-Year Middle School Students:

In what follows, we will present two models of dictation lessons prescribed in the Arabic language curriculum for the first year of middle school, as illustrated below:



1. The Hamzat al-Qat' (Glottal Stop) at the Beginning and Middle of the Word (p. 81):

a. I Learn the Rules of My Language:

- Write the text between quotation marks on the board, and ask students the questions as provided in the textbook page mentioned above.
- Derive the conclusions one by one, following a logical progression.

b. I Apply My Learning:

- This application is carried out immediately after the lesson. The teacher may propose additional exercises depending on the students' weaknesses and according to the time available for the session. If the allotted time is insufficient to correct all the exercises, the teacher may return to them in guided work sessions or during integration activities at the end of the learning unit.
- Students are also assigned the homework activity found at the bottom of the page under the title: I Do My Exercises at Home.



2. The Open T (ta maftuha) (p. 121):

a. I Learn the Rules of My Language:

- Write the text at the top of page 121 on the board and ask the appropriate questions related to the topic, as indicated in the textbook.
- Involve students in formulating the conclusion or the new dictation rule.

b. I Apply My Learning:

Each student individually attempts to answer the two requirements given in the same session. The teacher then monitors the students' work and corrects with their participation. The teacher

also assigns other homework exercises (including I Do My Exercises at Home suggested at the bottom of the lesson), which students complete in their practice notebooks. These are corrected during guided work sessions or partial integration sessions at the end of the learning unit.

Although the two lessons seem sufficient to ensure students' comprehension, we still find, during the correction of their written expressions or when answering direct questions related to dictation lessons, that they make numerous mistakes, especially confusing the writing of hamza in its two types or writing ta at the ends of words, as well as other errors from the remaining lessons. The most common spelling errors made by learners include:

- **Errors related to letters with similar pronunciation:**
 - *za* and *dad*, e.g., *nadara* (freshness) / *nazzara* (glasses), or *dalla* (to mislead) / *zalla* (to remain).
 - *sad* and *sin*, e.g., *sara* (he became) / *sara* (he walked).
 - *dal* and *dhal*, e.g., *nafada* (to run out) / *nafadha* (to penetrate), or *dalla* (to guide) / *dhalla* (to humiliate).
 - *ta* and *ta*, e.g., *taba* (to repent) / *taba* (to be good).
- **Errors related to writing hamzat al-wasl as hamzat al-qat':**
 - *ism* → 'ism, *istintaj* → 'istintaj, *ibn/ibna* → 'ibn/'ibna.
- **Errors in writing hamzat al-qat':**
 - *itmi'nan* → *itma'nan*.
 - *yaqra'* → *yaqru'*.
 - *ma'una* → *mu'na*.
 - *mil'* → *mali'*.
 - *juz'* → *juzi'*.
 - *qiraa* → *qaraa*.
- **Errors in writing ta:**
 - *rasamat* (she drew) → *rasama*.
 - *hayat* (life) → *hayat* with an open *ta*.
 - *ru'at* (shepherds) → *ru'at* with an open *ta*.
 - *mubarat* (match) → *mubarat*.
- **Errors in writing the solar and lunar "al" (definite article):**
 - *al-taqa* → *at-taqa*.
 - *al-shams* → *ash-shams*.
 - *bi-l-ard* → *bilard*.
 - *raaytu al-qamar* → *raaytu l-qamar*.
- **Errors in writing omitted alif:**
 - *hadha* → *hadha*.
 - *al-ilah* → *al-ilah*.
 - *lakin* → *lakin*.
 - *al-Rahman* → *al-Rahman*.
- **Over-extension of short vowels into long vowels:**

- Fatha extended to alif: *baqara* (cow) —→ *baqara*.
- Damma extended to waw: *kura* (ball) —→ *kura*.
- Kasra extended to ya': *rihla* (journey) —→ *rihla*.
- **Writing tanwin as a final *nun*:**
 - *biladun* —→ *biladan*.
 - *ardun* —→ *ardan*.
 - *bintun* —→ *bintan*.

5. DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING DICTATION LESSONS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL:

- ✓ First-year middle school students face numerous difficulties in learning dictation lessons, despite the fact that most of them grasp the dictation rule during the lesson. The most prominent difficulties include:
- ✓ Inability to avoid committing common spelling mistakes during tests and regular exercises, despite most learners' understanding and assimilation of the dictation rule.
- ✓ Lack of concentration and distraction among some learners, explained by individual differences between them.
- ✓ Weak auditory and visual memory.
- ✓ The direct connection between dictation lessons and grammar and morphology rules, which makes it difficult for learners to control correct grammatical writing.
- ✓ Some learners suffer from health problems related to hearing and vision.
- ✓ The influence of colloquial dialect on learners' ability to distinguish between pronunciation and writing.
- ✓ Learners' sense of boredom during dictation lessons due to a lack of motivation and insufficient variety in activities on the part of some teachers, which reduces their motivation for learning.

