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The Impact of Language Immersion on Arabic Language Acquisition for Speakers of Other Languages: “Enhancing Arabic Language Skills for Speakers of Other Languages” Program as a Model

Hossam El-Din SAMIR¹, Nabeeha Bin HAIDARA², Fawzi, ALGHAZALI³, Mohamed Abouelfadl BADRAN⁴

Abstract

This study aims at examining the process of Arabic language learning through immersion within classical Arabic speakers. It investigates how Arabic language is acquired through imitation and emulation and to what extent that can be effective and efficient for speakers of other languages. In our Linguistic program, we are keen on establishing an institutional cognitive foundation based on “experimentation”. For this, Mohamed Bin Zayed University for humanities has launched an educational program that aims at Arabic language acquisition for speakers of other languages. This program serves its international students and provides within its learning environment a set of pedagogical strategies and methods that conform to theories of language acquisition. Providing such a learning environment for speakers of other languages would enable them to learn and comprehend the basic principles of Arabic language. For this, we underline our quest of establishing the optimal epistemological setting for non-native learners of Classical Arabic language, based on integrating educational programs worthy of experimentation and examination. This, in turn, foregoes several traditional learning phases that primarily rely on teaching rules, concepts, and literary texts, highlighting the perception of Arabic language acquisition within modern educational communities. These are the main objectives of our research. In addition, the impact of such linguistic programs on language learning was investigated through analyzing the results of a pre-test and a post-test of the four basic skills of learners participating in this experiment. Findings of this experiment reveal the linguistic and cultural outcomes of the “Language Partner” Program and reflect the necessity of updating the educational methods and structures.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics, Language Acquisition, Language Immersion, Language Partner, Arabic Language for Speakers of Other Languages.

Introduction

This study provides a wholistic overview of language acquisition and its methods through a case study of hierarchical mechanisms of learning Classical Arabic by speakers of other languages. The study also points out the available applications in this epistemological field.

Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities is keen on teaching Arabic to its international students with their various cultures and fields of specialization. In an experiment sponsored by

¹ Associate Professor of Linguistics and Grammar at the Faculty of Arts and Languages, at Mohamed bin Zayed University for Humanities, and an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Dar Al-Uloom, in Minia University, Egypt, Email: hossameldine.abdelaa@mbzuh.ac.ae. (Corresponding Author), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4023-6168>.

² Email: nabeeha.binhaidara@mbzuh.ac.ae, – <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5506-9676>

³ Professor of Applied Linguistics and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Languages, at Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities (UAE), Email: Fawzi.alghazali@mbzuh.ac.ae, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5559-1034>.

⁴ Professor of Literary Criticism, Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities (UAE) and South Valley University (Egypt), Email: mohamed.badrان@mbzuh.ac.ae - ORCID iD: 0009-0004-4335-7840.



the university, students from Russia and Indonesia received a preliminary training that aimed at enabling them to acquire the language before they start their academic specialized study. Through this experiment, the university offers multiple programs facilitating Classical Arabic language acquisition within a pure Arabic context.

The present study addresses an applied case that would contribute to developing linguistic designs that help learners of Arabic as a foreign language. The study also highlights the value of learning language through immersion in a Classical Arabic speaking community that enables learners to imitate and emulate. For this, Mohamed Bin Zayed University for humanities has launched an educational program that aims at Arabic language acquisition for speakers of other languages. This program serves non-native learners of Arabic and provides within its learning environment a set of pedagogical strategies and methods that apply theories of language acquisition. Providing such a learning environment would enable learners to comprehend and acquire the basic principles of Arabic language. For this, we underline our quest of establishing the optimal epistemological setting for non-native learners of Classical Arabic language, based on integrating educational programs worthy of experimentation and examination. This, in turn, foregoes several traditional learning phases that primarily rely on teaching rules, concepts, and literary texts, highlighting the perception of Arabic language acquisition within modern educational communities with their social, psychological and cognitive contexts.

The main objective of our research is to investigate the impact of these language programs on enriching the linguistic outcomes. Results of a pre-test and a post-test of the participants' four language skills reveal the participants' linguistic outcomes and production of the linguistic partner. Analysis of these findings could reflect the necessity for updating the educational and scientific methods.

Recently, interest in language acquisition has been increasing. This is due to numerous reasons, most importantly: language is an essential means of communication that fulfills people's economic, cultural, and religious purposes among other social needs. Furthermore, it is noted how large cohorts of people from various cultures arrive in all Arab countries, particularly in the Gulf countries, mostly for economic and religious purposes. Therefore, speakers of other languages are constantly keen on learning and mastering the Arabic language. This encouraged studies and research in the field of Linguistics exploring language acquisition through some practices that develop cognitive competencies including immersion, co-existence, listening, emulation, among other strategies that contribute to acquiring language.

Scientists have all agreed that the human brain is capable of processing language employing a set of hierarchical mechanisms that develop this language and its production. Thus, language learning originates from a dire need for communication with a surrounding context that is primarily considered a language source that relies on simplification and adaptation techniques for the purpose of establishing a linguistic dictionary.

Immersion and emulation within native speakers' social environment and daily practices are considered highly effective educational strategies in several developed countries. Language immersion provides a learning environment that contributes to acquiring language effectively. Within this learning environment, learners move through different stages starting with simple expressions, then clarity, and reaching to accuracy. Eventually, learners demonstrate the capacity to generate complete sentences with clear articulation which reflects efficiency and excellence of expression. In advanced stages, learners seem competent in utilizing Language rules in expressing their needs clearly and comprehensibly. Research has shown that listening skills play

a crucial role in language learning. Some researchers refer to the listening phase as “the passive phase” in which learners act as recipients of language. In fact, this phase involves all the essential linguistic accumulation that increases by the increase of listening practice. At this stage, learners rely on storing sufficient vocabulary and structures that empowers them with linguistic competence in expression. Other studies have explored the mechanisms that involve learners’ linguistic awareness and its development.

Furthermore, it has been noticed that children’s language acquisition depends on their processing of tangible objects through observation and contemplation. This is akin to the listening stage that non-native learners of Arabic experience. Proven by practical experiments, children experience the most important stage of language acquisition, in which their linguistic awareness is formulated through contemplation, perception, and acquisition of diction. Contrary to what some researchers call it, this stage is not passive; it is the initial step towards language production in reading and writing.

Significance of the Study

Arabic language acquisition is highly significant. Speakers of other languages who learn Arabic play a substantial role in transferring our Arabic culture into their communities. Accordingly, the present study tackles how such learners acquire the Arabic language within a pure Arabic context. This learning process is worthy of examination and analysis. Therefore, Mohamed Bin Zayed University is keen on producing linguistically competent graduates who will contribute to spreading the principles of tolerance and co-existence among the world’s populations.

The significance of this study lies in two main issues. First, it underlines the process of language learning through immersion with native speakers of classical Arabic. This learning process relies on imitation and emulation. Second, it highlights to what extent these strategies are effective and sufficient for Arabic acquisition. In fact, the value of any language program is in its epistemological institutional foundation that is based on experimentation.

Research Objectives

This study aimed at:

- 1- Describing the actual linguistic behavior and highlighting the practices of participants in the immersion experiment for evaluation.
- 2- Establishing an applied linguistic model for non-speakers of Arabic, considering the linguistic surroundings of learners.
- 3- Examining and providing a set of teaching strategies and methods that conform with the theories of applied language acquisition.
- 4- Providing a model of Arabic cognitive environment within the field of Classical Arabic learning and acquisition for speakers of other languages.
- 5- Designing modern applied educational programs that minimize traditional and routine stages of teaching rules, concepts, and literary texts, and focus on the various aspects of the learning process including cultural, social, and psychological aspects.

The Rationale of the Study

This study addressed a selection of questions and hypotheses through investigating the linguistic environment and its applications within systematic language acquisition and immersion with the

language partner. Therefore, the study applied language proficiency tested to measure the language skills including speaking, reading, and writing, in addition to other linguistic aspects, i.e., grammar, morphology, dictation, and punctuation, with all their cognitive and performance dimensions.

During the researchers' years of experience in the field of teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages, it has been observed how difficult it is for learners, especially speakers of other languages, to acquire Classical Arabic simply through traditional curricula and classroom learning. This problem urged the present study. Accordingly, officials in Arabic language learning programs in Mohamed Bin Zayed University have been attempting to provide numerous facilitations for non-native learners to learn and acquire the language through the most effective methods. Benefiting from the language immersion that students experience in their students' hostel, a program of "Language Partner" is launched. The results of this program on international students of Arabic have been examined highlighting how they have been influenced by their surroundings.

Research Questions

The present study raises multiple significant questions, including:

- 1- What does linguistic immersion mean? What are its objectives, its challenges, and its complications?
- 2- What is the connection between traditional Arabic and its dialects? Is it considered diglossia or bilingualism? Do the similarities in lexicon, phonemes, derivations, syntax help or distract the participants?
- 3- How is it possible to benefit from second language acquisition theories in analyzing proficiency levels of learners?
- 4- What is hierarchical mechanism in Arabic language acquisition for non-native learners?
- 5- How is it possible to apply language immersion for non-native learners of Arabic within pure Arabic-speaking surroundings?
- 6- What are the psychological foundations for teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages?

