

A mathematical model for an Arabic word generator

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ABSTRACT

In Arabic script as well as in the script of other similar languages the shape of a letter changes from one word to another. The number of different shapes for some letters may be three or even four depending on the neighbouring letters in the word. For this reason it became usual to allocate more than one key for the same letter in the Arabic typewriter and computer terminal keyboards. In recent years and with the introduction of word processors, the Arabic keyboard was modified and the number of keys representing the same letter was reduced as a result of applying contextual analysis to each character in order to choose the correct shape of the character. Most of the context analyses used lack generality and are hardly satisfactory. In this paper a mathematical model for an Arabic script generator is introduced and the model is reduced to an algorithm which was implemented on a microcomputer to generate Arabic script using one key only for each character.

INTRODUCTION

The basic alphabet of the Arabic language consists of a certain number of letters and a few long and short vowels and diacritics (Table 1). Some of the Arabic letters have one shape only, others have two or three or even four shapes. The shape of each letter depends on the neighbouring letters in the string of letters of an Arabic word. The pronunciation of any Arabic letter does not depend on its shape but, as in most natural languages, on the meaning of the word. The vowels and diacritics are used in Arabic to indicate the proper pronunciation of a letter and are omitted in many of the recent Arabic publications.

The problem of representing the Arabic characters was considered early in this century when typewriters were introduced and was solved by allocating a key for each letter shape or fount; the result of this solution was slow typing. When computers were introduced into the Arab world, computer terminal keyboards looked exactly the same as typewriter keyboards.

In recent years many researchers in the Arab world (e.g. Al-Banna 1980) and many software developing firms outside the Arabic world started to look into the problem of representing Arabic characters. Most of the researchers in this field have classified Arabic letter shapes or founts into 'first position fount', 'middle position fount' and 'last position fount' (Al-Banna 1980). This classification is inadequate since some

Table 1. Extended Arabic character set

Reference no. R	Proposed corresponding Latin ascii	First shape S_1	Second shape S_2	Third shape S_3	Fourth shape S_4
0		null			
Set R_2					
1	89	ع	ع	ع	ع
2	84	غ	غ	غ	غ
3	68	ي	ي	ي	ي
4	66	ى	ى	ى	ى
5	85	ه	ه	ه	ه
Set V					
6	39	فتحة) ' /			
7	60	كسرة) ' /			
8	38	ضمة) ' /			
9	35	شدة) ' /			
10	34	فتحتان) ' /			
11	62	كسرتان) ' /			
12	91	مدة) ' /			
13	01	سكون) ' /			
14	02	ضمتان) ' /			
15	18	همزة وصل) ' /			
Set D					
16	32	فراغ			
17	33	!			
18	61	=			
19	58	,			
20	15	ء			
21	37	÷			
22	05	,			
23	04	:			
24	40	(
25	41)			
26	42	×			
27	43	+			
28	36	?			
29	45	-			
30	31	.			
31	64	:			
32	48	°			
33	49	١			
34	50	٢			
35	51	٣			

Table 1 (cont.)

Reference no. R	Proposed corresponding Latin ascii	First shape S_1	Second shape S_2	Third shape S_3	Fourth shape S_4
36	52	ا			
37	53	ب			
38	54	ت			
39	55	ث			
40	56	ج			
41	57	ح			
Set IND					
42	72	د			
43	86	ذ			
44	67	ر			
45	77	ز			
46	46	و			
47	44	ؤ			
48	78	ة			
Set R_1					
49	70	ي	ي		
50	74	ن	ن	ن	
51	87	د	د	د	د
52	80	ط	ط	ط	ط
53	79	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
54	73	ف	ف	ف	ف
55	83	ق	ق	ق	ق
56	65	ك	ك	ك	ك
57	81	ل	ل	ل	ل
58	47	م	م	م	م
59	88	ن	ن	ن	ن
60	90	ز	ز	ز	ز
61	82	ح	ح	ح	ح
62	69	ج	ج	ج	ج
63	59	ب	ب	ب	ب
64	71	ا	ا	ا	ا
65	76	م	م	م	م
66	75	ن	ن	ن	ن
67	63	ز	ز	ز	ز

letters have more than one fount in the middle or last position, e.g. Character 1 in Table 1 may have Shape S_2 or Shape S_4 in the last position.

