

Towards Developing a Language Course for Hajj Guides in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, A Needs Assessment

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Abstract

Hajj guides in the second holy city in Islam deal with some million visitors and pilgrims to the holy Prophet's mosque. Although they are well trained in terms of hospitality and guidance, they seem to lack the basic communication skills in English. As most of the visitors and pilgrims resort to English as an international language, the need arises for developing a systemic ESP course for these Hajj guides. This study assesses the English language needs of these guides. Data gathering methods- including a questionnaire, a proficiency test and unstructured interviews – allowed testing of the questions via triangulation to validate the results.

Keywords: islam, religious tourism, ESP, hajj, english for pilgrims, needs assessment, triangulation

1. Introduction

From the early times of Islam, certain big families and tribes in Medina (Al Medina Al Munawwarah) have provided services and guidance to the pilgrims who come to visit the grand mosque of the prophet of Islam Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be Upon Him). In 1936, shortly after the union of Arabia and the establishment of the third Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a framework was developed to organize the efforts and services provided by different families. It was not until 1985 that a systematic establishment was founded to unite the different individual endeavors. In 2008, the National Establishment for Hajj Guides was officially affiliated with the Saudi Ministry of Hajj. Hajj guides in Medina are called "Adilla" in Arabic; hence the English translation of the title of the establishment is "National Adilla Establishment" (NAE henceforth). Within the latest framework, the NAE has developed detailed in-house divisions to systematize and improve the quality of the services provided to pilgrims and visitors.

The basic services provided by the NAE to Hajjis and visitors to the holy city are: (NAE website 2012)

- 1) **Reception:** representatives of the NAE receive Hajjis at Al Medina airport, provide them with simple gifts and guide them to their places of residence.
- 2) **Medical service:** Hajjis who become ill and/or need to go to hospital are looked after, and Hajjis who die during their stay in Medina are taken care of through providing burial services.
- 3) **Facilitating accommodation:** while the NAE does not provide accommodation of its own, it helps facilitate the process through working as a liaison between Hajj companies and hotels in Medina.
- 4) **Debriefing and guidance:** representatives of the NAE provide guidance and answers to Hajjis' questions that are related to religious duties, medical needs, adequate behavior in holy places, and public relations.
- 5) **Computer services:** All Hajjis' data are stored on computer databases for ease of reference when need for such data arises especially in cases of Hajjis who become lost or are missing.
- 6) **Passport holding:** All Hajjis' passports are held by the NAE for the registration of data and for safe protection of the passports until the time of their departure.

- 7) **Facilitating departure:** representatives of the NAE help facilitate Hajjis' departure through providing buses, helping in finalizing departure procedures, and offering gifts at airports.
- 8) **Residence inspection:** the NAE periodically inspects places of residences, hotels and hostels that are specialized in accommodating Hajjis to check quality of places of stay and services. The NAE has the authority to ban facilities that fail to meet the quality standards provided by the Ministry of Hajj.

In its current format, the NAE consists of the following units:

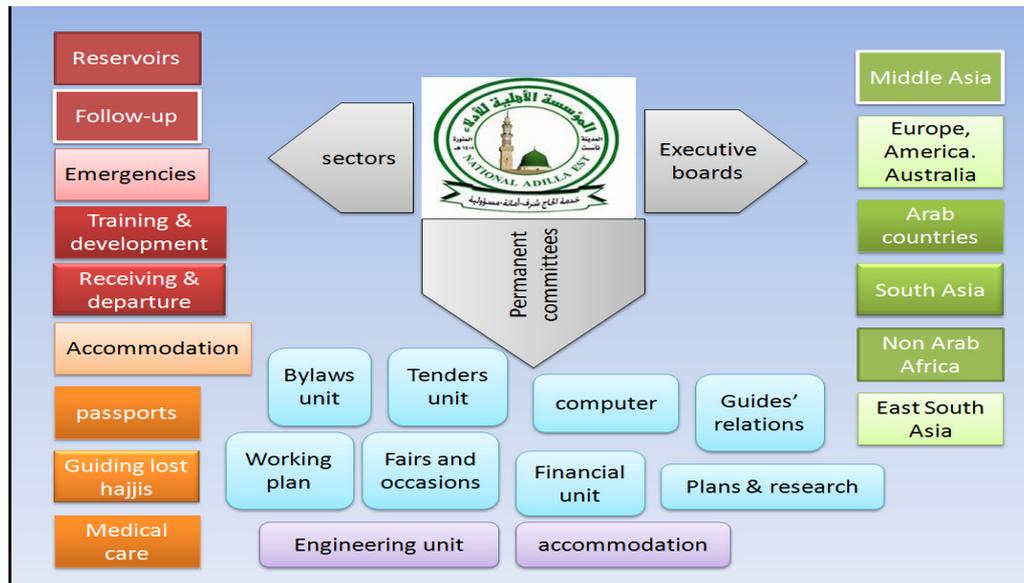


Figure 1. Organization of the NAE (Note 1)

Because it works with about 2.5 million Hajjis per year, the NAE hires a big number of seasonal guides who can use the various languages of the visitors in communication. Because there are no professionals in all languages needed, the NAE hires people who can use English as a lingua franca with visitors who can speak English as a second language.

Although the training unit in the NAE offers periodical training programs to the guides on public relations, managing crowds and communication skills, it is noticed that there is no systemic course in English to fulfill the language and communication needs. Since guides deal with people from different nationalities, English serves as a lingua franca for communication among people who do not share a common language. Due to the role played by the English language, the need arises for training the Hajj guides in the basic language and communication skills needed for accomplishing their job. Since there is no systemic course designed especially for this group, the present study seeks to assess the language needs of the guides in order to recommend a framework for a training language course.

