

Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Second Language: A Case Study of Dubai

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Abstract: Enrolment into Arabic as a second language (ASL) in Dubai has increased steadily due to the high influx of immigrant populations. Although Arabic is the primary language in Dubai mandatory taught in primary schools in Dubai, training and learning face challenges that affect learning a teaching objective. The extant investigation aimed to examine the teaching and learning of ASL in Dubai through exploring the importance of ASL, ALS programs in Dubai, ASL changes and solutions, and the role of technology infusion and motivation in ASL training and learning. The examination utilized a qualitative case study where seven teachers and eight learners were interviewed. The researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis. The data obtained revealed that ASL is important among non-Arabic natives and immigrants since its improved communication and interaction. The main challenge noted included curriculum shortcomings, inadequate training and learning, poor technology utilization, and insufficient learning times. The findings suggested curriculum review, increase in the technology used in training and learning, and allocation of more time for ASL lessons to curb the challenges. The examinations discuss the policy, practice, and research implications of the findings. Although the findings are insightful in ASL training and learning in Dubai, the researcher recommended extensive research using different methodologies, sample sizes, and other cities in the UAE.

Keywords: Teaching and Learning Arabic; Challenges; ASL; Arabic in Dubai

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic language is increasingly receiving recognition in the international community as more countries realize its importance in international communication. The acceptance of Arabic as a working language by the UN set the path for implementing Arabic in educational discourses (UN, 2019). The UNESCO conference of 1948 that convened in Beirut, Lebanon, endorsed the Arabic language to facilitate UN summits convened in Asian or Arabic-speaking countries (UNESCO, 2019). The recognition of Arabic as a crucial communication language worthy of status that Chinese, Russian, and Spanish received in the UN in 1974 increased the adoption of Arabic in global meetings. The language was subsequently incorporated into the education acumen (UN, 2019). Since Arabic is spoken in Dubai, most schools have responded to the growing need for learning Arabic as a second language (ASL). Mercer and MacIntyre (2014) examined the second language acquisition process and constrained and noted that it faces numerous hurdles.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What is the importance of teaching and learning ASL in Dubai?
- ii. What are the challenges facing the learning and instruction of ASL in Dubai?
- iii. What are the solutions to the challenges experienced in teaching and learning of ASL in Dubai?
- iv. What is the role of motivation and technology in training and learning ASL in Dubai?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Importance of learning and teaching Arabic as a second language

Although learning ASL is demanding and challenging, it crucial to learn when considering living or working in UAE (Salameh, 2018). According to Kataw (2016), learning ASL is crucial for communication with residents and literacy. Habbal (2017) conducted a qualitative investigation of Arabic discourses in a classroom setting and the benefits that accrue to learners and teachers. Other researchers found that the increased demand for the ASL had increased worldwide, particularly in countries that have close political and economic ties with the Arab countries (Habbal, 2017). Other researchers who concluded that learning and teaching Arabic were challenging include Moeller, and Catalano (2015), Alkutich (2017), and Kharkhurin (2015), who hypothesized that there were benefits that made learners and teachers partake in ASL.

Habbal (2017) examined classroom discourses between teachers and learners to comprehend the perceived benefits and importance of learning and teaching ASL. The researcher used the second language attainment framework and the Vygotsky model to assess the significance of learning ASL to learners and the motivations of teaching ASL among teachers (Habbal, 2017). The findings of the study depicted that learning and teaching of ASL were crucial because they fostered secure interaction among learners and teachers (Habbal, 2017). The analysis revealed that there were learner-specific reasons for learning ASL, such as working in an Arabic country and social interactions. The researcher examined the increasing demand for ASL or AFL and found that Arabic is central to Arab culture and religion. Besides, the increased expatriation drives the teaching and learning of ASL (Hussein & Gitsaki, 2018).