6. CAUSES OF THE SPREAD OF SPELLING WEAKNESS:

Several reasons and factors have led to the spread of spelling weakness, the most important of which are:

▪ **Reasons related to the conditions surrounding the teaching-learning process:**

For example, the large number of students in one class, which makes it difficult for the teacher to involve everyone in the lesson, in addition to the lack of resources and teaching aids that facilitate dictation, such as overhead projectors, individual boards, and others.

▪ **Reasons related to the learners themselves:**

Some students have weak intellectual and linguistic levels, unable to distinguish between letters with similar articulation points for example, confusing *dad* and *dal* in certain words such as *difda'* (frog), where the *dal* is pronounced as *dad*, causing students to err. Similarly, failing to distinguish

between dad and za' in many words such as: zahira (phenomenon), zahr (back), damma (dammah), nadara (freshness), nazzara (glasses).

Their psychological and emotional states also vary: some are hesitant, fearful, and lacking self-confidence, while others suffer from speech disorders such as stuttering, lisping, or stammering, in addition to other individual differences.

▪ **Reasons related to spelling rules:**

For example, the difference between the written form of a letter and its sound. Arabic differs from other languages in that some letters are written but not pronounced, or pronounced but not written. Such additions or omissions cause discrepancies between spoken and written forms, making it difficult for students to write words correctly.

Examples of addition: Amr (with an added waw), la'ibu (they played), with an added separating alif.

Examples of omission: Allah, Taha, dhalika, al-Rahman, ilah, lakin, where the pronounced alif is omitted. Khalifa Al-Junaidi described these as: "Words pronounced in fullness but written in deprivation, if the expression is correct, for no reason other than having endured deprivation in earlier times." ¹⁶. By "fullness," he meant they are pronounced fully, while by "deprivation," he meant they are written in an incomplete form.

▪ **Reasons related to grammar and morphology rules:**

Some dictation rules depend on grammar and morphology in their written form, which presents an obstacle for learners: if they are not proficient in grammar and morphology, they will commit many spelling errors. For example, they must know the grammatical position of the word and its derivational origin before writing it.

- Writing the hamza in: jaa aba'ukum (your fathers came), raaytu abaakum (I saw your fathers), nazartu ila aba'ikum (I looked at your fathers).

The grammatical case of the hamza (nominative, accusative, genitive) determines how it is written.

From the morphological perspective: the soft alif (alif layyina) can only be written after knowing its derivational origin:

- 'asa (stick) is written with a long alif because it derives from 'aswan (dual form).
- masha (he walked) / jara (he ran) are written with a short alif (maqsura) because their roots are ya', as seen in their present tense forms yamshi (he walks) / yajri (he runs).
- da'a (he called) / sama (he rose) have their alif changed to waw in the present tense: yad'u (he calls) / yasmu (he rises).

▪ **Factors related to teaching methods:**

Undoubtedly, the method of teaching dictation has a significant impact on achieving the objectives of the lesson. Effective teaching methods depend on the teacher's skill and academic competence. Among the teaching-related causes of spelling weakness are:

- Choosing an inappropriate text for the dictation lesson, such as one containing difficult or forced vocabulary, or one that has no connection to students' reality, or failing to consider appropriate length.
- Not allocating sufficient time for the session, and dictating too quickly.
- Not using the board properly.
- Teachers' neglect in training students on the correct use of the four skills: listening carefully to articulation points (especially similar ones), correct pronunciation, accurate vision, and proper writing.
- Neglecting applications and exercises and not dedicating enough time to them.
- Teachers correcting alone without involving students in the process.
- Failure to identify and address common errors among students.
- Isolating dictation from other activities such as reading, composition, handwriting, and grammar.
- The absence of a dedicated dictation activity book.
- The lack of specialized dictation labs.