2. Theoretical Background

The purpose of the present study is to assess the language and communication needs of Hajj guides in the city of Medina. Medina Hajj guides use English as a vehicle for communicating professionally with non-Arabic speakers who visit the holy city. As a matter of fact, "English is now the dominant or official language in over 60 countries ..., and is represented in every continent and in the three major oceans. ... It is this spread of representation which makes the application of the term 'world language' a reality" (Crystal, 1995:106). A language needs assessment is sought to achieve this goal.

Because the type of English needed for this group of participants is not general English, but rather a specialized type of vocational English that suits their needs, an ESP approach is followed in assessing their needs. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) define ESP as "an approach to language teaching which aims to meet the needs of particular learners" (p.21). According to Dudley-Evans (1998), ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners; ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves, and is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre". Hutchinson & Waters (1987) explain that "what distinguishes ESP from General English is not the

existence of a need as such but rather an awareness of the need”(p.53). Accordingly, the scope of the study is delimited to a group of practitioners in Hajj guidance by undertaking a triangulated procedure. Cheng (2005) states that “triangulation is often used to indicate that more than two methods are used in a study with a view to double (or triple) checking results. This is also called “cross examination””. (p. 72).

Cowling (2007) noted that “casting a large net to cover many sources allows for more opportunities to identify needs and also to filter out any inaccurate perceived needs through the use of triangulation” (p. 429).

Thus, we can state the following items as the rationale behind the present study:

- Medina Hajj use English as an international/ global language for communication purposes.
- A triangulation of data process is undertaken through using a questionnaire, interviews and a test.
- The needs of these participants will be the basis for outlining a developmental program of study.

As the world is getting closer and the communication revolution is reaching its peak, people tend to rely on facilitating means for business and science exchange. Through the ages, different languages served as the lingua franca for such purposes. Latin was the lingua franca of Europe before the age of the Renaissance, and Arabic was the dominant language of science and study in the Middle Ages. English is undoubtedly performing this task now. It has become something like an Esperanto language through which people all over world get to communicate. Crystal (1997, p.1) made the bold statement that “English is the global language”. According to Fishman (1996, p. 628) “The world of large scale commerce, industry, technology, and banking, like the world of certain human sciences and professions, is an international world and it is linguistically dominated by English almost everywhere, regardless of how well established and well-protected local cultures, languages, and identities may otherwise be”.

The case with the Arab and Muslim communities, however, took long to contextualize the everyday use of English for their particular needs. Mahboob (2009:188) argues that English is a “powerful language worldwide, and that this power implies that English plays a key role in education around the world, including in Muslim countries. A number of applied linguists have expressed concern about the power that English represents, and are concerned that this language continues to be a language to which colonial messages adhere. This view led to some extremist fatwas (religious judgments) condemning English as “a thread to the national identity, a language of infidels, and a waste of time” (Al-Hajoori: 2011). Enlightened Muslim scholars, on the other hand, regard English as a “vehicle for reaching a wider audience and for delivering the word of God” (Al-Ouda, 2011). Mahboob (2009:188) points out that many scholars have challenged such assumptions, and have argued that “the new varieties of English such as Singaporean English, Ghanaian English, and Pakistani English represent a language of opposition to colonial discourses”.

Mohd-Asraf (2005:103) discusses some of the reasons behind traditional Muslims’ resistance to English, focusing on Muslims in Malaysia. He argues that “although English is rooted in the Judeo-Christian culture, and often viewed as a primary vehicle for the transmission of “Western” values, the learning of English is not in conflict with Islamic values”. He also presents an Islamic perspective on the role of language and the attitude that Muslims should adopt towards learning languages. He concludes by emphasizing the need for English teachers to take into account the socio-cultural aspects of learning English when teaching Muslim students, and for Muslims to value the importance of learning English for the purpose of acquiring contemporary knowledge.

Elyas and Picard (2010: 143) argue that “English pedagogy – in Muslim countries- is most appropriately placed within “the third space”...., with a hybrid English language pedagogy which interrogates both traditional Islamic approaches and relevant Western practices and marries the best of these approaches to enhance teaching and learning. This exploration would best occur within quality teacher training facilities which encourage reflective practices and research into culturally appropriate pedagogy”. Within such a hybrid pedagogy the functions of the language would be presented within the culture of the Islamic countries. Selected practices that promote international understanding and cultural acceptance of the target language would draw the core of such pedagogy.

Based on the reviewed literature, the present study tries to answer the following questions:

- What are the language needs of Medina Hajj guides?
- Within a global communication context, what type of “English” should be presented in a training program for this group?

3. Data Collection

The present study went through 3 stages: first, the researchers conducted unstructured interviews with some leaders in the NAE who are responsible of hiring guides and organizing their work during heavy seasons. In the second stage, we designed a questionnaire, and submitted it to some in-service Hajj guides. In the third stage, we collected information concerning the state-of-the art of Hajj guides' proficiency level in English through developing a proficiency test. This triangulation procedure was used to support the results attained from each of the three instruments, and to ensure the reliability of the final results.

3.1 Unstructured Interviews

We decided to interview four groups of stakeholders who are closely related to the work of the guides. The total number of interviewees was 13 as shown below:

- 1) The board of trustees for the NAE (5 persons); as they manage the work of the Hajj guides and suggest the annual working plan for them. They were assumed to provide the study with insight suggestions on the areas that need development in the work of the Hajj guides.
- 2) The head of the department of English and the director of the language centre in Taibah University in Medina, as these are the persons responsible for governmental training in English language and communication skills. They were perceived to provide the study with insightful comments on the areas that need development in the work of Hajj guides based on their long experience in training Imams and religious preachers.
- 3) The director of the Hajj and Umra² students' committee; as he is responsible for providing help related to man power from university students if need arises for more Hajj guides within the NAE work. He was perceived to provide the study with insightful comments on the needed areas for development.
- 4) Field workers in the ministry of tourism branch in Medina (5 persons); as these are the persons who supervise the work of Hajj guides from the ministry of Hajj, and who provide consistent feedback on their work. They offer valuable comments on certain areas that need development in the work of Hajj guides.

