

in-group that anything which is not characteristic of this group and its behavior he regards as either incorrect or foolish. In either case, he finds it hard to make an adjustment.

This brief description of some of the psychological problems involved in language learning and using is by no means the entire story, nor can we automatically pigeonhole people by types: introverts, extroverts, talkative, nonconformists, etc. Each person is a complex combination of various attitudes and responses. However, within the complex web of such diverse and often contradictory tendencies there are numerous important psychological factors at work determining in no small measure our reactions to and ultimate facility in the learning and use of foreign languages. A greater awareness of these factors on the part of those who engage in problems of communication in foreign languages will help to explain difficult problems and to overcome otherwise hopeless barriers to success.

*E. A. N.*

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## The People vs. the Dictionary

Of all the tradition-ridden languages of the world there is probably none more tied to the past and more circumscribed by what the dictionaries approve than Arabic. And yet, even in Arabic there is a proverb which says, "Better a popular mistake than an unknown dictionary usage."

The living language is what people know and speak. Dictionaries which always lag behind are often excellent witnesses to the past, but they must be used with discretion in translating for the future.

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## Ignorance is Bliss

In a small church in Egypt the pastor was discovered before the service going from pew to pew gathering up all the Bibles with vowel markings. He was in process of locking these up in a closet when a visitor, noticing the strange procedure, asked him, "But why are you locking up the voweled Bibles and leaving the much more difficult unvoweled texts in the pews for the people to use?"

"Ah, you see," replied the pastor, "if the people do not have the voweled text, they cannot notice all the mistakes I make in reading."

But that is not quite all of the story, for actually this pastor was unconsciously making adaptations of the text in the direction of the more colloquial usage—something he would not have dared to do had the people been in the habit of following a fully voweled text.