

Teaching Arabic Vocabulary Through Dialogue and Its Procedures for Learners of Arabic as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

Dialogue is one of the fundamental pillars of social life and an essential means of communication. It enables individuals to express their needs, desires, feelings, positions, problems, and methods for managing various aspects of their lives. Furthermore, dialogue fosters the development of ideas and experiences, facilitating expression, creativity, and participation in a civilized society. Through dialogue, communication and interaction with others occur. This study aims to explore effective methods for teaching the Arabic language through dialogue and its application to non-native speakers at the primary level at Mara University of Technology. Specifically, it will investigate whether dialogue aids students in acquiring vocabulary. Vocabulary is a crucial component of language, alongside sounds and structures. Teaching vocabulary is an essential part of foreign language programs, including Arabic. However, despite its significance, the learning and teaching of Arabic vocabulary to non-native learners face several challenges, contributing to their weaknesses in this area. Notes are statistically significant differences between two groups: those "using dialogue" and those "not using it" in learning Arabic vocabulary.

Keywords: Dialogue, Non-native speakers, Language teaching, Primary education.

1. Introduction

Dialogue is a cornerstone of social life and a vital necessity. It allows individuals to express their needs, desires, feelings, positions, and challenges, as well as to manage the various affairs of their lives. Additionally, dialogue enables individuals to develop their ideas and experiences, preparing them for expression, creativity, and participation in a civilized society. Through dialogue, communication and interaction with others are facilitated.

This study will examine effective strategies for teaching the Arabic language through dialogue and its application to non-native speakers at the primary level at Mara University of Technology. Specifically, it will explore whether dialogue enhances students' vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is one of the primary elements of language, along with sounds and structures. Teaching vocabulary is an integral part of foreign language programs, including Arabic. However, despite its importance, learning and teaching Arabic vocabulary to non-native learners often encounter challenges that lead to deficiencies in this area. There are statistically significant differences between the groups "using dialogue" and "not using it" in their vocabulary acquisition.

Several studies have addressed the topic of dialogue, including a study by Al-Laboudi entitled "Dialogue: Its Techniques, Strategies, and Teaching Methods. (Al-Labbudi 2003) This work aims to promote the culture of dialogue, which is a vital form of communication in both formal and informal daily life situations. It also serves as an alternative strategy for addressing significant global issues, particularly in the aftermath of conflicts and their destructive effects. Another relevant study is "Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary" by Al-Bari, which focuses on vocabulary acquisition, the types of vocabulary taught, the relationship between vocabulary and grammatical rules, and effective presentation methods for vocabulary instruction. ('Abd Al-Bari, 2011)

Learning is a process shaped by experiences in various environments, including home, school, clubs, and workplaces. It involves a change in behaviour resulting from prior experiences, leading to a relatively permanent alteration in an individual's knowledge, behaviour, feelings, or attitudes. (Al-Samman, 1983) One of the key principles of human learning is the principle of reinforcement. Vocabulary acquisition entails expanding an individual's knowledge and learning new patterns of response, while also allowing for the evolution of existing response patterns. (Shihatah, 2003) Dialogue, as a process, involves the exchange of ideas and knowledge among individuals or groups with diverse perspectives. Effective dialogue techniques are essential interpersonal skills that enable individuals to engage in meaningful and productive conversations.

Definition of Education

Before exploring the teaching of the Arabic language, it is essential to present the concept of education. The term "education" originates from the root words "taught," "teaches," and "education," which collectively imply that educating someone involves facilitating their learning. (Majma' al-lughah al-'Arabiyyah, 2004)

There are numerous definitions of education, including:

1. Education is the process of modifying behaviour or experience. (Fahmi, n.d)
2. Education is the transfer of information from books or the mind of the teacher to the learner. (Shihatah, 2008)
3. According to Ali Sayed Ahmed, education encompasses the body of knowledge or science applied through books, curricula, and activities, whether in school, at home, or in a club. (Ahmad, n.d)

4. Education involves the transmission of information from a knowledgeable teacher to a learner who must accept what is taught. (Abdul 'Azizi, no. date)