Unstructured interviews were selected as a data gathering technique because, as Long (2005) observes:

[they] allow in-depth coverage of issues and have the advantage of not preempting unanticipated findings by use of predetermined questions, categories and response options, a potential limitation of structured interviews and questionnaires (2005, p. 36).

Four 50-minute interviews were conducted, in November 2011, December 2011 and January 2012. Findings of this initial stage are summarized below:

- It is crucial for Hajj guides to speak English (typically, most visitors to Medina do not speak Arabic). Even though the NAE is aware of this, there is no systemic training in English as a foreign language for novice guides, and the case depends mainly on different persons' capacities in using English.
- There is no placement test for aspirant guides, and graduates of the English departments from colleges of Education and Humanities are given priority in hiring.
- Some native speaking students who study at the international Islamic university in Medina are also hired to deal with visitors who come from their countries of origin. English native speakers constitute a big number of them; normally from West and South Africa.
- The regulations of the KSA (gender segregation and religious conservatism) should be taken into consideration
- Time is very limited as guides are hard to gather in times other than the season of Hajj in Zul Hejjah and the Ramadan Umra.
- Most guides volunteer for this work during Hajj and Umra seasons.

In order to gather data regarding in-service Hajj guides' language needs, 100 in-service guides were randomly selected to respond to a questionnaire. This group was considered experienced "in service" representatives from the field, who often "make excellent sources on the content of their job" (Long, 2005, p. 27). Surveying the needs was carried out in two separate stages: having participants fill in the questionnaires before their seasonal work with the NAE in September, and by administering an English language proficiency test. The NAE allowed the researchers to administer the two instruments in the due dates.

3.2 The Questionnaire

According to West (1994), questionnaires represent a well-established instrument for collecting data in needs assessment research. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed in three stages. The questionnaire developed by Wozniak (2010) to investigate French mountain guides' linguistic needs was used as a starting point and was modified to suit the professional context of Hajj guides. The questionnaire was discussed with the NAE board of trustees and then was piloted on 10 guides. In its final version, the questionnaire consists of 31 questions in five different parts: personal data, language background, use of English in the professional context, the suitable required level of English and the suitable time for training. There was also an open-ended question for participants to add any clarifying information. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic, and guides were free to respond to whatever version they prefer. A total of 90 copies of the questionnaire (out of 100 candidates, i.e. 90%) were completed.

3.3 Hajj Guides' Level of English Language Proficiency

In order to check Hajj guides' current level in English, a proficiency test was developed. According to Brown (1996, p.9), "proficiency decisions are necessary in setting up entrance and exit standards for a curriculum, in adjusting the level of the program objectives to the students' abilities or in making comparisons between programs." In other words, teachers and administrators must make a variety of curricular and administrative decisions on the basis of overall proficiency information.

Because of the general nature of proficiency decisions, a proficiency test must be designed so that the general abilities or skills of students are reflected in a wide distribution of scores. August & Hakuta (1997, p.114) note that language proficiency tests cannot be ignored "because they are tapping an ability correlated with a variety of language proficiencies, not because they constitute language proficiency"

Taking this background in consideration, we developed our proficiency test for Hajj guides. The test included four main sections that represent the four language skills. Objective and open-ended questions were used. The test represents the average level that should be represented by each Hajj guide, and makes use of materials related to their work. 100 field workers from Hajj guides were randomly chosen to sit for the test. Those were the same group that responded to the questionnaire.

Constructing the test items

Based on the interviews with the field workers and the stakeholders in Hajj guidance, certain areas in the English language were prioritized according to the following criteria: frequency of mention by guides and stakeholders; frequency of error by students in the pilot study (see below); testability; and formative potential for non-native speakers. Fifty two candidate test items were developed from the areas prioritized.

Based on these areas, a table of specifications was designed, items were written and materials were selected. The duration of the test was 2 hours for the sections: grammar, reading, writing and listening. Then there was an interview for 10 minutes where participants were expected to manifest their speaking skills in replying to selected questions related to their work. With the help of two native speaker Hajj guides and EFL professionals at Taibah University, each candidate item was embedded in as authentic a sentence as possible, and three distractor sentences were formulated in the MCQ item type in the test in the grammar section, the reading section and the listening section.

Scrutiny

The resulting 45 multiple choice items (30 in the grammar and vocabulary, 10 in the reading section, and 5 in the listening section) in addition to the open-ended and semi-controlled test items in the writing and the speaking sections were submitted to a scrutiny panel consisting of: the two native speaker Hajj guides (both university graduates of the Islamic University), four TEFL university professors, two university tutors in the language Centre, and one professor of Linguistics from a the department of English with special expertise in language testing. As a result, most the questions especially in the multiple choice options were revised in some way (see appendix (B) for the test in its final format).

Pilot study

A sample of 10 Hajj guides was randomly selected to pilot the test. The purpose of this initial step was to determine the appropriateness of the number, duration and construction of the test items to the target audience. Participants were encouraged to spell out any difficulties they faced in comprehending the questions. Based on the results of the pilot study, duration was fixed, and certain items were modified for cultural appropriateness.