Method of Approach

This study applied a descriptive analytical approach. To describe language immersion and theories of second language acquisition, the descriptive approach was employed. In the application and analysis of learners' tests and the impact of language immersion and the "Language Partner" program on the participants, the analytical approach was utilized.

The study also employed two language proficiency tests. One was given to learners at the beginning of the experiment, and another was given to them by the end of the experiment. Results of these tests were analyzed highlighting the impact of the experiment on learners' Arabic language acquisition and proficiency level.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were selected purposefully. They were seven international students: four Russians, and three Indonesians. They all participated in the experiment of language immersion and took part in the "Language Partner" Program.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its thorough design, this study had some limitations. First, the time of the study was limited to the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024. Second, the place of the experiment was limited to Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities, in Abo-Dabi, in the United Arab Emirates. Third, the number of participants in the experiment was confined to seven international students from Russia and Indonesia. Finally, the experiment focused primarily on the language immersion program, and identifying its impact on the main language skills of the participants.

Previous Studies

Several studies have investigated “Linguistic Immersion” in general. They have examined its impact on second language acquisition employing modern linguistic methods of analysis. Examples include:

- El-Badawy, K.A. (2021) Alinghimas Allughawy fi Taleem Allughah Alrabeyah li Alnatiqeen Bighairiha (Qiraah fi Tagruba Elibya). Journal of the Faculty of Education, AlZawyah University, Trabulus, Libya, (pp.30-57)
- Sbilaat, K.J. (2018). Waqea Barameg Alinghemas Allughawy BilUrdon wa Tathiraha ala Alkafaah Allughweyah Alarbeyah lil Nateqeen bighayriha. The International Journal of Specialized Education, 7(6), pp.54-64.
- Buzina, M.J. & Dwagi, A.J. (2021). Alinghemas Allughawy fi Taleem Allughah Alarbeyah lil Nateqeen bilughat Ukhra: ALwasail wa alteqneyaat. The Journal of Maqamaat, 5 (1), pp.37-62.
- Muath, M.M. (2023). Alinghemas Allughawy Alifterady Limutaelemy Alrrabeyah Gheir Alnateqeen biha, The Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference: Teaching Foreign Languages and Linguistic Studies, Marmarah University, December, Istanbul, Trukey, pp.326-345.
- Manna, A. & Ben Yahya, Y. (2016). Alinghemas Allughawy wa Atharuh fi Talemeyat Allughat: Dirasah Lisaneyah, The Journal of Alwahaat for Research and Studies, 9(1), pp.1048-1065.
- Hawasheryah, B. & Alaqeed, A.O. (2021). Alinghemas Allughawy wa Faelyatuh fi Taleem wa Tallum Allughah Alrabeyah: Ayat Hulul liltakyuf maa Mutaghayraat Alalaam Alraqamy. Aamal Almulateqa Alwatany Aliftirady Althalith, University of Alaraby Bin Mahidy Um Abawaqy , Algeria.

Throughout these studies, it is observed that their findings were inconclusive in underlining the impacts of second language acquisition within its native environment abroad. Some studies proved that studying abroad is effective for language acquisition. In contrast, others argued that learning a second foreign language abroad might hinder the communicative skills of learners. For example, some scholars pointed out certain evidence that proved how learners managed to use Arabic during their study abroad. Through examining a sample of American students studying Arabic language in Arab countries, analysts found that these students were communicating in English more frequently than in Arabic. Other researchers established a connection between the extent of benefit from studying within a native environment and the duration of staying in such an environment. For students to benefit from this type of experiment,

they should spend at least one academic term. In fact, some students succeed in improving their fluency and demonstrate high communicative skills.

Moreover, some studies revealed how some students have boosted their low proficiency during the term and performed better than others who did not study abroad (within a native environment).

In addition, a group of analysts highlighted that learner in the “Linguistic Immersion” program learned Arabic more efficiently inside classrooms under the supervision of their professors and with the support of their colleagues on a daily basis. Meanwhile, they resorted to their native language as a means of communication with one another. They might also use English to communicate with the natives of the Arab country they stay at. Thus, their use of Arabic was minimal and confined to very few daily tasks. Similarly, other researchers found out that some students used English and Arabic effectively outside classrooms. This in turn stressed that using the first foreign language (English, French, Spanish, Italian, or Russian, ...etc.) contributed positively to acquiring Arabic (Alsahily, 2019, p.161).

The significance of the Study

The present study is the first of its kind applying the Linguistic Immersion/ Language Partner Program in Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities. It is considered a great contribution to the field research on Arabic language acquisition as a second foreign language for non-native speakers of Arabic. The study represents an experiment of immersing these students within a pure native Arabic environment with its cultural, social and intellectual context. Accordingly, students acquire the Arabic language naturally as they acquired their own mother tongue.

- The present study provides the details of an experiment that assessed the impact on cognitive growth resulting from the “Language Partner” Program applied in Mohamed Bin Zayed University on a sample of international students.
- This model reveals how Arabic was acquired and the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) were enhanced through exposure to the linguistic reality and its uses and communicative contexts.

The Design of the Study

This study investigated the impact of linguistic co-existing and immersing on improving language proficiency of non-native learners of Arabic. The subsequent section provides operational definitions of the fundamental concepts and terms in the study including language immersion, co-existence, industry, learning, language acquisition, linguistics, linguistic proficiency and its categories, performance, and competence. This is followed by another section that reviews the theories of language acquisition underlining applications on Arabic acquisition as a second language. Then, there is a section devoted to the application part of the study revealing the production of Arabic language through immersion and practicing with native Arab peers and their impact on non-natives’ acquisition of Arabic. In addition, the discussion section provides the findings of the study and recommendations for future research.

Definition of Terms

Language immersion refers to a strategy for second language acquisition that aims at improving foreign language for non-native speakers through developing cognitive skills of learners (Bibler & Andrew, 2021). Language immersion has multiple long-term purposes. These include

expressions that can be utilized in the process of explaining and clarifying for students. These expressions might require correction and modifications in some cases. Finally, there are uncommon or rare words that are limited to the use of specialists and linguists. (Al-Maghraby, المغربي 1949)

Language grammar is considered the foundation of a language. Through grammar, the structures and meanings of sentences can be comprehended. It adds meaning to phonemic pronunciation; and it generates accurate linguistic sentences. To Sibawai, Grammar is the study of rules that construct sentences and connect them. In modern linguistics it is referred to as "Syntax". (Youssif, يوسف 1990)

Thinking is an implicit mental activity that cannot be directly observed or measured. It involves an interaction between significance and symbols within a particular system to generate notions. Some scholars have been interested in examining and analyzing the complex interaction between linguistic symbols and mental thoughts. These scholars have represented different groups: one group considers language and thinking as one thing, another group refers to thinking as a mental activity that precedes behavior whereas a third group believes that thinking is the foundation of language. (Al-Saleh & Al-Baqmy, الصالح، والبقمي 2018; See also Abo-elSaoud, أبو السعود 2020; Abdullah, عبد الله 2020; Hasaneen et al., وآخرون 2015; Dewey, 1933; Gelder, 2005; Harris, 2012).

Diglossia, Is the connection between traditional Arabic and its dialects considered diglossia or bilingualism? Can the similarity in lexicon, phonemes, derivations, syntax be beneficial or distracting for participants?

Ferguson (1959) defined diglossia as the simultaneous presence of two varieties of language or dialects of the same language within a language community. Each has a specific function of use. A High Variety is used in official or formal contexts, e.g., education, media, and formal speech, whereas a Low Variety is used for daily informal interactions. Furthermore, Mounin (1993) pointed out that diglossia reflects the individual's ability to use two or more languages. Dubois Jean (1973), on the other hand, explained diglossia as a linguistic condition and social circumstances within which people speak two different languages. This, in turn, makes it challenging to differentiate between simple structural similarity and psycholinguistic blending of different structures. This occurs due to the individual subjective use of language functions. Consequently, this influences the individual's use of the two languages or varieties in different situations, in a way that makes it difficult to shift from one language system to another. These processes highlight the discrepancies in using two languages or varieties in communication. This is underlined by the Transformative-Generative Approach, distinguishing between linguistic competence and performance (Dalilah, 2008, p.271). It is crucial that Diglossia is a phenomenon that raises questions concerning second language acquisition and the impacts on learners of other languages, especially in a multilingual environment. Several studies revealed how individuals who grow up in a community with diglossia seem to be rather flexible in learning new languages. Accordingly, Diglossia is considered a positive feature and cognitive skill of second language learners (Bialystok, 2001, *passim*). In addition, the similarity between the grammatical structures of the native language and the second acquired language might be facilitated by diglossia which in turn improves learning (Cook, 2008).