3.2 Role of technology in teaching and learning ASL

The changes in technology and its permeation in modern pedagogy led to the invention of technology that simplifies TAFL and learning ASL (Shehab & M Zeki, 2015). Alhumaid (2015) examined the perspectives regarding the infusion of technology in teaching and learning ASL in the UAE. The researcher investigated perspectives regarding the infusion, competence, and ease of learning and found that contemporary learners are accustomed to technology in learning foreign languages due to its ease of navigation, customization, and independence. Learners can search for vocabularies and get their meaning in Arabic instantly (Alhumaid, 2015). The qualitative investigation concluded that technology was inevitable in TAFL and TASL. Al Musawi et al. (2016) also conducted a similar study to be part of the 3-year project to support the development of software for teaching and learning ASL.

The investigators examined the application of technology in teaching Arabic and found that teachers used technology to introduce their lessons (Al Musawi et al., 2016). However, the teachers did not use technology to explain concepts or illustrations. A related investigation on an infusion of YouTube in teaching and learning the Arabic language found that technologies such as YouTube effectively teach Arabic (Albantani & Madkur, 2017). The researcher argued that contention on the use of technology in instructing foreign dialects should not be on the legitimacy or validity of using the technology or the bi-argument of using technology but on the infusion of technology in foreign language curriculums (Albantani & Madkur, 2017). According to the researcher's arguments of Albantani and Madkur (2017), the benefits of using technology outweigh the demerits.

However, the researchers had reservations about the little research on the demerits of infusion of technology in learning Arabic. Laabidi and Laabidi (2016) examined challenges faced in infusing ICT in TAFL and found a shortage of research studies that examined hurdles faced in the use of ICT in instructing and learning foreign languages. Omari (2015) also examined computer-aided techniques in instruction and learning of Arabic using a mixed design and found that the permeation of pedagogy compels teachers to assimilate technology in their instruction. The findings of the studies review are useful to this investigation. However, a salient drawback is the lack of examination of technology's challenges and implementation strategies in TASL.

3.3 Role of Motivation in Teaching and Acquisition of ASL

Please Mahdikhani (2016) examined motivation and its implication on the acquisition of foreign languages. According to Mahdikhani (2016), motivation is the driving force that propels learners to master new words. The examination of Anjomshoa and Sadighi (2015), Ordem (2017), and Zaman (2015) also found that motivating learners and teachers boost their morale to instructors learn the second language. Farhat and Benati (2018) examined the impacts of motivations on the acquisition of modern ASL. The researcher found that motivation creates an enabling environment for instructors and learners of ASL. However, the major drawback of the motivation arguments is that the approach advocates for comprehension of human behaviors and revives forces for actions using a single approach. Farhat and Benati (2018) explained that motivation is a complex concept and can be exhaustively examined under a single method or this

study. The findings of this study are useful to the current investigation since they illuminate the role of motivation in the acquisition of ASL. The present research will examine the concept in detail.

3.4 Challenges of Teaching Arabic as a Second Language

The review in the sections above showed that most studies had a shallow examination of the challenges faced in TAFL and TASL. First, cultural barriers affect the TAFL process due to cultural diversity among learners in Arabic as a second language. Elachachi (2015) examined the cultural barriers of Arabs affecting the learning of foreign languages among native Arabic speakers. Elachachi (2015) found that cultural differences affect learner interpretation, pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. Additionally, Haron and Ahmed (2016) examined the challenges faced in learning Arabic and found that internal obstacles originated from the learner and external agents. The internal challenges were related to the knowledge of Arabic, where vocabulary was identified as the chief challenge. Poor grammar was also cited as the second challenge in teaching and instructing Arabic.

Interestingly, the discoveries also showed that learners who learn Arabic have a phobia for using the new words they learn when speaking. According to Haron and Ahmed (2016), learner tend to use Arabic acquired sparingly in fear of being judged or making mistakes when speaking. Haron and Ahmed (2016) explained that low vocabulary was limited to insufficient content. A similar study revealed two principal challenges in teaching and learning ASL or AFL (Yang & Chen, 2016). Cultural factors affect TAFL and TASL through affective learner perspectives of learners regarding the Arabic language and the link between language and Arab culture. Azaryad-Shechter (2018) also added that grammar was a prevalent challenge in foreign language teaching and erudition in Arabic and other foreign languages.