7. Effects of the Spread of Spelling Weakness in Later Educational Stages:

- ✓ The phenomenon of spelling weakness, once it spreads, has lasting consequences that continue with learners throughout their later educational stages, and may even accompany them until they occupy jobs that rely heavily on writing. Among these effects are:
- ✓ Distortion of the intended meaning, leading to obscurity of the idea; spelling errors prevent the correct understanding of written material ¹⁷. This damage is particularly severe for university students when writing their papers and research.
- ✓ Difficulty in obtaining employment in companies, factories, shops, or institutions that rely primarily on writing.
- ✓ The persistence of spelling errors even among students of Arabic language, as well as writers, teachers, and journalists. Mustafa Amin stated: "It seems we have forgotten that many newspaper readers learn the language from them, so by these mistakes we are in fact teaching them ignorance."¹⁸. This demonstrates the presence of spelling mistakes in the works of journalists and writers. Anis Mansour also said: "We must pay attention to the Arabic language—this language that no one seems to know how to pronounce or write properly."¹⁹. These statements highlight the serious deficiency in learning our language in the required manner.

8. The Role of the Dictation Lesson in Improving the Quality of Learners' Written Language:

Teaching dictation at various educational levels leads to:

- ✓ **Improvement of learners' written performance:** Students become able to write correctly, with greater accuracy and clarity, during written expression, thanks to the diversity and comprehensiveness of dictation lessons.

- ✓ **Reduction in the number of spelling errors:** Continuous training helps consolidate and reinforce knowledge, thereby decreasing the number of spelling mistakes.
- ✓ **Practical application of grammar and morphology rules:** Students apply these rules while composing texts, since written expression involves integrating knowledge acquired through other activities (listening comprehension, reading comprehension, grammar, morphology, etc.), which demonstrates learners' ability to invest and merge their knowledge into a unified framework.
- ✓ **Assessment of learners' level and progress:** Dictation serves as both evaluation and training, helping to identify deficiencies and address them gradually.
- ✓ **Boosting learners' self-confidence:** Encouraging them to use their language correctly and to take pride in it.

9. A MODEL FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PRESCRIBED DICTATION PROGRAM DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025 FOR A FIRST-YEAR MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASS:

Week	Cognitive Content	Proposed Activities	Types of Dictation	Targeted Competencies	Assessment and Remediation
1	Diagnostic Evaluation + Review	A short text (fifty words) + discussion of common errors	Diagnostic Dictation	Identifying areas of weakness Error Correction for Future Prevention	Analytical Worksheet on Errors and Their Remediation
2	Punctuation Marks + Copying	Copying short sentences + Visual Dictation (writing a short text with punctuation marks, then erasing it) and subsequently dictating it to the students	Transcribed Dictation	Vocalizing words with diacritical marks and punctuating sentences with appropriate punctuation. Distinguishing between types of sentences.	Group activity to correct a text without punctuation marks
3	The Hamza at the Beginning of the Word (Hamzat al-Qat' – Hamzat al-Wasl)	Writing words containing Hamzat al-Qat' or Hamzat al-Wasl, such as: ibn (son) – ibna (daughter) – imraa (woman) – Ashraf – imam (imam)....	Visual Dictation + Test Dictation	Distinguishing Between Hamzat al-Qat' and Hamzat al-Wasl in Writing	Short Test (Dictation of Ten Words)
4	The Medial and Final Hamza	Practice Table (masala – shati' – bi'r – ra'is – mas'ul – shay' ...)	Controlled Dictation	The ability to write the medial and final hamza correctly	Individual Dictation
5	The Open Ta and the Closed Ta	Game: Correct the error in the following words: mu'allimatun – baytun – mumarridat ...	Test Dictation	The ability to distinguish between the closed ta and the ha, and to identify the cases in which the open ta is written in nouns.	Group Correction

6	The Open Ta in Verbs and Nouns	Writing varied sentences that include verbs and nouns ending with ta (e.g., wasalat – tawalat – waqaftu – sayyidat – zayt – mu'allimat ...).	Visual Dictation	Consolidation and Reinforcement of the Rule	Joint Activity (Pair Work)
7	The Soft Alif in Trilateral Nouns	Table with words (e.g., Muna – Huda – al-dunya – al-mustashfa – al-'asa – al-'ula – al-fata ...).	Transcribed Dictation	Differentiation Between the Long Soft Alif and the Short (Maqsura) Alif	Short Dictation
8	The Soft Alif in Verbs	Dictation Exercise (qada – sa'a – dana – rama – sama ...)	Controlled Dictation	Written Reinforcement of the Rule Using Verbs in the Past and Present Tense	Unified Writing Activity
9	Hamzat al-Wasl in Verbs and Nouns	Writing Different Words (istakhraja – ibtasim – imraa – ibn – istiqlal)	Visual + Test Dictation	Identification of the Positions of Hamzat al-Wasl in Verbs and Nouns	Group Dictation
10	Hamzat al-Qat	Exercises (ra's – mi'dhana – muadhdhin – Ahmad – Islam – 'inna – anna ...)	Test Dictation	Distinguishing It from Hamzat al-Qat	Short Test
11	A Text Incorporating the Previous Lessons (Practice)	Writing a Short Text (100 words) Including All the Previous Spelling Phenomena	Test Dictation	Integration of Previous Spelling Phenomena and Reinforcement of the Rule	Collaborative Correction
12	Final Evaluation	Writing a New Text (120 words)	Comprehensive Test Dictation	Measuring the Impact of the Program	Comparison of Final Test Results with Diagnostic Test Results