In contrast, Grosjean (2010) argued that a second language learner might get confused by the surrounding multilingual community. This learner would find it challenging to differentiate

among grammatical rules and lexicon. Grosjean also pointed out that people who are aware of diglossia might feel stressed and find it challenging to (2010: passim).

Bilingualism, as George Mounin defined it, is the person's competence in two or more languages. This might involve some challenges in accuracy of structures and complexity in psycholinguistic connections between structures. This reflects how people vary in their preferences of one language over the other depending on the context of use. This also highlights how people might lose control over their expressive competence in one language but not the other. Such discrepancies in people's proficiencies have been underlined by the transformational generative approach to linguistic proficiency and linguistic performance. (Dalila, دليلة, 2008)

Linguistic proficiency: in Arabic, competence reflects sufficiency (Ibn-Manthour, ابن منظور, 2003). As a concept, it refers to a person's capacity to act or execute an action. Therefore, linguistic proficiency refers to a person's capacity to use words and construct cohesive sentences. Linguistic proficiency also represents a learner's essential linguistic knowledge of skills and rules of a language. (Basindy, بسندي, 2009) ; (Alshahrani, A., 2019 : pp. 298-313. doi: 10.24093/awej/vol10no1. 25).

From a linguistic perspective, proficiency refers to the epistemological system that generates original knowledge of language and its grammar. It is a contribution to the philosophical perception of linguistics and cognitive psycholinguistics. (Tienson, 1983; See also Brown, 1980; Hatch, 1978).

Linguistic proficiency, as Dalila explained, is the implicit knowledge of language rules that enable a person to make sentences. Such a knowledge is acquired in childhood and as the child grows within their natural surroundings. As for speech performance, linguistic proficiency is also reflected (Dalila, دليلة, 2008, p. 271) ; (Pica, 1988 : vol. 21, pp. 70-80).

Proficiency vs. Competence: Competence exceeds proficiency. Proficiency refers to a learner's satisfactory level of linguistic performance while competence refers to a learner's excellence in a language. (Alwanas, الوناس, 2013)

Educational linguistic proficiency is the collection of skills and knowledge reflected by a learner's behavior during the learning process. Some researchers define it as the capability to employ certain techniques in certain contexts while learning. In language, it is the system created by a language user that empowers them to generate countless syntactic structures and recognize new structures. Linguistic proficiencies are attained through lexical, cultural, and ideological proficiencies. (Burno Philip, 2016; See also, Attia, عطية, 2007; Gamil, 2001).

Arabic proficiency: general proficiencies and Arabic proficiency specifically have a common feature, that is the integration of the learning system with its details and specializations for the major purpose of spreading the Arabic language and minimizing its learning challenges. Learning proficiencies include several specialties such as writing with its different levels, phonetics, morphology, diction, grammar, rhetoric, semantics. (Al-Sayed, السيد, 2012).

Awareness is the mental process responsible for human communication. Linguistic awareness enables a person to speak, write, read, and listen. Each of these skills involves the person's awareness, contemplation, visualization, beliefs, perception and acquisition (Ali, علي, 2016). Furthermore, Asteitih pointed out some important features that enhance perception and awareness of language structures. These features include perception of cultural components, rational choices, appropriate use of meanings, taking initiative, gradually growing proficiency,

mental awareness of syntactic phenomena, perception of sentences, lexicon, and patterns, and the capability to generate and transform in the second language. Accordingly, the learner produces a third linguistic variation distinct from their native language and the Arabic mother tongue. This new variation represents the learner's interaction proficiency (Asteitih, استيتية, 2004; See also Ahmed, 1977; Ferguson & Slobin, 1973; Schiefelbusch et al. 1974).

Listening is one of the fundamental and most common language skills. It is also considered an art. Listening plays a vital role in enriching language and expanding vocabulary. In addition, it is one of the essential conditions for linguistic and intellectual growth (Razaq, رزاق, 2023).

Imitation and emulation: in the fourth century, Augustinos pointed out that the foundation of language is the mental processes of the mind. He also describes a child's linguistic development as evolution. In his book, Augustinos dedicated an entire chapter to language learning through observation and imitation. He noted how he did not learn language through a certain systematic process, but he leaned language autonomously and consciously utilizing God's gift, i.e., his mind. (Gomaa, جمعة, 2018)

Repetition refers to the process of listening repeated to a word or a structure. This is an important stage for language learners to acquire the pitch and the rhythm through listening. Repetition maximizes the learners' exposure to the language which in turn increases the likelihood of learning. (AL-Kholy, الخولي, 1990)

Comprehension: language learning must involve comprehension as a fundamental process to develop the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Linguists have stressed the value of comprehending meanings while learning language. For this, language teachers exploit various tools to clarify meanings and facilitate comprehension, including visual images, recorded audios, realia, and slideshows, among others. (Ismael, إسماعيل, 1981)

Reading Comprehension refers to the interaction between the reader and the text, which leads to a deep understanding of explicit and implicit meanings of words and sentences. (Ragab, رجب, 2018)

Language immersion represents the process of placing a learner in a natural environment to acquire a language. Ancient Arabs used to follow this approach for acquisition of classical Arabic from its native speakers and within its natural surroundings. (Saoudy, سعودي, 2010; See also Manaa & Yahya, وياحيى, 2016; Ryding & Karen, 2013)

Language is considered a mirror of the community it is used in. Accordingly, being immersed within this community potentially enables the learner to acquire its vocabulary and communicative expressions within its natural native surroundings.

Enhancing Arabic Language Skills Program is a comprehensive program launched by Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities. It integrates multiple educational activities for the purpose of attaining linguistic proficiency by non-native learners of Arabic and empowering them to be competent users of Arabic. This program was designed to boost learning Arabic through a systematic pedagogical curriculum based on language immersion that provides learners with pure native Arabic surroundings that motivates non-native learners to acquire the Arabic language.

This program maintains certain vital aspects:

- **Pedagogical aspects:** this program provides a selection of pedagogical materials that are presented gradually to the learners to attain language proficiency including communication, diction, grammar and other proficiencies that reflect non-native learners' acquisition of Arabic.
- **Psychological aspects:** It also considers the psychological factors within the educational process. For this purpose, electronic programs are exploited, and cultural recreational trips are offered. These in turn transform the learning process into an exciting and motivating experience.
- **Affective aspects:** It supports learners' passions and aims at fulfilling their needs, bearing in mind their individual distinctions and specialties.
- **Social aspects:** It is keen on developing learners' social and communicative skills.

Theoretical Framework: Second Language Acquisition Theories

Linguistic theories: language acquisition theories vary, and each theory attempted to explicate the mechanisms of language acquisition. Some argue that language is innate in people whereas others view language primarily as a social instrument of interaction that develops within and is influenced by the surrounding social environment. Other theories underline the mental, intellectual and cognitive processes involved in language acquisition. Despite their diversity, these theories are not conflicting. Together, they offer an integrated rich view of language acquisition.

حتاملة، مجمع اللغة العربية الأردني : الرّابط

<http://www.majma.org.jo/majma/index.php/2009-02-10-09-36-00/317-70-2.html>

A)- Behavioral Theories of Language Acquisition: this is one of the most prominent theories that explained language acquisition. The psychologist Skinner is considered a pioneer behaviorist. He was one of the most popular scholars that stressed that language development is determined by the surrounding environment. To behaviorists, children are born without any language skills; yet they adapt with their environment and acquire the language used in their surrounding environment. (Al-Ausseily, العصيلي, 2006; Hatamla, حتاملة, 2020)

Skinner referred to this approach as an experimental approach. According to this approach, human knowledge is acquired through the senses. Similarly, Watson proposed his behavioral theory that urged experimental psychology to investigate and observe behavior, confronting rationalists and cognitive theories. Furthermore, Skinner argued that language acquisition is mainly a process of enhancing an existing behavior through stimulant and response. For example, when the child utters 'milk' and their mother responds by providing it, the child consequently perceives it as a reward and keeps repeating the same process. As a result, the child acquires the language (Bin Mansour, بن منصور, 2020).

The behavioral approach to language acquisition is also connected with sociolinguistics that is interested in the social factors represented through language and its functions. One of the most prominent issues in this field of study is dialects of different communities, including how they vary and spread according to the language planning and policy that result in a social language primarily influenced by the surrounding environment (Jasim, جاسم, 2013). Thus, the social aspect is essential in language acquisition. Through a person's interaction with significant issues, they develop their linguistic skills that can be measured by the extent of such interactions. Interestingly, interactions conducted during the teaching-learning process represent a crucial

social component. In fact, some researchers studied the social bonds established among learners categorizing them into two groups: a high cooperative connection that resulted in equal linguistic experiences, and a low cooperative connection that resulted in inconsistent learning experiences (Al-Shater et al., الشاطر، وآخرون، 2018).