Unal and Ilhan (2017) assessed challenges facing in teaching and learning the Arabic language among nonnative and found that learning foreign or second languages have loopholes that allow the ad-hoc implementation of strategies that teacher service as effective. For instance, the infusion of ICT in overseas languages and second language teaching largely remains a contentious trend to be implemented by teachers and school administration. Therefore, curriculum shortcomings also challenge learning and teaching ASL. Al-Busaidi (2015) also found that diglossia and triglossia aspects of Arabic were barriers in learning standard Arabic as a secondary language. Al-Busaidi (2015) also examined program-related challenges and found that TAFL lacks clarity of objectives, coordination, qualified and experienced teachers, insufficient presentation of Arab culture, and insufficient teaching and learning resources.

3.5 Solutions to the Challenges facing the teaching of Arabic

As seen in the review, TAFL encounters numerous challenges that impact the curriculum delivery of ASL. Worryingly, numerous researchers examined the challenges faced in TAFL but ignored the solutions to the challenges of instructing and learning Arabic. A search on the internet revealed a worrying deficit in scientific inquiries into the solutions to challenges in teaching and learning ASL. Masood (2015) examines the challenges and solutions in teaching Arabic, focusing on interpretations and translation of Arabic. Although Masood

(2015) sought to examine the challenges and solutions, the researcher focused more on challenges than solutions.

Notably, there were no clear solutions enumerated for the challenges faced in teaching and learning ASL. Alipicheva, Khalevinab, Trubcheninov, and Fedulova (2017) also examined practical solutions to challenges that face TAFT and other foreign languages. The researchers suggested that online and distance learning tools solve the major challenges to the teaching of ASL through instant translation, availability, and customization of the technology (Alipicheva, Khalevinab, Trubcheninov & Fedulova, 2017). The high interactivity of the tools also increases learning outcomes and makes the learning of a foreign language interesting. The current research studies will explore the solutions to the challenges.

4. THEORETICAL REVIEW: THEORIES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITIONS

First, the mother tongue transfer theory illuminates the concept of second language acquisition and holds that second language is transferred through interactions with vernacular. According to the mother tongue theory, learners use their vernacular knowledge to acquire an additional language. The theory supports the use of mother tongue translation in the classroom to translate the second language vocabulary to vernacular for easier comprehension. Although the theory is effective in learning the second language, it has been criticized for its detrimental effect on the learning progress of learners in acquiring a new language. For instance, Zhao (2019), Wang (2015), and Wang and Xiang (2016) discredited the use of vernacular in teaching and learning foreign languages due to the numerous disadvantages it has, such as delayed achievement of learning outcomes.

Secondly, the cultural introject theory argues that a second language is gained from social-cultural practices. Schumann (1978) proposed the theory, which argued that cultural introjects influence the acquisition of an additional language (Beliles, 2015). The ease of acquiring an additional language depends on the ability of the learner to adapt to new cultures. According to Schumann (1978), second language acquisition was determinant of the distinction between the target language and the cultural language of the learner (Beliles, 2015). Other factors, such as culture, awareness, and tolerance, were evinced to influence the additional language attainment process. The cultural introjection theory proposed that second language acquisition depends on their ability of the learner to acquire the culture of the target language. The theory proposed that learning the target culture promoted learning of the language since language is part of the culture. Understanding cultural aspects enables faster comprehension of second language.

Lastly, Krashen's second-language acquisition theory explained that second learning is based on five hypotheses: learning, affective filter, input, natural order, and monitor (Sun, 2017). The learning proposition explains that learning of the second language happens subconsciously without teachers, like acquiring the first language in children (Ma & Chen, 2017). According to the Krashen theory, acquisition affects learning. It continues to monitor the hypothesis where the acquired knowledge starts speaking of acquired words while the learning system monitors the use of the acquired language. The input aspect is concerned with the acquisition process (Liu, 2017). The natural order hypothesis holds that attaining additional dialect follows a foreseeable normal order in which learners can learn consciously or subconsciously.

According to the affective filter of Krashen theory, numerous affection variable impacts second language acquisition (Sun, 2017).