5. In general, education is the process of reconstructing experience through which learners acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. It encompasses the methods by which the elements of the learner's environment are organized to facilitate the acquisition of specific educational experiences. More specifically, education is an intentional activity conducted by one individual to communicate a system of linguistic symbols that differs from the learner's familiar means of communication. (Tu'aymah, 1989)

6. Education enables the learner to acquire intentional and organized experiences that foster cognitive, mental, skill-based, emotional, psychological, social, and moral development. (Al-Khalifah, 2017)

7. The teacher conveys knowledge and information to students in an effective manner, optimizing the time and effort of both the teacher and the learner to achieve educational goals. (Al-Samman, 1983)

From these definitions, we can conclude that education is the transfer of knowledge and information from a competent teacher or through books to the minds of learners, accomplished in a sound and appropriate manner to achieve desired outcomes.

Language Education and Dialogue

Language is one of the fundamental foundations of social life and an essential necessity. It serves as a means for individuals to express their needs, desires, feelings, and attitudes. Language enables people to manage their daily affairs and satisfy their social instincts. It facilitates the development of ideas and experiences, promoting creativity and participation in establishing a civilized life. Through language, individuals interact with others, fostering relationships with family and community members.

These interactions and strong relationships help individuals acquire experiences and develop the skills necessary for life enhancement. As language evolves and expands, so too do the strength and breadth of one's relationships with others. Language plays a crucial role in managing personal affairs and affirming an individual's existence and belonging within their human group. Furthermore, language strengthens the relationships among members of a nation, enhancing their lives and advancing their civilization, as the individual is the nucleus of society, and society is a link in the broader human community.

Language plays a major role in the processes of civilizational development and cultural exchange, not only as a tool for close communication through which we express concepts, ideas, and values and preserve cultural and scientific heritage, but also as an essential element of culture and thought. Its importance extends beyond mere expression to influence change; linguistic structures shape the intellectual frameworks, conceptual systems, and behavioural patterns of the language-speaking community.

Through language, individuals learn from others and acquire knowledge, as well as a significant portion of their culture, experience, and skills necessary for living and working within their local

and global communities. The language of every nation serves as its mouthpiece, expressing its hopes, pains, and ambitions. It is through language that intellectual and cultural heritage is preserved and passed down from one generation to the next. The civilization of a nation is measured by the depth of its scientific, literary, artistic, and moral heritage recorded in its language.

The Arabic language possesses all the elements of strength and distinction compared to other languages. It is characterized by precision, poetic richness, an abundance of forms, and distinct phonetics; its sounds engage the entire human speech apparatus and emerge from various points of articulation. Moreover, its flexibility is evident in the adaptability of words to convey meanings, the phenomena of synonymy and derivation, and its capacity to absorb native, Arabized, and foreign terms, along with the literary, religious, and scientific heritage that it encompasses.

The teaching of the Arabic language is linked to two key aspects: the first is a religious aspect, which focuses on preserving the Holy Quran and the Noble Prophetic Sunnah; the second is a national aspect, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding Arab heritage in thought, culture, and literature, thereby maintaining the connection among the members of the nation. The expressive dimension of language, encompassing both speech and writing, represents the totality of what an individual has learned regarding language skills, grammar, vocabulary, and structures. Some even consider this expressive ability to be the ultimate goal of language learning.

Learners acquire linguistic and cognitive wealth and understand the rules of proper linguistic performance through engaging in receptive activities such as listening and reading. They then utilize this knowledge to express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings, as well as to share experiences and form relationships through practicing expressive functions. Expression is the ultimate manifestation of linguistic ability, revealing the learner's level of performance. Consequently, developing expressive skills is a primary goal of teaching the Arabic language.

Expression, defined as articulating one's thoughts and feelings verbally or in writing, can be categorized into oral and written forms. Oral expression involves the art of conveying beliefs, emotions, sensations, information, knowledge, experiences, ideas, and opinions from one person to another in a manner that is accepted, understood, and engaged with by the listener or addressee. Educators advocate for equal emphasis on teaching spoken language in schools alongside written language.

