

Mejra Softić**ON THE FUNCTIONS OF ALIF IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE
(AL-'ALIF AL-LAYYINA – FLEXIBLE ALIF)****Abstract**

Classical Arabic philologists analyzed alif more than any other letter. In their works alif was analyzed in the context of its original function, as a sign for consonant hamza, but also as a long vowel sign, which lead to numerous studies and discussions. Given the fact that most of them focused on the analysis of alif as a sign for consonant hamza and that in the Orientalist literature we cannot find the works interpreting alif exclusively from the standpoint of its contemporary understanding (as a sign for a long vowel), the present paper aims at investigating the historical perspective of the dual function of alif, its contemporary terminological varieties in Arabic orthographies, its orthographic features and functions, as well as the modes of functioning on morpho-syntactic level.

Keywords: the Arabic language, alif, hamza, orthography, functional duality, morpho-syntactic level