In this work we address the above problem by building a mathematical model that reflects accurately the characteristics of Arabic strings and we introduce a model for an Arabic script generator. Thus we introduce a formal system and the rules for

generating this system. This technique was followed by Hyder (1972) in describing a system for generating Urdu script. The rules we shall introduce are much fewer and simpler than those suggested by Hyder. Since our system is programmable, we have implemented the system on a microcomputer to verify that it works and we have found that the need for more than one key for the same letter was eliminated.

The program is rather simple and may be implemented on any microcomputer. We have implemented it on the Apple II Plus microcomputer after we managed to write a program to store and soft generate all the Arabic characters under consideration. The program and its output are given in Figs 1 and 2.

MATHEMATICAL PRELIMINARIES

Let R and S be finite sets with cardinalities n and m respectively, where R is a subset of the set of integers I and S the set of all letter founts in any natural language, then we may introduce the following definition.

Definition 1. A function C is called a character generator if it maps every element $x \in R$ to a unique element $y \in S$ such that $C(x) = y$.

Let R^* denote all integer vectors with elements from R , and S^* be the space of all strings of finite length defined over S , then we may have the following definition.

Definition 2. A function G is called a script generator if for any vector $\mathbf{X} \in R^* \exists$ a string $Y \in S^*$ such that $G(\mathbf{X}) = Y$.

In many natural languages, e.g. English, C is usually a bijection $C:R \rightarrow S$ and thus the construction of a script generator G becomes an easy task and we may state this in the following theorem.

Theorem 1. If C is a bijection then

$$G(\mathbf{X}) = \prod_{x_i \in \mathbf{X}} C(x_i)$$

where

$$\prod_{x_i \in \mathbf{X}} C(x_i) = C(x_0) C(x_1) \dots C(x_n)$$

where \mathbf{X} is a vector of order $n+1$.

In the Arabic language C is not a bijection and this is why the construction of an Arabic script generator is hard. For this reason we shall consider in the following some of the techniques that may be used to replace C by a set of bijection functions. Let us first consider the following theorem which indicates that this is possible.

Theorem 2. Let R and S be finite sets with cardinalities n and m respectively, then there are m^n functions from R to S .

Proof. Stanat & McAllister (1971, p. 221).

Corollary 1. For finite sets R and S , $\exists 2^{|R|}$, i.e. 2^n ; distinct subsets of R and $2^{|S|}$ distinct subsets of S .

Proof. Stanat & McAllister (1971, p. 221).

Applying the previous properties and definitions to the Arabic language we may construct the mathematical model starting with the following: let $R = \{0, 1, \dots, 67\}$ be the set of reference numbers given in Table 1, and let

$$\begin{aligned} R_1 &= \{49, \dots, 67\} \\ R_2 &= \{1, \dots, 5\} \\ V &= \{6, \dots, 15\} \\ D &= \{16, \dots, 41\} \\ \text{IND} &= \{42, \dots, 48\} \end{aligned}$$

be proper subsets of R , where R_1 is the set of reference numbers of characters that have two shapes, R_2 of characters that have four shapes, V the diacritics and IND for characters that have only one shape and may link to other character shapes at their right side only. D is the set of delimiters as given in Table 1.

Since each character has at least one shape we may group all those shapes in one set called the S_1 set of shapes, and S_2 is the set of second shapes for characters having more than one shape and S_3 and S_4 are the sets of third and fourth shapes. The sets $S_1 \dots S_4$ appear in Table 1.

Moreover let

$$\begin{aligned} F_1: R &\rightarrow S_1 \\ F_2: R_1 \cup R_2 &\rightarrow S_2 \\ F_3: R_2 &\rightarrow S_3 \\ F_4: R_2 &\rightarrow S_4 \end{aligned}$$

be bijections defined on the given domains and codomains. Then we may proceed to establish the mathematical model for a script generator. Noticing first that the omission or inclusion of diacritics has no effect on the process of letter shape selection in Arabic, we may reflect this fact in the following definition.