To enhance students' oral expression skills, it is essential to plan functional language situations that mirror real-life contexts, allowing students to practice these skills effectively. Dialogue, as a crucial aspect of oral expression, serves as a means of conveying ideas and exchanging opinions to achieve specific goals. It involves conversations between individuals or groups with differing perspectives, aimed at sharing knowledge and fostering understanding. The success of dialogue hinges on the participants' adherence to its techniques and etiquette when expressing their ideas and opinions. (Al-Labbudi 2003)

The Foundations of Effective Dialogue

The foundations necessary for effective dialogue include the following: (Al-Labbudi 2003: 62-63)

1. Benefit and Usefulness: Dialogue should be beneficial and useful, as achieving a positive outcome motivates participants to engage seriously, clearly, and committedly in reaching the best alternatives. In contrast, dialogue that lacks benefit often devolves into mere argumentation aimed at defeating opponents, which stirs conflict, leads to disagreement, and wastes time.
2. Recognition of Others' Freedom to Disagree: Participants must acknowledge the right of others to disagree and express their opinions.
3. Willingness to Exchange Ideas: Be prepared to share opinions and ideas in order to reach the best possible alternatives.
4. Openness to Change: Each party should accept the possibility that their viewpoint may be incorrect and be willing to adjust it considering new evidence and information.
5. Avoiding Offense: It is essential to avoid offending others, regardless of the severity of the disagreement, as this can close off avenues for understanding and cooperation.
6. Knowing When to Withdraw: If the other party becomes emotional, angry, or stubborn, it may be best to remain silent or abandon the dialogue.
7. Courage to Express Opinions: Have the courage to express opinions in front of those who disagree, provided you have strong evidence and arguments to support your claims. Equally, be willing to concede your stance if proven wrong.
8. Active Listening: Listen attentively to what others say, allowing them the opportunity to present their ideas without interruption.
9. Mastering the Art of Questioning: Develop the skill of asking questions at appropriate times to gather more information, seek clarification, or convey specific impressions, such as surprise, affirmation, denial, or rejection.
10. Respecting Divergent Opinions: Avoid mocking or ridiculing those who disagree; instead, take their opinions seriously and validate them.
11. Critical Thinking: Do not accept everything at face value; wait for sufficient and convincing evidence before forming conclusions.
12. Precision in Language: Choose words and phrases carefully to accurately express what each participant means, avoiding vague or ambiguous language that could lead to misunderstandings.
13. Accountability for Words: Dialogue participants must be precise and thoughtful in their word choices to ensure their statements are not misinterpreted or taken out of context. . (Al-Labbudi 2003)

The Importance of Teaching Vocabulary

The significance of teaching vocabulary encompasses the following points: ('Abd al-Bari, 2011: 33)

1. **Key to Language Acquisition:** Teaching vocabulary is crucial for language acquisition; vocabulary is the true foundation of the teaching and learning process. Without language, there is no learning, and without vocabulary, there is no language.
2. **Facilitating Self-Expression and Understanding:** It helps students articulate their thoughts clearly and comprehend others effectively.
3. **Enhancing Communication:** Vocabulary instruction enables learners to understand others and communicate with them successfully.
4. **Developing Thinking Skills:** Vocabulary development fosters critical thinking skills, particularly when a single word has multiple meanings (verbal homonyms) or when several words express a similar meaning (synonyms).
5. **Strengthening Social and Family Relations:** A robust vocabulary reinforces social and familial connections among community members.
6. **Expressing Needs and Desires:** Vocabulary serves as a means for individuals to articulate their needs, desires, and inclinations, facilitating the fulfilment of their interests.
7. **Cultivating Taste and Eloquence:** Developing a rich vocabulary enhances a language user's ability to choose appropriate words suited to the context and the values of their audience.

Vocabulary is a prominent component of language and one of the most significant dimensions of language that applied linguists focus on. This raises an important question: Given the critical role of vocabulary in language teaching and learning, what specific vocabulary should educators prioritize for their students?

