



The Difficulties of Learning the Four Skills of the Arabic Language from the Point of View of Male and Female Students of Arabic: The Proposed Solution

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Abstract

The present study examines the level of difficulty in learning the four language skills of Arabic from the perspective of male and female students at Farhangian University (West Azerbaijan Province). Data collection was based on a researcher-made questionnaire, which, after obtaining the opinions of the research sample, was analysed using a descriptive-analytical approach and statistical analysis methods. The study sample in the present research includes 100 male and female students in different academic terms who were randomly selected. SPSS software was used to analyse the data. This research includes several axes: First, a theoretical framework focusing on language skills and the difficulties facing language learners and proposed strategies to improve them. Second, research method and tools. Third, statistical analysis of the data obtained from the responses of the study sample to identify the most important weaknesses and difficulties in teaching Arabic at Farhangian University, and to analyse the results. In the end, the most important result was that male and female students of Farhangian University have many difficulties in learning language skills such as speaking and writing, and among them, the difficulties of male students are much greater than female students, indicating that females have better language abilities compared to males.

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1. Introduction

Teaching Arabic as the first language of the Islamic world and the language of Islamic culture and civilisation is of great importance, and Muslims have been interested in teaching and learning it for a long time. Arabic language in the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been the focus of education policymakers for religious, cultural, political and economic reasons, and its learning begins in the first secondary school based on the 16th principle of the constitution. In many universities of the country, including Farhangian University, the Arabic language course has been established to train teachers needed for education, and hundreds of students are admitted to study it every year. However, the teaching of the four skills of the Arabic language in Iranian universities, especially Farhangian University, has always faced difficulties.

1.1. Research Questions

The present essay seeks to identify the difficulties of learning Arabic in this university and provide solutions to improve education and try to answer the following questions:

- What are the most important difficulties that male and female students of Farhangian University face in learning Arabic language skills?
- What are the appropriate solutions to overcome the problems faced by students in teaching the four skills of the Arabic language?

2. Theoretical research literature

The subject of difficulties in education is one of the new fields that have attracted the attention of researchers since the 60s of the last century. The meaning of teaching difficulties in the current research is not the inability to learn, but the inability of learners with normal intelligence to use the normal educational programme. Every language consists of four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and learning any language depends on mastering these four skills. The process of teaching the four Arabic language skills to students is very complicated. Many students have difficulty in pronouncing Arabic letters correctly, and many of them do not have the necessary ability to understand the general meaning of a listening text. As regards reading skills, there are also difficulties such as the connection between letter and sound, distinguishing between similar letters, and understanding the reading text. The main problem of Arabic students is in speaking skills: they have little ability to talk with others and think in Arabic. In the field of writing skills, there are also problems such as the inability to translate thoughts and ideas while keeping the writing style of Arabic speakers. Lack of vocabulary is another difficulty in teaching writing skills to non-Arabic speaking students.

3. Research background

Difficulties in teaching the four skills of the Arabic language to non-Arabic speaking students have always attracted the attention of experts and researchers in different countries, and various conferences have been held to investigate these difficulties and provide practical solutions.

In the present study, the authors have tried to investigate the difficulties of teaching the four skills of the Arabic language from the perspective of the students of Farhangian University of West Azarbaijan Province, while using the findings of previous studies.

4. Research Methodology

In order to achieve the mentioned goal, a questionnaire was designed. After consultation and consensus with the experts in the field of educational sciences and Arabic language teaching, and after reviewing and adjusting their views, it was finally shaped in 40

questions. The statistical population of the present study consisted of all students of the Arabic language teaching field at Farhangian University of West Azarbaijan Province in the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023, and the questionnaire was applied to a sample of 100 male and female students who were randomly selected. SPSS (multivariate analysis of variance, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, percentage) was used for data analysis.

5. Results

It was mentioned earlier that the present study was conducted to investigate the difficulties of teaching the four language skills from the point of view of male and female students of Farhangian University of West Azarbaijan Province. The results show that there are many difficulties in learning Arabic language skills from the point of view of the target group. In the two skills of listening and reading, the two variables of age and gender have not been found very effective in learning these two skills, and both girls and boys had the expected abilities to a large extent in these two skills. However, the bottom of the scale was in favour of girls, who were better in more than two-thirds of the indicators of these two skills. This does not mean the problems of these two skills are overcome; the findings show that girls have difficulty in understanding the general idea of the listening text and understanding the meanings of the words. However, in the field of speaking and writing skills, the status of male and female students was not very good, and their average scores were lower. In fact, their improvement requires brainstorming and extracting thoughts and language combinations, connecting them together at a specific time, and observing grammar points. The main cause of these problems should be found in the curriculum of teaching Arabic language in Farhangian University, which does not seem to pay much attention to the linguistic development of students and encouraging them to talk inside and outside the classrooms.

The proposed solutions to solve the mentioned problems are to innovate and update the curriculum of Farhangian University and study units according to the needs and level of students and the use of practical units to strengthen the four language skills. Increasing the teaching hours of the units related to the four skills and allocating the mentioned units from the third semester to the end of the course is another solution. Benefiting from the opinions and views of experts in the field of educational sciences and teaching methods can play an effective role in reducing these problems.

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