B)- The Innateness Theory : was proposed by Chomsky who rejected the hypothesis and principles of behaviorism. Chomsky revealed their failure to provide a scientific explanation for language acquisition. To him, it is illogical that all linguistic responses are determined solely by external influences. He stressed that language use is unlimited. He also pointed out how behaviorists were extremely impressed by the behavioral experiment on animals to the extent that they overlooked the distinctive human linguistic capabilities. (Ismael, إسماعيل، 2017)

Criticizing Skinner, Chomsky argued that children do not receive sufficient linguistic input that enables them to acquire accurate language. In fact, adults do not use accurate language consistently and children are exposed to few words and expressions. He advocated that children are born with an innate ability to acquire language. He also believed that the human brain had developed, and its neural circuits contain linguistic data since birth. Language acquisition is stimulated through the natural capacities such as listening and speaking which can be recognized by the child's mind and its linguistic data. That is called "*Language Acquisition Device (LAD)*". Children acquire language through mimicking sounds and imitating sentences that they hear from others. To Chomsky, language is universal (Gomaa, جمعة، 2018; Isany, عيساني، 2012).

Chomsky published his book "Syntactic structures" in 1975, attacking certain specialized methods for their superficial perspectives of linguistic structures. He attempted to highlight meanings and their interpretation (Nada, ندى، 2014). In addition, Chomsky's transformational generative theory seems to be the most detailed theory to describe and interpret linguistic structures. Therefore, *Generative Grammar* represents an essential part of any linguist's or language philosopher's knowledge. He also noted how language is not one type of complex behavior; it is a compound of human activities (Lyons, 1985)

C)- The Cognitive Theory of Language Acquisition: Piaget argued that knowledge is not simply the outcome of experiment. There must be mental patterns and structures that facilitate perception of the surrounding world.

As one of the pioneers of the structuralist approach, Piaget explains language acquisition within an epistemological framework. He established what is known as constructive epistemology. The structural approach views language as a cognitive, intellectual and dynamic activity performed by a person. Such an activity is developed throughout the stages of human development and growth. Therefore, this approach is interested mainly in the cognitive dimensions. Piaget also argues that intellectual development undergoes several phases, i.e., pre-systematic thinking, pre-use and perception of concepts, and intuition (Badr, بدر، 1981).

Piaget regards these responses as motivating the child to continue responding without any distortion or direction from the sender. As for questions, they are phrased in child's language and during experimentation, these phrasings are repeated to highlight the thinking process. The child's response and acts generate questions reflecting the child's intuition. Piaget's experiments are distinguished by their flexibility with children as each case requires. This in turn pinpointed the individual differences among children which required extra effort to identify the characteristics of each child and their capacity to acquire knowledge and language.

D)- The Interaction Theory of Language Acquisition: this theory shares some common features from behaviorism and cognitive theories. One of its pioneers is Lief Figo Tesky. This theory maintains that language learning relies on the interaction between the learner and their surroundings. As exemplified by children with their innate capacity to learn language for the purpose of communicating with others (Saufa, 2019 : pp. 192-201).

This theory integrates the aspects of external environment and the internal innateness of human capacity. This integration reflects the complexity of the process of language acquisition. Interaction theories include different approaches: Givon adopts the functional classifying approach while Hatch adopts the socio-cognitive discourse analysis approach. This theory of interaction is primarily concerned with discourse as a whole unit rather than focusing on a word or a sentence (Al-Samady, الصمادي 1998).

	Behaviorism Theory	Universal Grammar Theory	Cognitive Theory
Pioneer	Pavlov; Skinner; Watson	Chomsky (An American pioneer in transformational generative approach)	Piaget
Principle	-Language is a behavior that relies on stimulation and response. -Language is acquired through imitation and emulation. -Language is a behavior.	-Language is universal and involves the work of mind. -Humans are distinguished by their innate linguistic capacity that stimulates listening and imitation. -Humans have a pre-existing capability of language acquisition.	-The structural acquisition of language is parallel to human growth. At each stage, a person's acquisition and knowledge increases. -Growing awareness leads to extending language acquisition. -Language is acquired through interaction with the surrounding environment. -Children recognize meanings before they learn words. Therefore, children do not utter words they do not understand.
Limitations	-Humans and animals act alike during language acquisition.	Intuition is involved in predicting the speaker's intentions.	Piaget relied on children's deductive skills.

	Children seem passive as they acquire language. They start as a blank sheet.		Critics argue that children do not have a mature mind. For this, findings must be free of personalization.
Prominent Concepts	‘Linguistic behavior’	‘Transformational Generative Theory’	‘Cognitive Growth
Language	Language is as any other behavior, e.g., running, swimming, and playing.	Language is innate in humans and requires interaction with the surrounding environment to be activated.	Language is neither innate nor acquired. It is a creative function that requires proficiency. Language grows and develops naturally.

As noticed, these theories have been drawing on their predecessors. Chomsky argued against behaviorism and proposed an alternative interpretation for language acquisition. He viewed language as an innate feature of humans pointing out the distinct characteristics of language that is only activated through listening and imitation. He also highlighted the necessity of proficiency and performance for language acquisition. However, Chomsky’s approach overlooked the aspect of intuition that empowers a person to predict the speaker’s intentions. Nonetheless, Chomsky’s greatest achievement remains his detailed scrutiny of surface structures and language performance in contrast to deep structures that take place in a person’s mind reflecting their mental activity and broadening perception of linguistic phenomena. In addition, his work guided others to conclude that the surface structure of language used might be disconnected to its deep structure. Similarly, Piaget maintained how physical and cognitive growth is connected to language development. By this, he extended Chomsky’s work and added the concept of interaction. Thus, imitation and emulation are not the only conditions for language acquisition; interactions contribute to cognitive growth and language development.

Arabic Language Skills for Speakers of Other Languages

A)- Listening:

This is considered as one of the most important language skills. It is an effective means of communication. It is noteworthy how language immersion contributes to enhancing this skill through mingling with native speakers within their natural surroundings. Besides, through daily conversations, listening skills are improved continuously. In addition, repetition of sounds allows learners to acquire accurate pronunciation and conversational styles. (Hawashrya, هواشرية 2021)

B)- Speaking:

This is the second most important skill. It is considered complex since it involves multiple linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. The speaker’s psychological state plays a crucial role in directing this skill. Also, the speaker’s social status has a great significance during interaction. Even the mental images formed in the learner’s minds are influenced by the teaching methods

of Arabic as a second language. In fact, Speaking is the subsequent skills after listening. Learners seem passive during listening, storing vocabulary and structures. With speaking the learner interacts and produces actively, demonstrating their communicative skills in phrasing ideas, exchanging topics and conversing with other learners. Most importantly, this skill should be taken gradually to attain competence. (Al-Aamry, العامري 2016) ; (Malaysian Examinations Council, 2015 : <http://www.mpm.edu.my>).

C)- Reading:

This is one of the cognitive processes that involve transforming written symbols to perceived expressions. It starts by recognizing the alphabets and building connections among letters to form words that are gradually stored in memory, exploiting accumulative experiences. There are several types of reading: reading aloud, silent reading, auditory reading, Quick reading, and critical reading. (Hadiantu, هاديانتو 2014; See also, Attia, عطية 2007)

D)- Writing:

This is an essential skill in learning Arabic. It is also a crucial means of effective communication. Therefore, learners of Arabic are keen on mastering this skill. Writing activities start with writing Arabic letters of the alphabet, recognizing their shapes and practicing their pronunciation. Besides, they learn to distinguish the letter in different distributions: initial, medial, and final positions in words. Moreover, they learn the rules of punctuation and dictation. Writing activities include drawing letters, dictation, punctuation, writing composition, and grammar. (Al-Yuoby, اليوبي 2018).

Language Proficiencies: Hierarchical mechanisms and Arabic Language Acquisition

Participants in the present study took three language proficiency tests.

These tests:

- measured writing skills, writing a paragraph applying rules of writing
- measured speaking skills (through oral examination)
- measured listening and comprehension skills
- used educational programs requiring recording their reading of texts

Participants took three tests:

- a)- A diagnostic test for classifying learners and identifying their needs, strengths, and weaknesses, with the purpose of addressing them and providing the required support.
- b)- A mid-test assessing the learners' progress in the program.
- c)- A final test assessing the learners' language proficiency and achievement in the program.

Duration of the program

The program for Arabic language acquisition for speakers of other languages lasted for four months and was implemented during the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

Program Content

This program provided a selection of activities and events for the purpose of developing language proficiency and Arabic acquisition.

1) Phonetic Proficiency

“Language Partner” Program aimed at developing learners’ phonetic proficiency through mastering the phonetic articulation of letters, recognizing their distinct features and accurate pronunciation. Therefore, the program included practices on reading and articulation.

Reading texts:

The following text is a model for the reading practice provided for participants.