Key Research Gaps

The review in this section revealed several research gaps that require extensive research to illuminate learning and teaching ASL. For instance, some studies explored challenges face in teaching and learning ASL, more research work is required on the challenges. There is a gap in solutions to the challenges facing teaching and learning ASL since the literature review and scrutiny of databased yield two suitable studies only. Besides, the studies fell short of the expectation in addressing the solutions to the challenges facing learning and instruction of ASL. The extant investigation seeks to bridge the informational gap by examining the challenges and solutions of TAFL and TASL.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research method and its justification

Quinlan, Babin, Carr, and Griffin (2019) noted that differing arguments and definitions characterize research methods discourses. In some cases, researchers such as Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2018) refer to designs such as qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Some researchers, such as Drake, Rancilio, and Stafford (2017), discuss methods as the instruments used to gather data. In this context, the research methods refer to the tools used to glean data from the participants. Notably, the researcher used interviews to glean data from respondents. Rosenthal (2016) and Alshenqeti (2014) explained that interviews are suitable for qualitative methods since they explore experiences and allow extensive examination of the subject under scrutiny. Therefore, interviews were justified because the investigator aimed to glean data on teachers' and learners' experiences and perceptions of teaching and learning ASL.

5.2 Study Location and Population

The researcher examined the teaching and learning of ASL in Dubai. The study of teaching and learning of ASL was suitable in Dubai because Dubai is a growing multicultural and multilingual cosmopolitan city with an increasing demand for ASL among immigrants and locals who speak colloquial Arabic. Thomure (2019) examined the Arabic language systems in Dubai and the larger UAE and found that the demand for Arabic was increased among immigrants and locals who speak other languages. Therefore, the blend of the learners in Dubai city provided a suitable location and population for examining teaching and learning ASL practices. The study population comprised the teachers and learners taking ASL or AFL.

According to Achkhanian (2016), the increasing influx of immigrants in the UAE has increased enrollment in Arabic learning centers. For instance, in 2016, the average enrolment for ASL in the Arabic learning center located in Dubai World Trade Centre was slightly over 1000 students, with the majority being between 20-45 years. The demand for modern standard Arabic (MSA) is rising because Arabic is the primary language in schools. For instance, in 2015, 38% of the total enrolment were Emiratis (Pennington, 2015). Clarke

(2016) also revealed that in 2016, the immigrant population in the UAE was over 90%. The population in Dubai has increased rapidly in the last three years, considering the increasing immigration to Dubai. Therefore, the population for this study is vast and impractical to glean data from all the population members, thus necessitating sampling. The sampling procedures and sample size obtained is described in the subsection below.

5.3 Study Location and Population

The number of learners taking ASL is many; thus, it is impractical to investigate all due to resources constraint. Taherdoost (2016) explained six steps for choosing a sampling method for qualitative methods. According to Taherdoost (2016), the procedure for sampling begins with a definition of the population and selecting the sampling frame to ensure that the sample obtained will be a reliable representative of the entire population. The researcher then chooses the sampling technique, a sample size, collects data, and then assesses the response rate. However, Palinkas et al. (2015) asserted that researchers should first assess the response rate before deciding the sample size. Notably, the researcher chose a qualitative sampling method since the study was qualitative. The investigator combined purposeful and convenience sampling. The convenience sampling was appropriate since it enabled the investigator to choose reachable participants due to resource constraints. Additionally, the purposeful sampling was appropriate as it allowed the investigator to choose participants that would provide useful information regarding the study. Benoot, Hannes, and Bilsen (2016) explained that although the purpose and convenience sampling are different, they are complementary in choosing a reliable and enough sample size. The investigator chose a sample of 15 interviewees, where 8 were learners taking ASL, and 7 were teachers of ASL.