Definition 3. Two Arabic script strings W_1 and W_2 are said to be equivalent if and only if

$$W_1 \subseteq W_2$$

and

$$(W_2 - W_1) \subset V \text{ .}$$

Thus in view of Definition 3 the following model for an Arabic script generator will analyse the equivalent consonant script of the one that contains diacritics. Nevertheless we do not neglect diacritics from our contextual analysis and this is included implicitly in our mathematical model and explicitly in the following algorithm.

THE MODEL

Let \mathbf{W} be any vector in the form

$$\mathbf{W} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} \\ \mathbf{y} \\ \mathbf{z} \end{pmatrix}$$

where each \mathbf{x} , \mathbf{y} , \mathbf{z} is a vector from the set R^* defined over R as given in the previous section. Then G is called 'Arabic script generator' if

$$G(\mathbf{W}) = G(\mathbf{x}) G(\mathbf{y}) G(\mathbf{z})$$

where for any

$$\mathbf{x} = (x_{i-1}, x_i, x_{i+1})^T$$

we have

$$G(\mathbf{x}) = C(x_{i-1}/x_{i-2}, x_i) C(x_i/x_{i-1}, x_{i+1}) C(x_{i+1}/x_i, x_{i+2})$$

where x_{i-2} is the element before x_{i-1} and x_{i+2} is the element after x_{i+1} , and for any vector $(a, b, c)^T$ we have

$$C(b/a, c) = F_2(b) \text{ for } \{a \in R, b \in R_1, c \in D\} \\ \text{or } \{a \in (\{0\} \cup D \cup \text{IND}), b \in R_2, c \in D\} \quad (\text{I})$$

$$= F_3(b) \text{ for } \{a \in (R_1 \cup R_2), b \in R_2, c \notin D\} \quad (\text{II})$$

$$= F_4(b) \text{ for } \{a \in (R_1 \cup R_2), b \in R_2, c \in D\} \quad (\text{III})$$

$$= F_1(b) \text{ otherwise.} \quad (\text{IV})$$

PROCEDURE

Starting with an input vector of reference numbers which represents an Arabic script, i.e. word, sentence, paragraph, we scan the vector applying the previous rules and outputting the proper shapes starting at the right and concatenating to the left as with the Arabic script. We obtain the required script.

Example. Consider the vector

$$\mathbf{W} = (0, 42, 64, 05, 47, 42, 52, 01, 16, 0)^T$$

Step no.	Vector	Output	Rule no.
	0		
	42		
1	64	ا	IV
2	05	ال	IV
3	47	اله	II
4	42	الهو	IV
5	52	الها	IV
6	01	الهواج	IV
7	16	الهواجع	III
8	0	space الهواجع	IV

The generator **G** may be constructed through the following algorithm, since the algorithm uses the succeeding as well as the preceding characters in order to determine the exact shape of the current character. A temporary character shape is echoed which is later modified when the algorithm can decide the exact shape.

THE G ALGORITHM

```

Flag ← 1           ; Flag = 1 indicates that the a character is
                    ; ∈ {∅} ∪ IND ∪ V ∪ D
$ ← " "           ; indicates current character b ∈ {∅} ∪ IND ∪ V ∪ D

L0 : Get b
L1 : IF b = "END" Then stop; ENDIF
      IF b ∈ IND ∪ V
          Then $ ← " "
              Flag ← 1
              Go to L3
      ENDIF ;
      IF b ∈ R1
          Then $ ← "2"
              Flag ← ∅
              Go to L3
      ENDIF ;
      If b ∈ R2
          Then $ ← "4"
              IF Flag = ∅ Then Draw F3(b) Go to L4
              ENDIF
      ENDIF ;
L3 : Draw F1(b)
      IF $ = " " Then Go to L0 ENDIF ;
L4 : Get c
      IF c ∉ V ∪ D
          Then IF $ ≠ " " Then Flag ∈ ∅ ENDIF
              b ← c
              Go to L1
      ENDIF
      IF c ∈ V Then Draw F1(c)
          Go to L4
      ENDIF ;
      IF c ∈ D and ( $ = "2" or ( $ = "4" and Flag = 1) )
          Then Replace F1(b) by F2(b)
              Go to L5
      ENDIF ;
      Replace F3(b) by F4(b)
L5 : $ ← " "
      Draw F1(c)
      Flag ← 1
      Go to L0
    
```