Validity and reliability of the test:

The reliability of the test was calculated using Alpha coefficient and was found to be 0.64 which reflects a reasonable reliability value of the test. Reliability of the test was also calculated using the split half method, and Alpha value was 0.86 which reflects a good reliability level of the test. Face and content validity of the test were calculated by submitting the test to a jury of professionals who agreed on its suitability to the target audience. Internal consistency for each section of the test was calculated and was found to be of high validity at 0.05 level as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Internal consistency of the sections of the test

Section	Gram & Voc	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking
Correlation coefficient	0.799	0.796	0.539	0.841	0.823

Item difficulty of the test:

Item difficulty is the proportion of students who answered an item correctly (CET, 2012). If (j) indicates item number, (N_c) is the number of students getting the item correct, and (N) is the total number of students taking the test, then the item difficulty for the (j^{th}) item is

$$P_j = \frac{N_c}{N}$$

Table 2 shows the item difficulty for each section of the test:

Table 2. Section difficulty and facility for the test

Section	Gram & Voc	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking
Item difficulty	0.37	0.43	0.38	0.6	0.8
Item facility	0.63	0.57	0.62	0.4	0.2

Item discrimination of the test:

Item discrimination is the ability of the item to differentiate those students with more knowledge from those with less. To calculate item discrimination, the total test score is used as a surrogate for this knowledge, the top scoring students are separated from the bottom scoring students, and then their response patterns are compared (CET, 2012). The formula for the discrimination index of item (j), where ($p_{ju} = N_{cu} / N_u$) is the item difficulty for the upper third and ($p_{jl} = N_{cl} / N_l$) is the difficulty for the lower third, is

$$d_j = p_{ju} - p_{jl}$$

Table 3 the item discrimination for each section of the test:

Table 3. Section discrimination for the test

Section	Gram & Voc	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking
Item discrimination	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1

Table 3 shows that the first three sections (Grammar / vocabulary, reading and listening) are highly discriminatory, while the last two sections (writing and speaking) are not. This is attributed to the nature of the productive skills of writing and speaking as opposed to the receptive skills of listening and reading. This can also be attributed to the difference in test types in the different sections; using MCQ with the first three sections, and using open-ended questions with the last two sections (writing and speaking).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Results of the Questionnaire

Language Background

The first part of the questionnaire was devoted to the respondents' language background. 90 Hajj guides filled out the questionnaire. Their average age was 25. Eighty five out of 90 (94%) were Arabic speakers; one was a native speaker of English and four spoke Urdu as a mother tongue.

With regard to participants' initial English training, most of them are graduates or are still studying at the English department in colleges of Education or Humanities in Taibah University or other Saudi Universities (75), 10 were not graduates of English, but attended English courses abroad and 5 were students in the Islamic university. None of them had experience in ESP. Some (30) mentioned that they improved their English while communicating with their English-speaking visitors, while 12 of them had some experience of traveling to English-speaking countries.

English language in the professional context

A big number of participants used English to communicate professionally with native speaker visitors (51.1%) and with nonnative speakers (36.6% often and 44.4% sometimes). The 4 Urdu speaking guides indicated that they can code switch to Urdu whenever they communicate with people from Pakistan or who prefer to use Urdu to English. Participants tended not to speak English with peer professionals whether native or nonnative speakers because most non Arab Hajj guides would use Arabic rather than English in their communication with Arabic native speakers. This raises the issue of the type of English to be presented when designing a training course in English for these Hajj guides. (See Table 4).

Table 4. As a professional, do you communicate in English with...?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	No response	total
With NS visitors	4 (5.5%)	4 (5.5%)	30 (33.3%)	46 (51.1%)	6 (6.6%)	90 (100%)
With NS professionals	60 (66.6%)	12 (13.3%)	10 (11.1%)	7 (7.7%)	1 (1.1%)	90 (100%)
With NNS visitors	2 (2.2%)	7 (7.7%)	40 (44.4%)	33 (36.6%)	8 (8.8%)	90 (100%)
With NNS professionals	70 (77.7%)	10 (11.1%)	3 (3.3%)	0	7 (7.7%)	90 (100%)

Language skills

With regard to language skills, listening and speaking skills were found to be more occasionally used than were reading and writing skills. Forty five of the participants (50%) often read general documents. On the contrary, very few of them (only 7) read professional documents. This can be attributed to the lack of training in English for Specific Purposes, and the resort to Arabic in reading most Hajj-related materials. A big number of participants took part in conversations about general interests (77.7% with Native speakers and 66.6% of them with Non Native speakers). With NNSs, the number decreases because visitors would sometimes prefer to use languages other than English; mainly Arabic and Urdu. A big number of Hajj guides indicated that they practice writing in English (50% sometimes, and 38.8% often) in general interest electronic venues (email, chat, discussion groups). Based on this result, it seems suitable for the English language proficiency test to be focused on reading, speaking and writing skills. Nevertheless, it would be more appropriate to use different sources of the materials presented in the test. (See table 5).

Table 5. Language Skills

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	No response	total
Reading: general press	2 (2.2%)	8 (8.8%)	33 (36.6%)	45 (50%)	2 (2.2%)	90 (100%)
Reading: professional press	55 (61.1%)	10 (11.1%)	8 (8.8%)	7 (7.7%)	10 (11.1%)	90 (100%)
Writing	2 (2.2%)	7 (7.7%)	45 (50%)	35 (38.8%)	1 (1.1%)	90 (100%)
Conversation with NS	2 (2.2%)	6 (6.6%)	12 (13.3%)	70 (77.7%)	0	90 (100%)
Conversation with NNS	3 (3.3%)	7 (7.7%)	15 (16.6%)	60 (66.6%)	5 (5.5%)	90 (100%)

Adequate level of proficiency

Almost all Hajj guides indicated that a guide should be able to communicate in basic English (81, i.e. 90.3%). A bigger number of them indicated that a guide should be fluent in English to make themselves understood (87, i.e. 96.6%). The participants also stressed the significance of using English for their occupation purposes. Almost all of them (87) agreed on the importance of understanding and giving safety instructions, describing the characteristics of medical emergency and sending emergency messages. Eighty eight of them (98.1%) emphasized the importance for the guides to be able to communicate with the visitors in General English, i.e. describe their work, etc., and take part in written or discussions dealing with profession-related issues.