5.4 Data Collection and Recording Procedures

The investigator used interviews to glean data. The interviewing procedure was as follows. The researcher approached the potential respondents and established a rapport. The investigator explained the intentions to interview the respondents regarding the teaching and learning of ASL in Dubai. The investigator requested the respondents for time to explain more about the study. The researcher gave the potential interviewer a consent form explaining all aspects of the study, such as confidentiality, privacy, potential harm, intention to withdraw, and other aspects of the study. The process of getting informed consent from the responses explains all risks, benefits, or implications that may befall the interviewees upon participation be divulged to the interviewees (Manti & Licari, 2018). Once the respondents participate orally or through writing, the interview took place conveniently for the participants. The interview discussions were recorded using an aural phone recorder and later transliterated for further scrutiny.

5.5 Data Analysis Methods

The investigator used a thematic approach to analyze data. First, the researcher coded the data gleaned to ensure that patterns and themes were formulated. The researcher used an open coding technique to identify close relationships and patterns in the data. The preliminary codes also identified crucial information. The preliminary codes later formulated final codes that constituted the study themes. The researcher used the final codes to come up with a theme under which the data was discussed. Elliott (2018) explained that the thematic approach relies on coding for data analysis and discussion. The investigator discussed the teaching and learning of ASL in Dubai under the themes formulated through open coding.

5.6 Data Reliability and Validity

Validity aspects examine the extent of the study in examining the subject intended to be examined (Noble & Smith, 2015). Dikko (2016) also added that reliability is critical since it is the basis upon which the findings are assessed for application in other contexts. The validity discussed, in this case, is the validity of the interviews in examining the teaching and learning ASL in Dubai. Leung (2015) examined the reliability, generalizability, and validity in qualitative research and asserted that they are the fundamental basis of research. Findings must be reliable, valid, and generalizable. First, the investigator tested the interview questions to ensure that they were reliable in examining the subject. The researcher avoided ambiguity in questions. The researcher also ensured that the university research committee authorized the interview process, and the respondents consented to the interview to ensure that the research findings were authentic and rational.

6. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction to Data Presentation and Analysis

Notably, the investigator first prepared data through validation, checking for completeness, then coded the data. Coding was essential in theme formulation under which the data would be presented, analyzed, and discussed. The analysis and discussion in this chapter utilized a thematic approach, as earlier noted and explained in the preceding chapter. The themes formulated through open coding as detailed in chapter three are: a program of teaching Arabic in Dubai, challenges facing teaching and learning of ASL in Dubai, solutions to the challenges, the role of technology, role of motivation, and perceptions regarding the current programs for training and learning of ASL in Dubai. Although the researcher targeted 15 interviews comprising a blend of Arabic trainers and scholars, the investigator invited 17 potential interviewees. The response rate was 15 because two declined the invitation citing lack of time due to their busy work schedules. Nonetheless, the response rate met the researchers' target sample. The researcher used alphabets to code the identity of interviewees from A to O. The interview

had seven questions, one on biographic information and six scrutinizing the subject matter of this investigation.

6.2 Data Presentation and Data Analysis

The research asked interviewees to identify whether they were teachers or learners since their responses would be impacted by being teachers or learners. For instance, the challenges faced by the two categories of respondents are different. There were eight scholars and seven teachers.

6.2.1 Learning programs of ASL in Dubai and their importance

First, the researcher enquired about the learning programs of Arabic in Dubai. The data gleaned showed that there were numerous learning programs for ASL, but there was autonomy to the institutions to customize the programs to meet the diverse demand of their customers. The Arabic language is implemented based on the specific institution requirements and standards guided by the government policies on foreign language teaching. Respondent J explained that the current education system had emphasized English as a foreign language and less of AFL. Respondent D also added that "most of the programs support Arabic as a primary language, not as a secondary language." Respondents H, C, and E explained that currently, there are bilingual programs where English, and Arabic are used as the main languages of communication.

Further, respondent N added that every institute has its outline guided by the curriculum for delivering modern standard Arabic, but the interpretation is left to the instructor's interpretation. Notably, respondent A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O had similar explanations that there are numerous challenges as noted in their use of words like "many", "various", "numerous" and "a lot" to describe the programs of ASL in Dubai. For instance, respondent F said: "Well, there are various programs based on learner's specific needs. For instance, there are programs for the beginner and or professionals who want to master the language. Also, we have online courses for those who want to do self-study."