FIG.1.SOURCE LISTINGS FOR FLINE-EDITOR

```

10 LOMEM: 18432
20 REM *****
30 REM FLINE-EDITOR
40 REM F. MUSA AND K. GHAWI
50 REM 1983
60 REM REFERENCE: A MATHEMATICAL MODEL FOR GENERATING ARAB
IC SCRIPT
70 REM *****
80 I1 = 94:I3 = 105:X0 = 272:Y0 = 14:AINDEX = 1:B = 67:SP =
23:MS = 9:MR = 175:DD = 105:FLAG = 1:SET$ = ""
90 PO% = 0:BB% = 0:QB% = 0:LL% = 0:N2 = 69
100 DIM RZ(I1),F1%(I1),SZ%(I3),CD%(N2),OLO%(N2),INDP%(N2):I
NDP%(0) = 1
110 FOR J = 1 TO N2:OLO%(J) = 83:CD%(J) = - 1: NEXT J: REM
INITIALIZE ARRAYS
120 REM ==LOADING THE NEW SHAPE TABLE==
130 D$ = CHR$(4): PRINT D$;"BLOAD BINSHAPE,A16384"
140 POKE 232,00: POKE 233,64: REM S=16384
150 REM ==LOADING THE MAPPING FUNCTION==
160 PRINT D$;"OPEN M1": PRINT D$;"READ M1": FOR J = 1 TO I3
: INPUT SZ%(J): NEXT : FOR J = 0 TO I1: INPUT F1%(J): INPUT
RZ(J): NEXT
170 PRINT D$;"CLOSE"
180 REM ***** MAIN PROGRAM *****
190 SCALE= 1: HGR : ROT= 0: POKE - 16302,0: HCOLOR= 3:Y =
Y0
200 X = X0: GOSUB 230: GOSUB 300: IF RB = 27 THEN END
210 AINDEX = 1:Y = Y + SP:FLAG = 1: GOTO 200
220 REM -----
230 REM === SUB FOR DRAWING SAHEM ===
240 IF Y > MR THEN HGR : POKE - 16302,0:X = X0:Y = Y0
250 DRAW DD AT X,Y
260 RETURN
270 REM === SUB FOR REMOVING SAHEM ===
280 XDRAW DD AT X,Y
290 RETURN
300 REM =====SUB FOR LINE-EDITOR=====
310 GET B$:ACKB = ASC (B$):RB = RZ(ACKB): IF (RB < > 21)
AND (RB < > 27) AND (RB < > 13) THEN BB% = 1:CD%(AINDEX) =
RE: IF NOT (PO% = 1) THEN BB% = 0: GOTO 520
320 IF BB% = 1 THEN BB% = 0: GOTO 340
330 GOTO 420
340 IF SZ%(SH) = 0 THEN BINDEX = BINDEX - 1:FLAG = INDP%(BI
NDEX - 1):SH = OLO%(BINDEX):ADR = SH: IF ADR < > - 1 THEN
340
350 PO% = 0: IF INDP%(BINDEX - 1) = 2 THEN FLAG = INDP%(BIND
EX - 2): IF FLAG = 2 THEN FLAG = INDP%(BINDEX - 3)
360 IF ADR = B THEN FLAG = 1: GOTO 520
370 RC = RB
380 RB = CD%(BINDEX): IF RB > = 8 AND RB < = 18 THEN BINDE
X = BINDEX - 1:FLAG = INDP%(BINDEX - 1): IF FLAG = 2 THEN FL
AG = INDP%(BINDEX - 2): IF FLAG = 2 THEN FLAG = INDP%(BINDEX
- 3)
390 IF RB > = 8 AND RB < = 18 THEN 380
400 ADR = OLO%(BINDEX):SH = ADR: IF RB > = 19 AND RB < = 7
1 THEN 610
410 QB% = 1:T = AINDEX:AINDEX = BINDEX: GOSUB 270: GOSUB 770
: GOSUB 230: GOTO 520: REM PRESS *CTRL->*TO CORRECT MISTA
KES,*ESC*TO END THE PROGRAM