Concerning setting up a training program for these Hajj guides, most participants thought that it would be useful to have a training course in English at the NAE (86 of them, i.e. 95.4%) or as part of guides' in-service training (70, i.e. 77.7%). Fifteen of them didn't agree to a periodic training in English based on the fact that their work is mostly occasional and voluntarily.

A problem-based approach to language training would then be the most appropriate for this group. Belcher (2009) explains that "PBL activities are designed to engage students in collaborative solving of typical field specific problems, simulated or actually occurring, using as resources materials that the learners themselves find and critically analyze" (p. 9). Knowledge about cultural differences was suggested by one of the native speaker Hajj guides to be part of the needed language training: "People from different nationalities need different ways of treatment; the South Asians who expect the guide to be tolerant of their mistakes, are quite different from the Europeans who expect the guide to be sharp and informative."

Table 6. Level of proficiency

	Don't agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No response	total
HG should communicate in Basic English	7 (7.7%)	40 (44.4%)	41 (45.5%)	2 (2.2%)	90 (100%)
HG should communicate in good English	3 (3.3%)	22 (24.4%)	65 (72.2%)	0	90 (100%)
HG should be fluent in English	2 (2.2%)	24 (26.6%)	63 (70%)	1 (1.1%)	90 (100%)
HG need basic training in English	2 (2.2%)	30 (33.3%)	56 (62.2%)	2 (2.2%)	90 (100%)
HG need periodic training in English	15 (16.6%)	29 (32.2%)	41 (45.5%)	5 (5.5%)	90 (100%)

4.2 Results of the Test

Results of the proficiency test emphasized those attained from Hajj guides who responded to the questionnaire. Table 7 shows participants' scores in the test as a whole and to each subsection of it.

Table 7. Mean and SD of Hajj guides' scores in the Proficiency test

Section	subsection	Total score	Mean	SD
Gram/Voc		30	19.4	5.11
Reading	Passage	5	3.65	0.933
	Matching	5	3	1.45
Writing	rearranging	5	2.65	2.05
	Letter writing	10	1.4	1.39
Listening		10	2.4	0.940
Speaking		10	2.9	1.11
Total		75	35.4	10.311

Table 7 shows that participants who sat for the test hardly achieved 50% of the total score. Participants' mean score in the test was 35.4 out of a total of 75 scores. Their mean score in grammar and vocabulary is the highest (19.4) out of a total of 30 scores. In the reading section, participants' mean score was (6.65) out of a total of 10 scores. This shows that they can read and comprehend relatively well as compared to the other skills. Since the passage reading question included a long passage related to their work, they answered most the questions right.

With the matching subsection, they were required to read mini passages and match them to relevant pictures. They have also answered about 60 % of this question correctly.

Participants' proficiency in writing comes third with a mean score of 4.05 out of a total of 10 scores. This shows that they can hardly write correct sentences or paragraphs in English. What is more important is that their mean score in the letter writing subsection was 1.4 out of 5, which shows that the bigger part of the score in the writing section goes to the rearrangement question which is relatively easier than creating a whole new piece of writing. When it came to the actual performance in letter writing, participants' achievement was not as high as it was in the first subsection. The ability to convene grammar, word choice, information, cohesion, punctuation, conventions, unity and coherence in a piece of writing is not as easy as the act of arranging events. This shows that these guides need training in the areas of writing correct sentences, organizing ideas and producing well formed pieces that are related to their career.

The listening part was the least section in which participant scored. A mean of 2.4 out of 10 shows that they could hardly listen and understand a text related to their job. Although the nature of their work incorporates lots of listening practices, they seem not to concentrate or fully understand the message addressed to them by an English speaking guest. This in turn emphasizes the results attained from the questionnaire and the focus groups where stakeholders reported that most Hajj guides need intensive training in listening and speaking.

While participants' scores in listening were lower than those in the speaking section of the test, we have to take into consideration that most of the answers provided to the questions in the interview part were the ones related to introducing oneself. Participants' answers in this section do not mean that they speak better than they listen. After all, both means are very low; 2.4 and 2.9 respectively. It rather means that they have readymade templates to use when asked about their jobs. Answering simple questions like asking about names, places, dates, and people was an easy task for the participants. On the other hand questions like asking about specifications of job, opinion, difficulties and problems in career, seemed difficult for them. This again confirms the need for intensive training in listening and speaking.

Participants' achievement in reading and grammar was higher than that in the other skills, because it is conceived that participants find it easier to locate information and match pictures with sentences and phrases as compared to the productive skills. While listening is also a receptive skill, participants' achievement reflects their low level and the need for more training on listening to different varieties of English. This also shows that a written text is easier to attack as compared to a listening text where the mental processing is time-bound not like that of the reading text.