The respondents also explicated that Arabic teachers are subjected to rigorous training to attain a diploma in teaching Arabic. The testing and teaching are guided by government education policies and standards, as outlined by KHDA. Respondent N said that "there are a variety of programs all which KHDA must approve." Most Arabic teaching job requirements stipulated that prospecting ASL teachers must have a bachelor's degree in ASL specialization or at least a diploma in teaching the Arabic language. Arabic is mandatory in the UAE learning system. Most of the existing programs on learning and teaching Arabic focus on Arabic as the primary language and less on ASL. The investigator also asked about the importance of teaching and learning ASL in Dubai.

Respondents G, I, E, A, J, D, F, C, L, and K explained that gaining literacy of ASL facilitated communication with the locals since Arabic is a primary language in Dubai. 60% of

the respondents (B, D, E, G, I, J, L, N, O) said that the literacy of Arabic supported their business communication and interactions with customers. Notably, one participant said that learning Arabic diversified the language portfolio since they liked learning new languages. Teachers explained that it is important to teach Arabic since it shares the rich culture and heritage of the UAE. Besides providing them with job opportunities, some teachers explained that it promotes Islamic religion among learning since Arabic is the language of the Holy Quran. For instance, participant C said:

"It is important since most Dubai locals use Arabic as their only primary language. Thus, knowledge of the language ensures that the language barrier is broken, especially for foreigners. We also believe Arabic is the holy language of the Quran; hence, learning it helps one have a deeper understanding of our religion."

The data presented and discussed above illuminated the importance of teaching and learning ASL in Dubai and the programs available to learners prospecting to enroll in ASL. The findings above achieved the first objective research question on the importance and programs of ASL in Dubai. The data presented in the current and subsequent questions represented the responses of 15 interviewees subjected to seven scrutiny questions. All the interviewees answered all research questions, thereby promoting an in-depth comprehension of the aspects under investigation.

6.2.2 Role of technology in learning and training of ASL in Dubai

All the interviewees explained that technology infusion in the instruction of ASL was a prime milestone in the teaching of foreign languages in Dubai. The interviewees explained that technology promoted translation and learning after classes. One can search for the meaning of Arabic words, translate Arabic to other languages, and vice versa. Besides, interviewee A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O explained that technology-supported online learning programs such as live training via skype, online learning Moodle's, online management classes, and submission of assignments. Respondent M asserted that technology "has made life easier for teachers and us through the translation tools." Respondent A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O had positive perceptions regarding the infusion of technology in learning ASL. A teacher (respondent B) said that technology eased their work since they could manage classes online, exchange learning materials with scholars over the internet. The perception of technology is evident in the assertion:

"Technology has made learning Arabic very easy, especially for foreigners, especially translation tools. Particularly, an online program can translate any major language into Arabic. In my case, as a teacher, I utilize the internet by sending learning materials and doing online Arabic language webinars."

Another teacher, respondent E, illustrated that technology had improved performance because learners can research material

over the internet. The findings presented in this section answer objective five by providing enriched responses to question five on the role of technology in teaching ASL in Dubai. The findings meet the objective above because they fostered the comprehension of technology and motivation in teaching and learning in Dubai. The findings explained the impacts of technology on teaching and learning ASL in Dubai.

6.2.3 Role of motivation in learning and instruction of ASL in Dubai

The respondents elucidated that learning ASL is a challenging task and requires scholars to strive hard. Regarding this, respondent J asserted that “learning Arabic is difficult, particularly grammar and vocabulary, which requires one to be in the right mind to embrace the challenge.” The respondent further explained that attitude and motivation towards Arabic learning was the fundamental aspect of learning ASL. Respondent M added that “motivation is crucial in learning as it enables scholars to strive to be proficient in Arabic.” Further respondent C asserted that:

“I think learners are motivated to Arabic because of its association with the religion while foreigners are motivated by the feeling of belonging that comes with the ability to communicate with the locals in their native language. Still, some learners are interested in business communications to ensure that they can communicate with their customers and suppliers.”