```



```

411 REM
412 REM
413 REM
414 REM
415 REM
420 IF RB = 21 THEN POZ = 1:SH = ADR: GOSUB 270: GOSUB 770:
  GOSUB 230:AINDEX = AINDEX - 1:CDZ(AINDEX) = - 1:OLOZ(AINDE
X) = 83: IF ADR = B THEN ADR = 83:AINDEX = AINDEX - 1:CDZ(AI
NDEX) = - 1
430 IF RB = 21 THEN BINDEX = AINDEX - 1: IF BINDEX < = 0 T
HEN AINDEX = 1:BINDEX = 1:POZ = 0: GOTO 310
440 IF RB = 21 THEN ADR = OLOZ(BINDEX): IF ADR = - 1 THEN
BINDEX = BINDEX - 1: GOTO 440
450 IF RB = 21 THEN ADR = OLOZ(BINDEX):SH = ADR:FLAG = INDP
%(BINDEX - 1): IF FLAG = 2 OR FLAG = - 1 THEN FLAG = INDP%(
BINDEX - 2): IF FLAG = 2 THEN FLAG = INDP%(BINDEX - 3)
460 IF RB = 21 THEN 310
470 IF RB = 27 THEN GOSUB 270: RETURN
480 IF RB = 13 THEN CDZ(AINDEX) = RB: IF POZ = 1 THEN POZ =
  0: GOTO 370
490 IF RB = 13 THEN GOSUB 270: RETURN
500 REM == 2-SHAPE CHARS HAVE ASCI(72,90) ===
510 REM
520 ADR = F1Z(RB):SH = ADR: IF RB > = 8 AND RB < = 18 THEN
  INDP%(AINDEX) = 2:FLAG = 1: GOTO 560
530 IF RB = 0 OR RB = 3 OR (RB > = 19 AND RB < = 71) THEN
  INDP%(AINDEX) = 1:FLAG = 1: GOTO 560
540 INDP%(AINDEX) = 0: IF RB > = 72 AND RB < = 90 THEN SET
$ = "2":FLAG = 0: GOTO 560
550 IF RB > = 1 AND RB < = 6 THEN SET$ = "4": IF FLAG = 0
  THEN SH = SH + 2:ADR = SH
560 GOSUB 270
570 GOSUB 720: IF LLZ = 1 THEN LLZ = 0: RETURN
580 GOSUB 230:OLOZ(AINDEX) = ADR:BINDEX = AINDEX:AINDEX = A
INDEX + 1: IF SET$ = "" THEN 310
590 IF RBZ = 1 THEN RBZ = 0:AINDEX = T: GOTO 610: REM RB
Z= 1 IF CORRECTION OCCURS

600 GET C$:ASKC = ASC(C$):RC = RZ(ASKC): IF RC < > 21 TH
EN CDZ(AINDEX) = RC
610 FLAG = INDP%(BINDEX): IF FLAG = - 1 THEN FLAG = INDP%(B
INDEX - 1)
620 IF RC = 65 AND RB = 87 THEN GOSUB 270: GOSUB 770:ADR =
  B: GOSUB 720: GOSUB 230:SH = B:SET$ = "":FLAG = 1:OLOZ(BIND
EX) = SH:INDP%(BINDEX) = 1:INDP%(AINDEX) = - 1:OLOZ(AINDEX)
  = - 1
630 IF RC = 65 AND RB = 87 AND AINDEX - BINDEX > = 2 THEN
  CDZ(AINDEX) = CDZ(AINDEX - 1):CDZ(AINDEX - 1) = 65:SH = OLOZ
(AINDEX - 1):ADR = SH:OLOZ(AINDEX) = OLOZ(AINDEX - 1):OLOZ(A
INDEX - 1) = - 1:INDP%(AINDEX) = INDP%(AINDEX - 1):INDP%(AI
NDEX - 1) = - 1
640 IF RC = 65 AND RB = 87 THEN AINDEX = AINDEX + 1: GOTO 3
10
650 IF RC < 8 OR (RC > 18 AND RC < 32) OR (RC > 57) THEN SE
T$ = "":RB = RC: GOTO 420
660 IF RC > = 8 AND RC < = 18 AND NOT (RC = 13) THEN P =
  1:ADR = F1Z(RC):OLOZ(AINDEX) = ADR:INDP%(AINDEX) = 2:AINDEX
  = AINDEX + 1: GOSUB 720: GOTO 600
670 REM --- IF C$ IS A DELIMITER ---
680 IF SET$ = "2" OR (SET$ = "4" AND FLAG = 1) THEN GOSUB
270: GOSUB 770:SH = SH + 1:ADR = SH:OLOZ(BINDEX) = ADR: GOSU
B 720: GOTO 700
690 IF SET$ = "4" AND FLAG = 0 THEN GOSUB 270: GOSUB 770:S

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```

H = SH + 1:ADR = SH:OLOZ(BINDEX) = ADR: GOSUB 720
700 SET$ = "":ADR = F1%(RC):INDP%(AINDEX) = 1:FLAG = 1: IF R
C = 13 THEN RB = 13: GOTO 490
710 GOTO 570
720 REM === SUB FOR DRAWING CHARS ===
730 IF X < MS AND SZ%(ADR) > X THEN LL% = 1: GOTO 760
740 DRAW ADR AT X,Y
750 X = X - SZ%(ADR): IF X < 8 THEN LL% = 1
760 RETURN
770 REM === SUB FOR XDRAWING CHARS ===
780 IF X > = X0 THEN X = X0: GOTO 820
790 X = X + SZ%(SH)
800 IF P = 1 THEN ADR = SH:P = 0
810 XDRAW ADR AT X,Y
820 RETURN
830 REM ===== PROGRAM ENDS =====