5. Recommendations

Based on the attained results from the interviews, the questionnaire and the test, the following recommendations are suggested:

- a) There is an urgent need for developing an ESP course for Medina Hajj guides
- b) The frame work of the suggested course should cater for the productive skills (listening and speaking) without neglecting the receptive skills (reading and writing)
- c) Materials in the suggested course should reflect the vocational nature of the work of Medina Hajj guides with emphasis on giving directions, making oneself understood, and attending for visitors' needs
- d) Formative and summative valuation procedures should be integrated in the suggested course so as to ensure the quality of the services presented and rectify mistakes in the implementation process.
- e) A basic component of the intended language course should address the cultural differences among Medina visitors and the appropriate strategies for dealing with different nationalities.
- f) Teacher orientation should be a basic aspect in the preparation of the course so as to introduce the course, its objectives, components, methods of teaching, instructional activities, and assessment techniques.
- g) The intended course should be implemented as a pre-sessional course for aspirant Hajj guides, and should be a requirement for hiring new guides. In the mean while, certain parts of the course should also be tailored for in-sessional training for in-service Hajj guides as a form of continuous education.

6. Conclusion

Hajj guides in the second holy city in Islam are in need of sustainable training on basic language and communication skills so as to undertake the responsibilities of their job successfully. While serving the guests of the holy city, they are in need to be served linguistically. Based on the assessed language needs of Hajj guides,

an ESP course seems to be an urgent need for them. The suggested recommendations represent a road map for outlining and developing the needed training programme. Helping Hajj guides in Medina acquire the language and communication needs will empower the slogan of the NAE; “*Serving Medina visitors is an honor, a responsibility and a duty*”.

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Notes

Note 1. This figure is based on the detailed Arabic version available on the NAE website 2012, www.adilla.com.sa

Note 2. Umra is an Arabic word which refers to smaller Hajj, that is; pilgrimage in times other than the month of Zul Hijja where the bigger pilgrimage (Hajj) occurs.

Appendix (A)

Needs analysis questionnaire (submitted in Arabic and English)

1. Bio data:

- 1.1 How old are you?
- 1.2 What is your mother tongue?
- 1.3 What is the highest degree of Education you got?

2. Training:

- 2.1 As a student, did you attend English (EGP) classes?
- 2.2 As a student, did you attend English (tourism and hostelling English) classes?
- 2.3 Have you attended English (EGP) classes since you became a hajj guide?
- 2.4 Have you attended English (tourism and hostelling English) classes since you became a hajj guide?
- 2.5 Have you spent time in an English-speaking country? (Where?/For how long?/What for?)

3. As a **professional**, do you use English to communicate.....?

- 3.1 with visitors that are native English speakers?
- 3.2 with other guides or professionals that are native English speakers?
- 3.3 with visitors that are nonnative English speakers?
- 3.4 with other guides or professionals that are nonnative English speakers?

4. Language skills

- 4.1 Do you read non specialized newspapers and magazines in English (Saudi Gazette, Middle East News, Newsweek, The Guardian, The New York Times, etc.)?
- 4.2 Do you read specialized / professional magazines (Hajj and Umra magazine, etc.)?
- 4.3 Do you write texts in English like email, posts on Internet forums, letters, articles, etc. pertaining to your profession?
- 4.4 Do you take part in general interest conversations in English with English native speakers (greeting a guest/organizing a site seeing trip– accommodation and transport, etc.)?
- 4.5 Do you take part in general interest conversations in English with English nonnative speakers (greeting a guest/ organizing a site seeing trip – accommodation and transport, etc.)?

5. Levels of proficiency:

- 5.1 You think that Hajj guides should be able to communicate in basic English.
- 5.2 You think that Hajj guides should be able to communicate in good English, to make themselves understood by all in all circumstances.
- 5.3 You think that hajj guides should be proficient in guiding and tourism English.
- 5.4 More specifically, you think that hajj guides should be able to:
 - understand/send an emergency message,
 - understand the description of/describe the characteristics of a medical emergency,
 - give safety instructions,
 - explain a decision made in a complex situation,
 - describe the equipment used,

- communicate with their clients in EGP (describe the Hajj dangers, their safety precautions, etc.)
- take part in written or discussions dealing with professional topics,
- know about the stakes for the profession in foreign contexts,
- be able to deal with cultural differences (foreign clients' expectations, etc.).

5.5 Considering your own experience, do you think that it would be useful to offer a basic training course in English at the NAE for new Hajj guides?

5.6. Considering your own experience, do you think that it would be useful to offer a periodic training course in English as part of the guides' continuous education?

- If you have any other comments, please list them below:

Appendix (B) the proficiency test

For Hajj guides

Name: _____

Age: _____

Duration: 2 hours

Dear Hajj guide,

This is a test in English. It is meant to assess your language skills in communicating with English-speaking Hajjis and visitors. You are kindly requested to answer all the questions as shown in the test.

Answer the following questions:

Section One: Grammar, Word Forms and Vocabulary

[30 Marks]

Fill in the circle on your answer sheet corresponding to the letters A, B, C or D.

1. My brother bought----- a book for my birthday.

A) me

B) I

C) her

D) myself

2. I ate my lunch very late, so I only want----- dinner.

A) less

B) a few

C) a little

D) some of

3. There is an exam next door. Please----- quiet.

A) you be

B) you are

C) be

D) to be

4. It's nice to remember some of the good times I had----- I was a child.

A) which

B) who

C) when

D) how

5. We could not watch the film to the end -----it was too boring.

A) because

B) so

C) therefore

D) but

6. I have five brothers but -----of them is quite different.

A) every

B) each

C) all

D) the whole

7. The blue car is-----.

A) mine

B) my

- C) myself
D) me
8. Hamza kept -----the house until he found the keys.
A) search
B) searching
C) searches
D) searched
9. We want -----for a swim this afternoon.
A) go
B) to go
C) will go
D) goes
10. When I lived in Saudi Arabia I ----- my family in Cairo every summer.
A) will visit
B) visited
C) visits
D) visiting
11. There's been a big change -----the weather lately.
A) about
B) over
C) at
D) in
12. I was angry because my brother insisted on -----my homework.
A) to copy
B) copying
C) copy
D) copied
13. ----- Aisha won't help me; I'll have to do it all alone.
A) Whereas
B) So
C) Until
D) Since
14. That's our new neighbor _____ moved in yesterday.
A) who
B) what
C) whom
D) where
15. -----you bring your cell phone with you?
A) Have
B) Does
C) Did

D) Had

16. Sara's dress is beautiful, and she made it _____.

A) himself

B) herself

C) itself

D) myself

17. -----do you make pancakes?