Key Findings and Observations After Implementing the Program:

After implementing the prescribed dictation program with first-year middle school students, a set of observations were recorded, the most important of which are:

- ✓ A decrease of at least 45% in the number of spelling mistakes in learners' written performance compared to the beginning of the year, especially in writing the closed ta (ta marbuta), the open ta (ta maftuha), hamzat al-wasl and hamzat al-qat', and in using tanwin.
- ✓ Learners were able to formulate and explain the spelling rule themselves, which is evidence of good comprehension.
- ✓ A noticeable improvement in learners' quality of Arabic usage, particularly in their written performance. Their reading skills also improved due to their understanding of spelling rules, which corrected their pronunciation of certain letters, such as the pronounced hamzat al-qat' and the unpronounced hamzat al-wasl.

It should be noted that implementing the dictation program and evaluating the results over the course of a single semester is not sufficient to achieve the desired objectives; rather, this evaluation should

continue throughout the entire academic year in order to measure the success indicators of the program and the features of improvement in learners' quality of written Arabic usage.

CONCLUSION:

It is evident from this research paper that the teaching of dictation has a significant impact on improving the quality of the use of the Arabic language in all contexts, especially in its written form. The dictation lesson constitutes a fundamental pillar in building learners' writing competence in Algerian schools; it contributes to consolidating correct linguistic rules and reducing common spelling errors that weaken the quality of written performance.

The study also concluded that systematic attention to dictation through diversifying its teaching methods, developing instructional tools, and linking it to daily writing practices—improves learners' writing skills and enhances their awareness of linguistic accuracy as a tool of expression and thought.

The phenomenon of spelling weakness has become a real problem that burdens our students throughout their academic and professional lives. Therefore, it has become necessary to seriously consider effective and practical solutions in the field to reduce this phenomenon and to develop dictation instruction. Accordingly, we propose a set of recommendations as follows:

1. Allocate a separate session for dictation, especially in the first year of middle school, since the dictation lesson is often delivered in the same session with explained reading.
2. Diversify and develop methods of teaching dictation by moving from traditional approaches based on direct dictation to new methods relying on observation, analysis, and self-correction. This requires a comprehensive pedagogical vision that combines theory with creative practical applications, in line with scientific and technological progress, while benefiting from modern approaches to language teaching.
3. Adopt modern learning modes such as blended learning, hybrid learning, and e-learning, which allow the integration of modern digital media in teaching dictation. This can be achieved by incorporating educational software and interactive applications that help learners practice dictation in stimulating and engaging ways, such as using educational videos, recorded tapes, and overhead projectors. These tools capture students' attention, foster interaction, active and cooperative learning, strengthen their self-confidence, enhance their linguistic proficiency, and stimulate their memory, thereby helping them consolidate spelling rules. Consequently, the dictation lesson becomes an effective tool for improving the quality of Arabic usage not only within schools but also across different areas of written communication in society.
4. Prepare a dedicated book for dictation activities in the first year of middle school and in primary education. Alternatively, teachers can design supportive notebooks, such as activity booklets or digital dictation workbooks, to enhance practice outside the classroom, while taking into account learners' individual differences and simplifying spelling rules through relatable examples.

5. Teachers should connect dictation with other writing-related activities, such as composition, reading comprehension, grammar, and reading lessons, while identifying common errors and setting up a serious practical program to address them.
6. Encourage self-correction and collaborative correction by involving students in discovering and correcting their own mistakes, thus reinforcing their autonomy in learning.
7. Address classroom overcrowding by dividing students into groups and teaching them alternately, or by increasing the number of classrooms.
8. Focus on exercises that serve the objectives of the dictation lesson, with attention to quality rather than quantity.
9. Organize training workshops for teachers to familiarize them with the latest global strategies in dictation instruction.
10. Work on developing a digital tool to automatically correct spelling errors through computers.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

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- ¹⁸ Mustafa Amin, “Idea”, Al-Akhbar Newspaper, Issue No. 7537, dated 13/8/1976.
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