```

Fig. 1. Source listings for FLINE-EDITOR.

IMPLEMENTING THE SYSTEM

To implement the system it was necessary to build an Arabic character generator, and that was one of the major problems facing this system. The character generator on a CRT, especially on a microcomputer, is stored either in a Read Only Memory or in Random Access Memory. In addition, it is possible to use the graphic capabilities of a microcomputer equipped with such capabilities for the same purpose (see Poole *et al.* 1981). The designers of many new microcomputers with graphic capabilities incorporated the concept of shape tables in order to supply graphics users with some powerful software for dealing with gaming figures. This facility proved to be very useful in generating Arabic characters.

وقد يُقال ، أن العلم لا يتم إلا بالعمل ،
وان العلم كالشجرة والعمل به كالثمرة .
وانما صاحب العلم يقوم بالعمل لينتفع
به ، وان لم يستعمل ما يعلم فليس
يسمى عالما . ولو أن رجلا كان عالما
بطريق مخوف ، ثم سلكه على علم به
سمي.....

(كلية ودمنة)

Fig. 2. Sample output of Arabic generated on a screen by FLINE-EDITOR and dumped to a dot matrix printer.

A shape table is created by outlining a shape with tiny unit vectors which are all of the same length but may be in any one of the four directions (up, down, left, right). The vectors are placed head to tail until the shape is outlined. Using a simple key, these direction vectors are converted to a string of bytes and then stored in memory as part of a shape table. One may store up to 255 shapes in a single table in memory. Once the object is represented in a shape table one can recall it using any available programming language. For example in Soft Basic, in order to draw a shape at the X, Y position on the screen we use

DRAW N AT X, Y

where N is the shape index number.

The actual procedure for creating a shape for a shape table is fairly simple but rather time consuming. A one to one correspondence was established between the available Latin keyboard and the Arabic letters (Table 1).

Fig. 1 is a listing of the program used to load the shape table into the computer memory and to implement the system. The program is a simple Arabic line editor written to test the practicality of implementing the suggested system only. A graphic program was used to output the script generated by our system on a CRT to a graphic printer (Fig. 2).

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نموذج رياضي لتكوين كلمات اللغة العربية

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خلاصة

يقدم هذا البحث دالة رياضية لتكوين مفردات اللغة العربية ويبين كيف يمكن برمجة هذه الدالة على حاسب صغرى بحيث تؤدي إلى اختصار عدد المفاتيح المستخدمة لادخال المعلومات في لوحة مفاتيح الأحرف العربية على أجهزة الاتصال الطرفية مع الحاسبات الالكترونية :