يقول القلقشندي في وصف الكتابة الإنشائية :

« إَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ صِنَاعَةَ الْإِنْشَاءِ أَرْفَعُ، وَصِنَاعَةُ الْحِسَابِ أَنْفَعُ؛ وَقَلَمُ الْمَكَاتِبَةِ خَاطِبٌ، وَقَلَمُ الْمُحَاسِبَةِ خَاطِبٌ. فَقُلْتُ: الْآنَ قَدْ انْقَطَعَتِ الْحُجَّةُ، وَبَاتَتِ الْمَحَجَّةُ، فَمَا الَّذِي يَحْتَاجُ كَاتِبَ الْإِنْشَاءِ إِلَى مُمَارَسَتِهِ؟ فَقَالَ: إِذَا، قَدْ تَعَلَّمْتَ مِنَ الصَّنِيعَةِ بِأَسْبَابِهَا، وَأَتَيْتَ الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا.. اعْلَمْ أَنَّ كَاتِبَ الْإِنْشَاءِ لَا تَطْهَرُ فَصَاحَتُهُ، وَتَبِينُ بِلَاغَتُهُ، وَتَجَلُّ بِرَاعَتِهِ، إِلَّا بَعْدَ تَحْصِيلِ جُمْلَةٍ مِنَ الْعُلُومِ، وَمَعْرِفَةِ الْإِصْطِلَاحِ وَالْإِخْطَاةِ بِالرُّسُومِ. أَهْمٌ مَا يَبْدَأُ بِتَحْصِيلِهِ حِفْظَ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ، فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ، وَمَا اسْتَمَلَ عَلَيْهِ كَلَامُ النَّبِيِّ مِنَ الْأَلْفَاظِ الْبَدِيعَةِ، وَالْعِلْمُ بِالْأَحْكَامِ السُّلْطَانِيَّةِ وَفُرُوعِهَا، وَالتَّوَعُّلُ فِي أَشْعَارِ الْعَرَبِ وَالْمَوْلِدِينَ، وَالْأَمْثَالِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ، وَالْإِطْلَاحِ عَلَى خُطَبِ النَّبِيِّ، وَرِسَائِلِ الْفُصَحَاءِ وَالْعِلْمُ بِأَيَّامِ الْعَرَبِ وَخُرُوبِهِمْ، وَالتَّنَظُّرُ فِي التَّوَارِيخِ وَأَخْبَارِ الدُّوَلِ الْمَاضِيَّةِ، مَعَ سَعَةِ الْبَاحِ فِي اللُّغَةِ الَّتِي هِيَ رَأْسُ مَالِهِ، وَالتَّحْوُّ الَّذِي هُوَ مِلْخُ كَلَامِهِ، وَالتَّصْرِيفِ الَّذِي تُعْرَفُ بِهِ أُصُولُ أُبْنِيَّةِ الْكَلِمَةِ وَأَحْوَالِهَا، وَعُلُومِ الْمَعْنَايِ وَالْبَيَانَ وَالْبَدِيعِ الَّتِي هِيَ جَلِيَّةٌ لِسَانِهِ.»

Qalqashandy wrote in his book on rhetoric:

“Rhetorical composition is one of the most prestigious crafts. Despite the existence of other profitable crafts such as accounting. To be an eloquent and skillful writer, you must master an array of general knowledge and specialized sciences. Primarily, memorization and comprehension of the Glorious Quran, the book of Allah Almighty, will provide you with wisdom and insightful perspective. Moreover, scrutiny of the heritage of the noble prophet (peace be upon him) will enrich your language commands with its exquisite expressions. Furthermore, it is crucial to have awareness of ruling laws and regulations. Then comes familiarity with Arab’s poetry, rare proverbs, speeches and letters of talented orators and writers, the history of Arabs and their wars, and the victories and falls of past nations. All these are vital, in addition to linguistic competence including the proficiencies and skills of grammar, morphology, semantics, rhetoric and poetics”.

Similar other texts were employed for learners’ pronunciation practice. This in turn develops learners’ reading proficiency including silent reading, reading aloud, and interpretive reading.

1-2) Utilizing ‘Class Point’ Program: This program allows learners’ participation through their computer devices. They read and record their reading within a specified time limit. Then after they finish, the program collects and saves these recordings for discussion and sharing feedback by learners.

Vocabulary Proficiency:

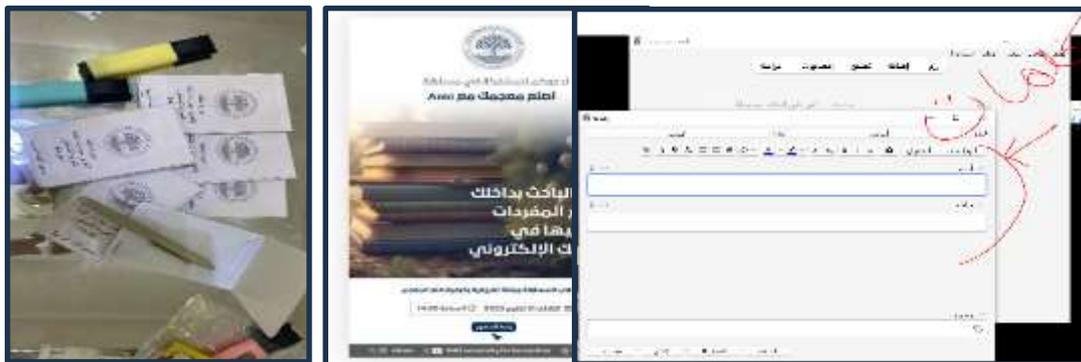
This refers to the learners’ capacity to use a variety of lexical items and vocabulary. The program for enhancing Arabic language skills offered two types of dictionaries:

Paper Dictionaries

Learners collected in these dictionaries all new vocabulary they encountered during lectures, at the student hostel or elsewhere. The learners were asked to write down this new vocabulary and comprehend it in their mother tongues.

Electronic Dictionaries

Mohamed Bin Zayed University has launched a competition entitled ‘Create your Dictionary with Anki’. International students participated in this competition and contributed to producing “Flash Cards”.



Paper Dictionaries

Electronic dictionaries

Figure (1) Designing Language Models for paper and electronic mini-dictionaries by non-native learners of Arabic in Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu-Dabi (2023-2024)

These figures reflect the lexical knowledge of the learners participating in this experiment. Through filling out a paper and an electronic form in Arabic that aims primarily to provoke the learner’s curiosity to explore the lexical meaning of words in contexts of use. The objective of this is to provide learners with sufficient lexical stock besides intensive selection of expressions based on Arabic discourse features, particularly in modern use. Learners then might face some unknown words and attempts to predict their meanings relying on contextual clues and semantic fields. By this, learners would form an impression about Arabic language and be able to distinguish different phonemes and words in Arabic.

Another stage involved introducing exercises on synonyms. These exercises expanded the learners’ knowledge of easy and common vocabulary. Moreover, acquisition of new vocabulary was gradual and allows learners to gain a particular number of new vocabularies in each new lesson, whether on the word level or sentence level. Also, there was practice on new structures using known words. That is, words that were acquired in past lessons were used to form new structures.

The third stage was about constructing dialogue and forming sentences and conversing in Arabic based on comprehension of the acquired vocabulary and their effective use in expressing clear complete meanings. This also included practicing different communicative contexts, such as first introductions, study, home, dinning, family, workplace, travel, health, weather, and sports, etc. (Garba, M., Hassan, R., 2024 : Volume VIII Issue VIII August, pp. 2519-2532. <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/> DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8080191>).

The fourth stage aimed at developing lexical skills. In this stage, learners were exposed to selected theatrical scenes that involved particular vocabulary intended to be learned. Such scenes represented certain situations that highlight the use of vocabulary, enabling learners to acquire

Grammar Proficiency

This type requires a great effort as it requires learners to practice grammar rules and apply them accurately. This is crucial for acquiring word forms and word orders in sentences. It is also important for correct orthography and accurate pronunciation. Grammar proficiency enables learners to generate and analyze sentences correctly and clearly. (Ashour, عاشور 2023).

Grammar proficiency is connected explicitly and implicitly to other proficiencies such as morphological, phonological, and writing proficiencies.

The program of ‘Enhancing Arabic Language Skills’ provided a selection of educational lectures that offered valuable lessons through which learners practiced using accurate syntactic structures, punctuation, and grammatical styles.