A) How

B) Who

C) Which

D) What

18. My sister is so healthy. She ----- smokes nor eats junk food.

A) both

B) either

C) neither

D) nor

19. I don't know which phone to buy. I like----- of them.

A) all

B) every

C) less

D) few

20. I was a little worried -----my exam results, but I passed.

A) for

B) about

C) in

D) on

21. The library -----a lot by the students.

A) is using

B) uses

C) used

D) is used

22. I ----- to bed early last night, but it was still hard to wake up this morning.

A) go

B) went

C) goes

D) going

23. Mary is ----- engineer.

A) an

B) a

C) these

D) this

24. I have wanted to travel to other countries ----- I was a little girl.

- A) since
B) before
C) until
D) whenever
25. There is ----- on the phone asking to speak to you.
A) each one
B) everyone
C) anyone
D) someone
26. Which sentence is correct English?
A) My sisters an old photo showed my mother.
B) My mother showed my sisters an old photo.
C) An old photo my mother showed my sisters.
D) Showed my mother an old photo my sisters.
27. Yesterday it rained ----- Ali and I got wet on the way home from school.
A) yet
B) but
C) or
D) so
28. Can you give me a ride to work today because my mechanic----- my car.
A) repairs
B) is repairing
C) repairing
D) is repaired
29. I am sure Ahmed's brother is _____ than him.
A) oldest
B) older
C) old
D) too old
30. John is trying to get fit. He ----- getting up at five a.m. every day to go running.
A) been
B) have been
C) are
D) has been

Section Two: Reading

10 marks

(A) Read the following passage, and then choose the correct answer from a), b) or c).

“Welcome” may seem like a simple common word that we use every day. But underneath lies a deeper meaning which shows emotions. When we say "Welcome" to our visitors, not only do we send a greeting message, but we also convey feelings and emotions. "Welcome" said with a smile makes visitors feel relaxed, at the same time it implies our willingness, kindness and hospitality.

Willingness may be the first thing you imply by saying “Welcome”. It means that you are ready to invite that particular person to your home. This in itself has an important meaning since we do not allow just anyone to come into our homes. So by allowing our visitors in, we are actually telling them that they are special and that their presence in our house is desired. At the same time, willingness means we are ready to spend time with our guest.

Kindness and friendliness are also expected when we say “welcome”. They are expressed not only in words but also by our attitude. It is the host’s duty to make his/her visitors feel comfortable and accepted. So whenever we say Welcome to our visitors, these two characteristics should go hand in hand with our “Welcome”.

Since hospitality is a well known Arab trait, it is eagerly offered by hosts and expected by visitors. When Arabs have visitors, they are expected to show their hospitality by offering the best they have whether it is food, drink or comfort. So, the minute the Arab host says "Welcome", he is expected to be warm and generous.

So next time you stand on your door step to greet a visitor and say “Welcome”, remember, it is more than just a greeting message. It is a bundle of attitude, expressions and feelings.

1. The passage is about:
 - a) meeting parents
 - b) welcoming guests
 - c) making friends
2. “Welcome” said with a smile implies:
 - a) hostility
 - b) hospitality
 - c) honesty
3. “Willingness” means:
 - a) we do not have time to waste
 - b) we are willing to visit other people
 - c) we value our guests
4. The duty of the host is to:
 - a) be kind and generous to the guests
 - b) be funny and impolite with the guests
 - c) be rude and uncomfortable with the guests
5. The underlined word “he” refers to:
 - a) the Arab visitor
 - b) the Arab guest
 - c) the Arab host

B- Match the paragraphs with the pictures:

1. This mountain witnessed the second battle in Islam. 70 martyrs are buried next to the mountain. Visitors are advised not to climb the mountain for their safety.
2. Once you enter the holy city of the prophet, there are certain polite behaviors that you should follow. There are signs that show where the boundaries of the sacred city start and end.
3. New transportation means have been introduced into the kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the comfort of hajjis and visitors. The sacred worship places train is now in effect. The two holy cities will be soon linked by another railway service.
4. Within the prophet’s mosque there is a sacred area called the “garden of paradise”. All visitors care to pray in this area. You can identify it by its green mat. However, you are advised not to hurt other people by pushing them to reach this place.
5. Whenever in doubt, seek the help of a policeman. They are there for your help. It is also important to keep a map of the holy city to mark your whereabouts, and a Saudi cell phone number to use in emergency.



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)



(E)

1. a) , b), c), d), e)
2. a) , b), c), d), e)
3. a) , b), c), d), e)
4. a) , b), c), d), e)
5. a) , b), c), d), e)

Section Three: Writing -10 marks

(A) Rearrange the following sentences to form a paragraph:

1. So, avoid the crowds and enjoy your time in the mosque.
2. This results in a big crowd and a short time to perform the salutation.
3. When you would like to salute the prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be with him),
4. Most people would do the salutation immediately after the prayer.
5. go at times other than the times of the 5 prayers.