Further, respondent O asserted that the “motivation concept is the most fundamental aspect utilized in illuminating the success of learning and teaching as an overseas or second language.” The respondent went further to illustrate the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation aspect of learning Arabic in the assertion that “learning of Arabic can be motivated by the desire for self-fulfillment and actualization.” In this sense, respondent O asserted that “learning Arabic is motivated by the joy that accrues after gaining proficiency in ASL.” Additionally, respondent F explained that extrinsic motivation was essential in learning Arabic and emanated from external factors such as the need for reward, recognition, and fear of punishment, among others.

6.2.4 Challenges facing training and learning of ASL in Dubai

The researcher inquired about the challenges that instructors and learners face when learning or training ASL in Dubai. The trainers and learners pointed out numerous challenges. Teachers expressed that behavior management was a significant challenge since most learners, especially in lower and upper primary schools, required constant monitoring and managing behavior during and after classes. For instance, respondent D said that “learners in primary school are very playful, thus making it hard to control a class with a big number” Other challenges identified were assessment, teaching, and performance evaluation. Limited input time and impractical expectations from learners lead to teachers’

frustrations when objectives are unmet regarding this. Respondent G, a teacher, explained that.

“learning Arabic for nonnative requires patience and extensive input in teaching since young learners do not understand Arabic faster. Therefore, expecting learners to understand and be proficient in Arabic in a few lessons is impractical. Teachers end up frustrated when the learning objectives are unmet.”

The respondents also listed insufficient teaching aids, resources, and technology infusion in Arabic as limiting factors. This is evident in the respondent’s D assertion that”

“Unlike other major languages like English, French and Spanish, which has many print materials to help teachers and instructors, Arabic falls short of resources to make the learning of the language effective and interesting. Also, time dedicated to young learners in the classroom is hard enough.”

Similarly, respondent A explained that the current curriculum is a challenge because of its lack of focus on ASL since it focused on Arabic as a primary language. Inadequate professional development of Arabic teachers was outlined as a prime challenge. Learners also reported that transition from primary to secondary and finally to tertiary institutions was challenging because each level came with increased demands on ASL. Colloquialism and mother tongue affected the learning of MSA. Participant K said that learning grammar and vocabulary was also challenging. Insufficient e-learning facilities in Arabic were a challenge; thus, students had to rely on personal technologies to learn MSA. The data provided and analyzed in this subsection illuminated the challenges facing instruction and learning of ASL in Dubai. The interviewees obtained rich data on the difficulties from fifteen respondents. The data presented in this section answered the second research question. The findings in this section achieved objective two.

6.2.5 Solutions to the challenges

The investigator asked the respondents about the solutions they could suggest for improving the instruction and teaching of ASL in Dubai. Respondent A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O suggested the infusion of technology in Arabic teaching. All the teachers also explained that the current curriculum requires evaluation and revision to offer a comprehensive guide to ASL and AFL teaching, assessment, methodology, and learning. A teacher, respondent B, also suggested improving infrastructure in public schools to match the standard in private schools. Respondent B illustrated the above assertion in the statement that:

“There is a huge disparity in resource and infrastructure of training and learning ASL and AFL between public schools and private schools. Most private schools have the needed infrastructure and resources such as books, technology, enough teachers, and supportive administration compared to public schools”.

Additionally, respondent I suggested that classrooms should have “inspiration boards where a learner can practice their Arabic writing skills on the board.” Respondent J, a teacher, suggested improving progress tracking systems for the achievement of learning outcomes. Another teacher (respondent A) recommended using ‘Boomerang’ or an independent model where scholars are empowered to create practical solutions to their problems and homework instead of relying on friends and parents to help with the assignments. The findings presented above answer question three, thus achieving objective three to challenge facing learning and instruction—besides, the data respondent to all research questions and objectives.