The Teaching Plan

Weeks	Topics
Week 1	-Introduction of the program, Assignments, and Assessments -Diagnostic Test -Parts of Speech: Nouns, Verbs, Articles -Nouns: markers
Week 2	-Verbs: types, conjugation, predication, parsing -Grammar and morphology exercises
Week 3	-Declension and Diathesis -Declension with original signs - Declension with secondary signs -Functional writing exercises
Week 4	-Nominal sentences - Function Particles (Nasikh Particles) - Modal/ Function Verbs (Nasikh Verbs) - Functional writing exercises
Week 5	-Verbal sentence - Agent (Subject) - Pro-agent - Object
Week 6	-Cognate Object -Causative Object -Comitative Object -Ablative Object -Mid-Test
Week 7	-Circumstantial accusative -Specificative -Vocative -Exceptive
Week 8	-Dependents -Attribution (Adjectives) -Conjunction

	-Apposition -Assertion /Emphasis
Week 9	-Morphological Patterns -Infinitive Verbs/ Verb Roots -Augmented Verbs
Week 10	-Present Participle (Active Participle) -Past Participle (Passive Participle) -Intensive Forms -Assimilation -Nouns of Time and Location (Locative and temporal Nouns) -Noun of Instrument (Instrumental Noun)
Week 11	-dictation exercises -Disjunctive Hamza -Conjunctive Hamza -the spelling of Hamza in (ﻮﻝ) -the spelling of Hamza in medial and final positions
Week 12	-General Review and Writing Exercises -Final Test

(Course Description of the “Language Partner” Program)

Representing Arabic grammar to meet the needs of non-native learners is considered a vital step for enhancing the quality of teaching Arabic language to speakers of other languages. Through focusing on the functional and practical dimensions of Arabic, it is possible to implement a highly effective educational experience that grab the attention of learners

A quick review of the curricula of grammar, morphology and dictation as provided in the “Language Partner” Program reflects a deep understanding of the new reality in language learning. Such new reality requires novel perspectives for presenting grammar through focusing on accurate structures in Arabic and analyzing deep meaning rather than surface forms (Alantaky,1/4). It is also evident that the psychology of learners is taken into consideration since learners were encouraged to benefit from all fields of knowledge to comprehend the second language efficiently. Accordingly, the main topics in grammar had been chosen, i.e., parts of speech (Nouns- Verbs- Particles), declension and diathesis, types of sentences, complements and adjuncts, verb complements, noun complements. This arrangement of topics seemed logical enough to fulfill the needs of non-native learners of Arabic.

As for morphology, lessons included essential rules of morphology. The program also focused on major topics such as morphological patterns and their significance, and the reason behind choosing the pattern “f-a-l” as the standard pattern. Besides, there was a focus on changes required while applying such patterns, along with explaining nominals, verbs, and derivations.

In addition, dictation practice involved ensuring accurate spelling and writing. That also covered issues of *Hamza*, separation and connection of words, affixation and deletion, *Tanween*, punctuation, and correcting common spelling mistakes. Finally, a comprehensive summary is provided for each lesson and followed by sufficient exercises.

It is obvious how the “Language Partner” Program is keen on offering a logical order of topics and lesson for learners. As explained, it starts with easy and simple topics and gradually covers complex topics. The program also stresses the importance of comprehension of rules that in turn

leads to appreciation of texts, highlighting the role of context of use. Moreover, the program is keen on empowering learners with accuracy and fluency in Arabic language, the language of the Glorious Quran. Finally, the program avoids controversial details and issues that might be confusing for learners and only specialists would be interested in them. Therefore, the program attempted to merge rules and practices to continuously assess comprehension and development of speaking and writing skills.

Through the program for enhancing Arabic language skills, and through designing grammar lessons, it was observed that:

- 1- learners are encouraged to write and speak accurately following grammatical rules.
- 2- learners are trained to differentiate among the linguistic structures.
- 3- learners practice observation, analysis, conjunction, and deduction.
- 4- learners improve their good thinking.
- 5- deduction of rules is based on comprehension of examples (Attia, 2008, pp. 208-209).

Writing Proficiency and Dictation: This refers to writing words correctly, using accurate punctuation in writing, and using clear graphic signs. Therefore, the program aimed at improving orthography and dictation through the activities provided for learners:

-Office hours at the university main library that included reading a selection of books appropriate for learners' level. (Abu Shaikha A., & Hamzeh M., 2023 : Vol. 14, No. 6, November pp. 1524-1534. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1406.10>).

-writing reports about educational and recreational trips that learners conducted during the program.

Through implementing the "Language Partner" Program, particularly regarding teaching dictation, it was observed that:

- 1- learners need quietness to concentrate on listening to different phonemes.
- 2- exercises are required to improve the learners' skills.
- 3- challenging vocabulary can be less challenging in writing through reviewing and applying the writing rules in different practices.
- 4- teaching dictation continues throughout all educational stages including higher education.
- 5- learners are retested in the vocabulary they made mistakes in.
- 6- dictation is divided into four categories: copying, at sight, audio, and assessing (Attia, 2008, pp.147-158).



Figure (2) Language Models for Enhancing Writing, Composition, and Dictation Skills of Non-native Learners of Arabic in Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu-Dabi (2023-2024)

Renovating Strategies and Approaches in Enhancing Writing and Dictation

Renovating approaches in teaching writing and dictation are crucial for enhancing Arabic teaching for non-native speakers. These approaches involve modern techniques and creative and interactive learning that enhance learning and meets the learners' needs. (Salim, M., 2024 : Volume-4 Issue-5, pp. 136-147. <https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.4.5.21>).

Communicative Proficiency:

Since communication is the most significant target for using language, measuring communication proficiency seemed as one of the most essential proficiencies that learners must acquire. Proficiencies might vary from one learner to another depending on their self-confidence. Some learners may feel shy and hesitate to interact with others whereas others appear confident enough to initiate conversations fluently. This in turn enables them to communicate information clearly and effectively to their audience while others are incapable of that despite their comprehension of the content they seek to deliver. (Asteitih, استيتية, 2004, pp. 47-48).

As for communication skills, the "Language Partner" Program was keen on exposing learners to various conversational scenes that depict several daily situations. The program included five units; each unit consisted of two topics:

- 1- Arabic language, and University life.
- 2- Tourism, and Sports.

3- Daily life, and Professional life.

4- Useful break, and Family trip. (Alshahrani, A., 2019 : 10, pp. 298-313. doi: 10.24093/awej/vol10no1.25).

5- Success at work, and Relaxation. (Abu Shaikha A., & Hamzeh M., 2023 : Vol. 14, No. 6, November pp. 1524-1534. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1406.10>).

Each unit followed this order: vocabulary and new expressions, dialogue, and exercises. Oral exercises focused on grammatical cases and phonetic changes, pauses and continuity, pronunciation and others. Also, there were interactive questions, or exercises that involved learners in conversation with colleagues. Writing exercises included completion tasks, multiple choice tasks, and rearrangement tasks. (Bernstein, J., Van Moere, A., & Cheng, J. 2010 : pp. 355-377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532210364404>).

Exercises : ‘Class Point’ Program:

It is an educational program that supports Arabic Language and requires a subscription in bundles of use. The “Language Partner” Program was keen on acquiring a bundle that allows learners to practice interactive classroom activities. Such activities include writing interactions that engage learners in virtual classrooms using their smart devices to practice writing. Learners join the activities through scanning a bar code shared by their instructors. (Mohideen, H. L. M., 2024 : 2 (10), pp. 760-767. <https://doi.org/10.56778/jdlde.v2i9.225>).

This program, among others, involves learners in virtual communicative tasks that assimilate real life interactions, making learners active participants through their speech and behavior. (Yaacob, M., & Bakar, K., 2018 :



<https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1104684>).

Figure (3) Samples of enhancing Arabic through using modern technology by Non-native Learners of Arabic in Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu-Dabi (2023-2024)

6) Oral interaction Proficiency :

This refers to listening and speaking skills. The program applied two strategies for communication proficiencies that encouraged learning Arabic within its environment.



Figure (4) Samples of Classroom Interactive Activities for Non-native Learners of Arabic in Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu-Dabi (2023-2024)

The Language Partner:

This is one of the valuable activities offered by the program ‘Enhancing Arabic Language Skills’ for speakers of other languages. This activity aimed at improving language skills in light of the program general policy. It provided language immersion for learners which facilitated effective communication within the community. The language partner was a member of the university community characterized by eloquence in Classical Arabic. This partner was also resident in the students’ hostel, so they accompanied non-native learners of Arabic to offer assistance whenever they needed, overcoming any challenges they faced while learning Arabic. (Mohideen, H. L. M., 2024 : 2 (10), pp. 760-767. <https://doi.org/10.56778/jdlde.v2i9.225>).

Open Discussions for Distinguished Expression:

Open discussion activities have been popular among learners. Numerous learners favored this activity rather than others since it allowed them to express themselves and share their interests. Non-native learners of Arabic found themselves competent in sharing this information about themselves. Examples of their discussions included ‘tourism in Russia’, ‘the Toktok in Indonesia’, and ‘cultural and linguistic diversity in Indonesia’, among others.

(Kenali, H., et al., 2019 : pp. 972-979. DOI: 10.4236/ce.2019.105073 May 30).

(Hays, R. T., 2005 : <https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/prepare-test/understand-test-format/speaking-test>)

Semantic Proficiency:

The study of semantics is the study of meaning. It is concerned with the connection between symbols’ meanings, whether these symbols are linguistic consisting of letters, words, and sentences, or non-linguistic including hand and head gestures. The study of semantics is an integral branch of linguistics. (Omar, عمر 1998)

Semantic proficiency is crucial for learners since it allows them to recognize implicit and explicit meanings of different vocabulary within their contexts. In addition, learners gained proficiency as they practiced and became fully aware of structures and their uses. Learners could realize connections among words in general contexts, and they could perceive specialized concepts. They practiced all these through discussion circles and reports.