Here's a grammatically and stylistically improved version of your text:

Therefore, scientists have identified a set of criteria for selecting words to present to learners. These criteria are:

1. **Teachability:** Tangible vocabulary should be taught early in a course that follows either the direct method or the total physical response method, as these words are easier to clarify through pictures or presentations.
2. **Similarity:** Certain words may be chosen because they resemble words in the learners' native language.
3. **Availability:** Some words may be uncommon, yet they are readily available, meaning they quickly come to mind when certain topics are mentioned. For example, the word "classroom" evokes related terms such as "seat," "chair," "blackboard," "teacher," and "students." Therefore, these words may warrant early study. This concept is not new; ancient Arabic scholars classified and developed linguistic dictionaries based on the theory of semantic fields and the associations of specific words with others.
4. **Coverage:** Words that encompass the meanings of other words can also be valuable. Any word that includes multiple meanings can enhance understanding.

5. Defining Power: Some words may be chosen for their utility in defining other words, even if they are not commonly used. For instance, the word "accountant," while not a frequent term for many, is significant for shop owners and helps define related terms such as "coat" or "shirt."

Steps for Teaching Vocabulary through Dialogue

1. The teacher begins the lesson with a greeting.
2. The teacher introduces the new vocabulary to the students.
3. The teacher explains the vocabulary to the students.
4. The teacher divides the students into groups of three.
5. The teacher instructs the students to engage in dialogue using the previously studied vocabulary.
6. The teacher allows time for the students to conduct the dialogue in Arabic.
7. The teacher observes the students individually.
8. The teacher gives the students the opportunity to express themselves freely.

Research Tools

Research tools are methods for collecting data from individuals related to the research topic in order to gather their perspectives, opinions, behaviours, and tendencies. The tools used in this research include: (‘adawat al-Baḥṡ al-‘Ilmi, 2023)

1. Observation: This study utilizes observation to gather data on the conditions, environment, and process of teaching Arabic vocabulary through dialogue among students in the class (TAC501) at Mara University of Technology.
2. Tests: The study conducts both pre-tests and post-tests orally with students to assess their progress in acquiring Arabic vocabulary after implementing dialogue in teaching.

Research Sample

The sample used in this study is purposive, consisting of two groups of 30 male and female students each, all of whom are enrolled in (TAC501) at the Language Centre of Mara University of Technology in the Department of Foreign Languages.

This revised text improves clarity and flow while correcting grammatical issues.

Study Procedures

The current study followed these procedures:

Step One: A review of previous research was conducted, focusing on the concept of education in general, the importance of teaching vocabulary, and the relationship between language teaching and dialogue. This also included an examination of the foundations of effective dialogue and the steps involved in teaching vocabulary through dialogue.

Step Two: A theoretical analysis of the topic was performed, which involved reviewing previous research. Subsequently, the study prepared educational materials by selecting a suitable topic for the students' level and developing both pre- and post-tests.

Step Three: The pre-test was administered to students in both the experimental and control groups.

Step Four: The study implemented a teaching method for Arabic vocabulary through dialogue with the experimental group, following a structured time plan. In contrast, the control group received instruction using the traditional method, without incorporating dialogue in their vocabulary lessons.

Step Five: The post-test was administered to both groups.

Step Six: The results were interpreted and discussed in light of the research hypotheses and the findings of previous studies.

The study assessed the students twice: first with a pre-test, conducted before implementing the dialogue-based teaching of Arabic vocabulary, and second with a post-test. The pre-test results showed no significant differences between the two groups; the control group scored 6, while the experimental group scored 5.5. After the dialogue-based instruction, the post-test revealed significant differences: the experimental group scored 8.5, compared to the control group's score of 6.5. This indicates that the dialogue process effectively aided students in acquiring new Arabic vocabulary, with the experimental group showing an increase of three points in their post-test scores. This significant improvement suggests that teaching through dialogue is an effective method for teaching Arabic vocabulary.

2. Conclusion

Teaching Arabic vocabulary through dialogue is recognized as an effective approach, in addition to traditional methods such as the use of boards. The study provided a detailed model for teaching Arabic vocabulary through dialogue and demonstrated that this method enhances vocabulary acquisition among learners. Moreover, it can increase learners' motivation to study Arabic without incurring any financial costs. Teachers can also directly correct students' mistakes during dialogue sessions, allowing other learners to observe and benefit from these corrections. This fosters collaborative learning among peers, enabling them to support each other's educational journeys.

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