Correct order: (write the number of the sentence only)

(B) -write a reply of 5 sentences to the following letter:

Dear Sir,

We are the international American Hajj company. A number of about 200 visitors to the holy city of Medina will arrive on the 2nd of April 2012. We would like you to answer the following questions for us: Will there be any person representing the Hajj guides Establishment in the airport? What routes should we take to reach the

Prophet’s mosque? What hotels do you prefer to reside in? What should visitors carry with them? Any other suggestions are welcome.

We appreciate your cooperation and advice.

Sincerely
Malcolm Jerard
Int’l Am Co.

Section Four: Listening - 10 marks

Listen to the following conversation and choose the correct answer from a), b) or c).

1. The text is mainly about:

- a) fasting b) pilgrimage c) prayer

2. In prayer, a Muslim does all the following except:

- a) stand, bow and prostrate b) face the ka’ba in Mecca c) give money to the poor.

3. The prophet gives the example of a river to resemble:

- a) ablution b) prayer c) swimming

4. In order to keep a strong relationship with Allah, a Muslim needs to:

- a) ignore the five prayers
- b) observe the five prayers
- c) perform the five prayers in Mecca

5. When performed correctly, Prayer has all the following effects except:

- a) it fills a Muslim’s heart with fear and hope
- b) it makes a Muslim unpunctual
- c) it helps a Muslim live righteously

Section Five: Speaking – 10 marks

The instruction will ask you some questions. Please reply to these questions as much as you can. 10 marks

End of Test - Good Luck

Answer Key to the Proficiency test for Hajj Guides

Section One: Grammar, Word forms and vocabulary

1.a 2.c 3.c 4.c 5.a 6.b 7.a 8.b 9.b 10.b 11.d 12.b 13.d 14.a 15.c 16.b 17.a 18.c 19.a 20.b 21.d 22.b 23.a 24.a
25.d 26.b 27.d 28.b 29.b 30.d

Section Two: Reading

Assign one mark for each correct choice for the two questions in this section.

Answers:

1 – b, 2- b, 3- c, 4- a, 5- c

Pictures: 1- e, 2-a, 3-d, 4- b, 5-c

Section Three: writing

Assign 2.5 marks for the rearrangement, and 7.5 marks for the letter writing as follows:

Ordering: half a mark for each correct sentence.

Correct order: 3,5,4,2,1

Letter writing: using the following scoring criteria, assign one of the following four mark categories only:

Score	Description
0	Question left unanswered, Original letter is copied, Chunks of incomprehensible letters are written
2.5	Basic conventions are given like “Dear...”, and “sincerely yours”...or the like, Many grammar and spelling mistakes are evident, No more than 3 sentences are written.
5	Some grammar and spelling mistakes are noticed, Some sentences are incoherent Some answers are provided for the questions but not all, Many punctuation errors.
7.5	Writing conventions are observed, No grammar or spelling mistakes are noticed At least five correct sentences are written An answer is provided for all of the questions listed in the original letter, No punctuation mistakes are noticed.

Sample answer (any other answer that meets the above criteria is accepted):

Dear Mr. Jerard,

I am very happy to hear that a group of American visitors are coming to the holy city of Medina. A member representing the Hajj Guides Establishment will definitely be waiting for you in the airport holding a sign of your name and company logo. Although the guide who will meet at the airport will provide you with the needed information, here are some pieces of advice:

Take the ring road to the prophet’s mosque to avoid traffic jams. Make your plans to book in one of the hotels around the mosque to keep close, but be careful some are really expensive- so check prices on the internet before you come. I recommend that guests should not carry a lot of money on them. Rather they are advised to carry travelers’ check.

Looking forward to seeing you

Sincerely

Name

Medina Hajj Guide

Section Four: Listening:

Assign two marks for each correct choice.

The following passage should be read aloud to test takers twice. The first reading should be followed by a ten minute silence for test takers to answer, then a second reading should take place for test takers to check their answers.

Muslims show their faith through different acts of worship. Prayer, or Salat, is the second pillar of Islam. Muslims face towards the Ka'bah in Makkah, an action which symbolizes the unity of Muslims. They stand, bow and prostrate to Allah. Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings be with him), compared performing ablution to having a river in front of one's house. The most important thing for Muslims is their relationship with Almighty. If their prayers are performed in the prescribed manner, their relationship with Allah will be strong. Muslims schedule their activities around prayer times. Muslims should plan their daily routines giving priority to their prayers. Prayers fill the heart of Muslims with faith, fear and hope in Allah. Prayers remind Muslims of their humble position as servants of their Creator.

Answers:

1 -c, 2- c, 3- a, 4-b, 5- b

Section Five: Speaking

Make use of the following questions:

1. What's your name and what's your job?
2. How do you find this job? Easy, difficult, and why?
3. How many visitors do you meet per year?
4. What are the common places they like to visit?
5. How do you manage to lead a big number of visitors during season times?
6. What are the visitors' basic needs?
7. What are some of their errors?
8. What are their problems?
9. How can a guide be a good representation of the holy city?
10. Tell me about a situation you will never forget in your career.

Using the following scoring criteria, assign one of the following four mark categories only:

Mark	Description
0	No response is given.....Student repeats question, Murmuring incomprehensibly
2.5	Answers are given to no more than 3 of the questions, Pronunciation is faultyTakes a long time to fill relevant words Information conveyed are fragmented No correct intonationMany grammar mistakes
5	Answers to given to no more than 6 of the questions Some grammar mistakes.....Some pronunciation errors Some intonation errorsOverall meaning is achieved with difficulty
7.5	Answers are given to no more than 8 of the questions Few grammar mistakes.....Few pronunciation errors Few intonation errors.....Overall meaning is achieved easily
10	Answers are given to all questions No or very few grammar mistakes, mostly slips...No or very few pronunciation errors No or very few intonation errors.....Needed information is given in details.