Figure (5) Samples of enhancing lexical competencies in Arabic for Non-native Learners of Arabic in Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu-Dabi (2023-2024)

The Instrument of the Study

For the purpose of the present study, namely attaining the essential proficiencies of non-native learners of Arabic, a summative test was designed to assess the learners. Based on a detailed review of past studies, the test was designed consisting of five questions. The first question measured comprehension. The second and third questions measured grammar proficiency. As for the fourth question, it measured learners' communicative proficiencies. Finally, the fifth question measured the writing skills. The whole test was designed to maintain the aspects of validity and reliability. (Malaysian Examinations Council, 2015 :

[http://www.mpm.edu.my/download MUET/MUET Test Specification 2015VersiPort.al.pdf](http://www.mpm.edu.my/download_MUET/MUET_Test_Specification_2015VersiPort.al.pdf)).

The Validity of the Test:

Having designed the test, it was reviewed by referees specialized in the field of Arabic teaching methodology together with a selection of Arabic language supervisors from the ministry of education in the United Arab Emirates. The referees shared their feedback on how appropriate the items of the test were and to what extent these items met the objectives of the present study. The referees also checked the linguistic accuracy of the test items and maintained how suitable this test was for non-native learners of Arabic. Accordingly, their comments and feedback were taken in consideration, and the test questions were re-phrased as in its final form (provided in the Appendix)

The Reliability of the Test:

The test was proven reliable using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The test was applied to a pilot of 6 learners that were not included as participants in the present study. Results came out as follows:

Results of test reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

No.	Test	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
1	Summative	0.89

Test Duration:

The test duration was allocated based on the average duration taken by the quickest and the slowest learners who took the test. The average duration was 60 minutes.

Test duration =

$$\frac{\text{time taken by the quickest learner} + \text{time taken by the slowest learner}}{2}$$

Analysis of Test Result

Student	Diagnostic	Mid-test					Final Test				
		Q1 4	Q2 4	Q3 4	Q4 4	Q5 4	Q1 12	Q2 10	Q3 8	Q4 10	Q5 10
A.Kh.	27	4	3	4	4	3	12	8	5	8	7
A.F.	17	3	3	3	2	2.5	12	7	5	6	7
Aa.S.	13	2	3	3	3	2	12	8	3.5	6	9
S.A.	9	1	1	1.5	0	1.5	9	8	2	5	4
H.Sh.	17	1	3	3	4	2.5	12	9	6.5	6	7
M.K.	25	1	4	2	2	3	12	9	5	6	10

Performance Analysis of Learners During the “Language Partner” Program

Through analyzing the participants’ results in the pre-test and post-test, it was observed that participants achieved progress in each stage through the activities that measured the language proficiencies. Participants’ progress revealed the performance of each learner in reading and writing activities.

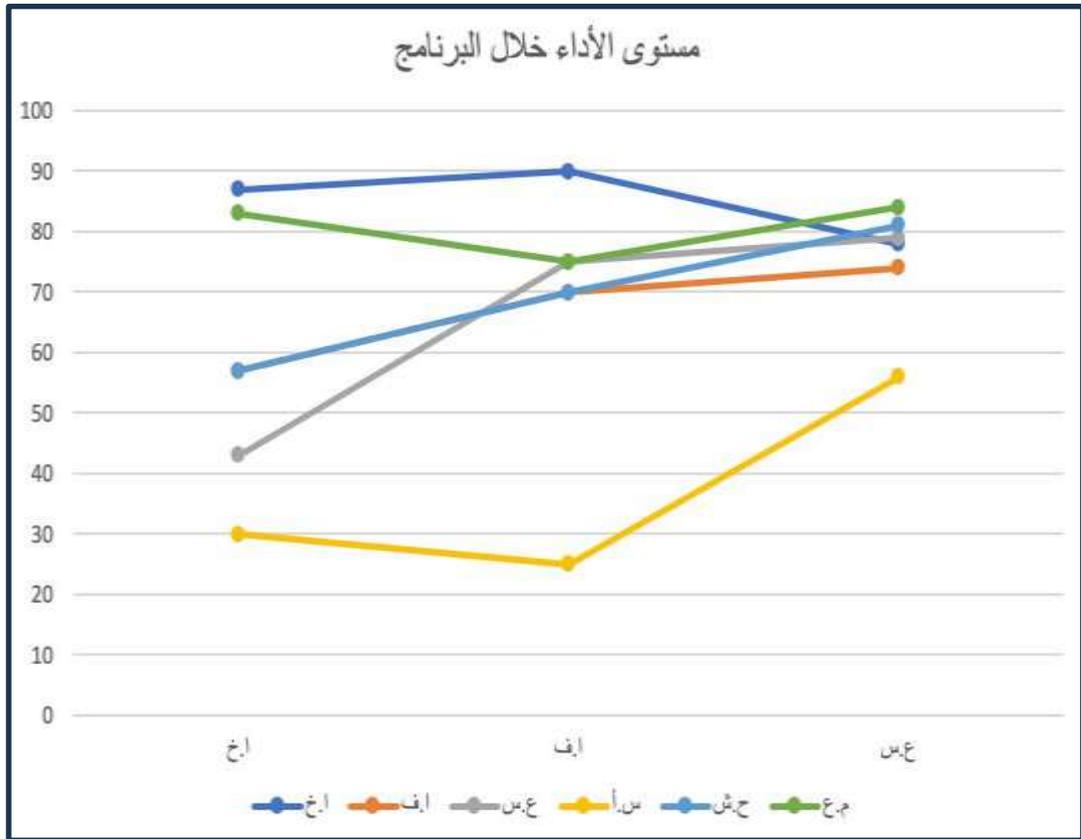


Figure (6) Statistical Analysis of Learners' Performance During the Pre-tests and the Post-tests

Discussion of Findings

To answer the question ‘Are there statistically significant differences (0.05) of using language immersion activities and practices during learning Arabic by speakers of other languages, by comparing the average grade of participants’ grades in the pre-test and post-test, and by measuring the academic achievement and their language proficiencies before and after the participants took part in the program of enhancing Arabic language skills?’, the impact was measured through comparing the average grade of the experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test and it was as follows:

Test	Average	Standard deviation	Impact
Pre	63%	22.8%	13%
Post	76%%	9.2%	

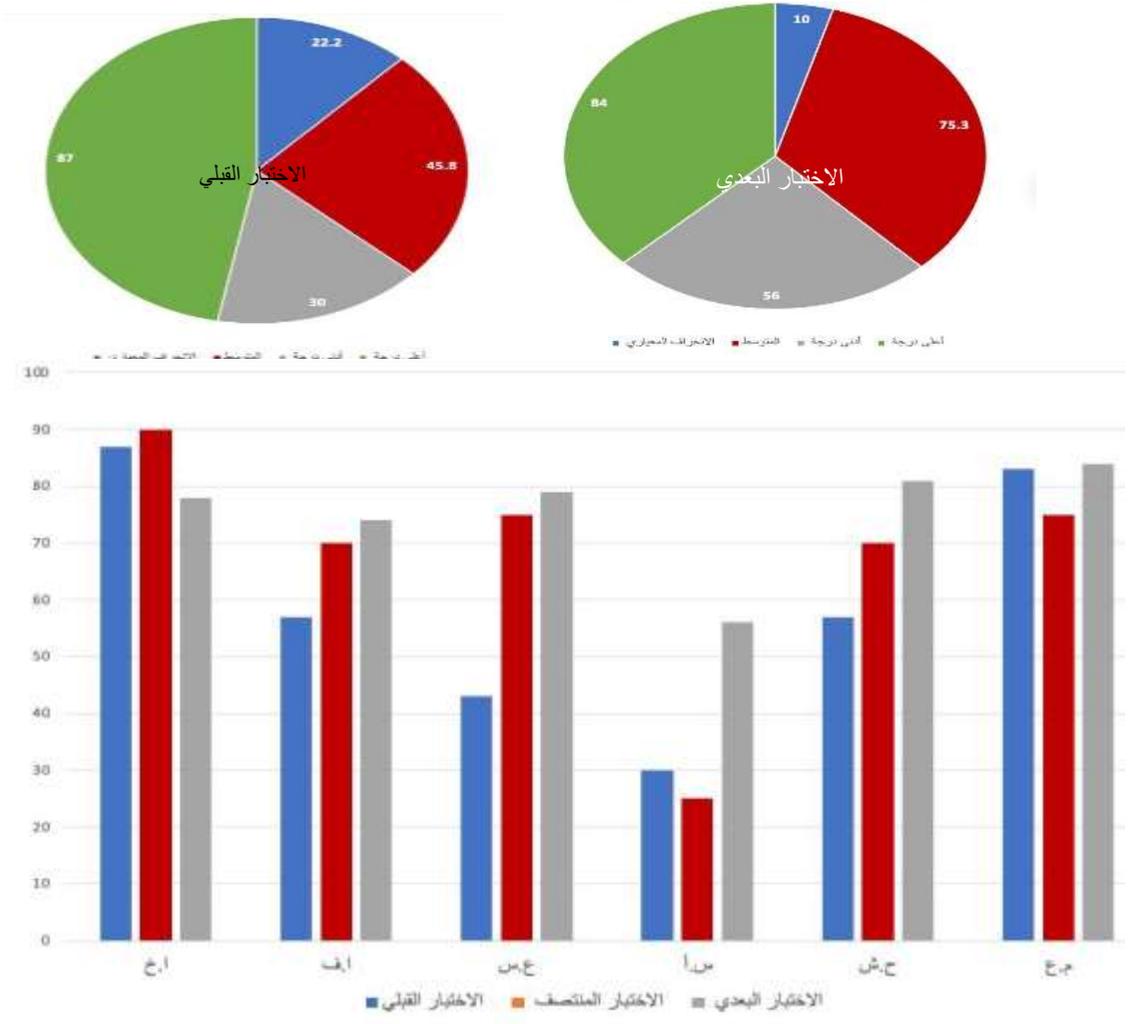


Figure (7) Statistical Analysis of Learners' Performance During Pre-tests, Post-tests, and Midterm Exam

Conclusion

This study attempted to provide a theoretical approach and its practical application for the purpose of allowing non-native Arabic learners to acquire new knowledge about Arabic language, its vocabulary and structures. Furthermore, it aimed at finding modern ways to enable learners and enhance their acquisition of Arabic as a second language, in order to master listening, speaking, grammar, reading, writing, effective communication competencies within the surrounding social environment and adapting with it.

This study has revealed the significance of “linguistic immersion” as a crucial means facilitating Arabic learning for non-native speakers. Findings confirm other recent studies that recommended linguistic immersion as one of the most effective means of minimizing learning problems faced by non-native learners of Arabic. As argued, linguistic immersion relies on direct interaction in

various daily contexts which in turn empowers learners with the linguistic competencies to interact spontaneously and enhance listening, speaking and negotiating skills among other forms of practices (Al-Badawy, 2021, pp. 30-57).

The study has also pointed out that memorizing and understanding are not sufficient for Arabic language learning. Arabic language must be utilized and practiced in actual situations by non-native learners. Learners who are deprived of the practical chance to utilize what they have learned, do not acquire the language competence. Hence, Arabic language acquisition relies on the integration of these aspects: memorizing, understanding, and practical application. In fact, higher education language model mostly depends on practical application that allows learners to practice using Arabic, its rules and contexts, and its pronunciation. This makes acquisition naturally implicit.

This study has demonstrated the differences between *Arabic teaching method*, its *application*, its *approach* and *curriculum*. Teaching *method* refers to how Arabic is introduced to non-native learners theoretically and philosophically. This also includes choosing the teaching materials and its completion. On the other hand, *application* refers to how the method is applied practically including the activities used in classrooms for teaching Arabic. Differently, *approach* refers to the educational principles and basis followed during the teaching process. An example is the knowledge-based economy approach that emerged recently with its effective role in educational practices and attaining goals matching modern requirements. That also has a role in improving Arabic teaching for non-native learners. Finally, curriculum comprises the teaching content and materials, their learning outcomes, lessons, and assessments.

The “Language Partner” Program for enhancing Arabic language skills for non-native learners at Mohamed Bin Zayed University has been carefully selecting the texts utilized in the experiment. Such texts include classical rhetorical texts with their high literary and moral values that empower non-native learners with accurate language competencies. The program also focuses on the spoken more than the written. Therefore, Arabic was presented through recorded dialogues on CDs at language labs. Furthermore, this program employed functional grammar in enhancing Arabic skills for non-native learners. This in turn enabled learners to generate accurate Arabic sentences appropriate for communicative contexts. Learners’ competencies included explanation, cognition, logic, and socialization.

The “Language Partner” Program was concerned with the psychological dimension of teaching Arabic for non-native learners while designing the program content and exercises. In fact, the program was keen on identifying learners’ interests and needs which enhances learning Arabic and its rapid acquisition.

This study has proven that learning and acquiring language are similar processes. Both involve the immersion of learners within the linguistic environment that resembles the native environment of acquisition. Effective learning is quite similar to acquisition. A non-native learner does not simply learn about a language. It is essential for the learner to recognize the rules and principles governing appropriate use of language in social contexts, i.e., acquiring language and its contextual use

Furthermore, the study has proven how the repetition of words enhances learners’ pronunciation and accuracy of retention.

Teaching Arabic in lessons of Grammar, Composition, and Dictation have been a great proposal that integrated language competencies of learners and developed their thinking, creativity, and

production. Accordingly, learners immersed in the context of use and acquired the language skills intended through the program.

System is another crucial aspect of the “Language Partner” Program. Users of language communicate through analyzing what they hear and read following a particular system initiated by the speaker or writer. That underlines a common linguistic system between the sender and receiver which leads to a successful communication (Arar, 2008, p.22). This system is not confined to vocabulary recognition that does not represent an actual system that would accomplish effective communication. As offered in Mohamed Bin Zayed University program, there have been constructive levels that integrate the various linguistic aspects, i.e., phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax.

This study has proven that participants in the “Language Partner” Program demonstrated great improvement in Speaking and listening skills. They also displayed high self-confidence during communication in Arabic in real life situations. In fact, direct exposure to Arabic culture enabled them to recognize and perception of customs and traditions.

Through this study, several concepts within the field of foreign language acquisition were distinguished accurately, including:

Language acquisition: refers to the subconscious gaining of language as exemplified by children acquiring their mother tongue through natural situations subconsciously, rather than through systematic lessons and approaches.

Language teaching: refers to the interactive process of delivering knowledge and experiences from an instructor to a student.

Language learning: refers to the personal behavior of a learner who aims at gaining knowledge and experiences.

Thus, language learning is the conscious process of gaining a new language as represented through learning Arabic by non-native speakers.

The study finally stressed the prominent role of application in delivering functional meanings of Arabic language rules. This was accomplished through the best methods of acquisition within contexts. Indeed, contexts of use represent the most influential tool for acquiring the rule of language, especially standard or classical Arabic as used throughout teaching (Saleh, 2021, p.660)

Recommendations for Future Research

The present study highlights the importance of linguistic immersion, offering a training program based on language practices and activities. Findings of this study have confirmed findings of previous studies in the field, which in turn proves that linguistic immersion is one the most effective methods for Arabic teaching for speakers of other languages. Accordingly, it is recommended:

regular updating teaching methods and utilizing modern applications, benefiting from international experiments, following up modern approaches in learning Arabic, designing teaching materials that provide social and cultural contexts for learners, improving curricula, choosing texts that enable learners to enhance their pronunciation and expression, depending on Arabic heritage to deduce grammatical rules in rather simple and effective ways that facilitate Arabic learning and acquisition of its competencies.

exploiting applications of “Language Partner” Program for nonnative learners of Arabic, and generalizing its implementation for natural language learning since it is proven to be efficient in enhancing non-native learners’ linguistic competencies through actions and interactions, and through exposure to culture and dialects that in turn foster Arabic acquisition.

holding training courses in universities and educational institutions that implement such practices and activities for enhancing non-native learners’ linguistic competencies and meeting their special needs, while overcoming any drawbacks and corresponding to the recent updates.

utilizing technology and cooperative learning, focusing on context which provides a rich and catchy learning environment for learners, since it is proven that this renovating approach in teaching vocabulary, grammar, dictation, writing, and functional composition fosters effective Arabic acquisition by non-native learners of Arabic. Further studies implementing such renovating approaches are recommended to highlight their value and effectiveness.

Considering merging the most effective traditional and modern teaching methods in teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages, for attaining the optimal benefit, including teaching through translation, focusing on grammar and morphology, considering direct methods, oral methods, communicative approaches, content-based approaches, curricula employed in language immersion programs (Abdullah, 2020, p.256).

Considering the phenomenon of diglossia while designing the Arabic lessons for non-native learners, together with utilizing modern technologies (digital learning – distant learning – online teaching) while maintaining the essential features of standard or classical Arabic (Abdullah, 2020, pp.256-257).

Considering learners’ individual differences as they participate in the *linguistic immersion* program, through providing them with useful tools and appropriate topics, and improving their language skills, focusing on using language effectively and motivating them to utilize it in social life (Shibila, 2018, p.62), besides conducting further experiments on introducing the most common Arabic vocabulary to non-native learners of Arabic.

Conducting further experiments on comparing and contrasting programs of teaching Arabic in different Arab and non-Arab countries around the world to benefit from their common and different findings in the field of teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages.

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