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data gleaned revealed the myriad programs available in ASL and AFL pedagogy in Dubai. Dubai has a diverse population comprising tourists, expatriates, scholars, and natives, among others. Different population segments of learners have different language needs. For instance, a tourist or a foreign investor's language needs are different from a learner intending to become an Arabic teacher. Therefore, the wide variety of programs is essential for addressing the needs of all ASL or AFT. Besides, customization is necessary to ensure that programs meet the specific needs of different categories of learners. For instance, a tourist visiting Dubai for three months will not enroll in a one-year program. Instead, they will enroll in shorter vacation programs. The data showed that the high number of programs had a chief implication on policies.

The data depicted a need for a policy review to capture the emerging trends and the growing number of ASL and AFT programs in Dubai. The study was championed to ensure learners got high-quality ASL education. The finding of Thomure (2019), Lewicka and Waszau (2017), Ahmad (2018), and the Mother Tongue Center (2019) reviewed in the literature section two supports the findings of this study on the variety of ALS programs in Dubai. Besides, the results on perceptions of training and learning ASL showed that the variety of ASL and AFL programs was preferred to a universal program since it met the needs of a diversified learning population in Dubai. The positive perspectives towards technology and motivation showed that instructors and learners comprehend the essence of technology in curriculum delivery and achievement of learning outcomes in contemporary language pedagogy. The results above concur with findings researchers reviewed in literature such as Alish (2016), Al Musawi et al. (2016), Abdalla (2015a), Ismail and Ibrahim (2018), Abedalla (2015b), Al Suwaiyan (2018), and Carroll et al. (2017). Therefore, the literature sources reviewed above supported the findings of this study.

Contrary to the perceptions and conclusion of Bani-Khaled (2014) that Arabic would fade away, the results counterargued that Arabic was growing due to the increasing demand for ASL and ASL. The results obtained in this study also supported the infusion of technology. Technology has become a necessity in modern pedagogy. Technology positively

impacts ASL and AFL since it makes learning more accessible, convenient, and automated. Respondents that used technology in learning Arabic supported the adoption of technology due to the myriad benefits that accrued to learners and teachers following its adoption. Some findings of the literature sources reviewed concurred with the results of this study. For instance, learners elucidated that they check the meaning of words and phrases or translate sentences instantly, as Alhumaid (2015), Albantani and Madkur (2017), and Omari (2015) found in their studies reviewed in the literature review.

However, some respondents noted a need for policy development on the infusion of technology in learning and training ASL and AFL. In line with Laabidi and Laabidi (2016) discoveries, the findings portrayed that more policies on the technology implementation, online learning Arabic and CATL of Arabic are required but recommended extensive research first. Results also revealed that teachers experience more challenges than learners. Most of the challenges facing teaching ASL were emanated from external factors such as curriculum, policies, infrastructure, technology infusion, and learners' attitudes. For instance, the lessons set for Arabic lessons were not enough for learners to gain proficiency. The results disclosed that the learners' challenges were internal.

The impacts of vernacular were identified as a prime challenge to learning and training MSA: cultural variations and the use of vernacular affected the learning of MSA, such as accents and pronunciation. The above findings were supported by the results of Al-Busaidi (2015), Unal and Ilhan (2017), Elachachi (2015), and Haron and Ahmed (2016) reviewed in the literature section. A review of curriculum, policies, and implementation of ASL and AFT syllabus was suggested as participants argued that they impact the delivery, testing, and performance management of ASL. Additionally, incorporating technology in the ASL curriculum was essential in modern globalized learning of foreign languages. The results presented, analyzed, and discussed above led to the discoveries summarized below.

8. LIST OF ABBREVIATED TERMS

AFL-Arabic as a foreign language

ASL-Arabic as a second language

CATL- Computer-Aided Techniques of Learning

CMALT- Committee for Modernization of Arabic Language Teaching

EFL- English as a Foreign Language

KHDA- Knowledge and Human Development Authority

T AFL-Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

TASL-Teaching Arabic as a Second Language

Definitions of key terminologies

Diglossia- denotes the usage of two dialects of a language, also referred to as bilingualism. (Bracker, 2018). For instance, the Arabic language has several dialects that

affect the learning and teaching of ASL to locals and foreigners.

Multilingualism- Multilingualism in this investigation is applied in the context of using multiple languages in the education system (Yoon, 2016)..

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