

The Strategy Of Language Games in Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers

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Abstract

The practice of language games in educational settings can serve two primary functions : first, it can serve as a tool to develop Arabic language skills; and second, it can provide opportunities for communication among learners. These have been identified as an effective method of alleviating the monotony and aridity of lessons while providing ample scope for practical application through the creation of meaningful and grammatically correct Arabic texts. Arabic teaching has particularly benefited from a new technique adopted by language education programmes in recent years, given this language's great status and sanctity compared to others. Positive results have been achieved through the development of Arabic language teaching systems and the added value of language into lessons. This success is due to the focus on these applications. They have a positive impact on learners, who develop and grow throughout the learning process. The efficacy of 'language games', otherwise referred to as 'communication games', is irrefutable. It is imperative that this group comprehends the exact signification of the Arabic language through the following competencies: listening, reading, speaking and writing. This approach has been demonstrated to be more dynamic, to engender a more profound experience to be more easily remembered. It has been demonstrated that this approach enhances the semantic training of the target language by engaging the five senses during the teaching-learning process, The development of this skill set constitutes the foundational aspect of the learner's repertoire and represents an extension of the linguistic material on which students are trained. The aim of this is to reinforce previously acquired knowledge well-established traditional training methods. Although learning Arabic for non-native speakers is a challenging task, language games are among the most effective methods to help students persist in their efforts toward comprehension and intensive automatic practice, enabling them to use the new language correctly and free of linguistic errors. In achieving these stated goals, it is imperative that the method is built on a practical foundation in a sequential and systematic manner according to the learners' levels, ages, and basic language skills. Games of this

genre include true-or-false, guessing and intuition, memory, question-and-answer, and so on.

From this perspective, the following research problem is raised: What is the value of language games in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers? And what objectives does the language games strategy seek to achieve in this context ?

Key Words: Language games; education; Arabic language.

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Introduction

In recent years, significant advancements have been observed in the domain of language education. The limitations of the grammar, translation approach and methods based on rote training – in achieving the desired goals of language teaching and learning have been recognised by applied linguists and language teachers. As a result, the focus of language teaching has evolved towards the communicative approach, which emphasises the utilisation of language as a means of communication.

This has prompted experts to explore novel approaches to teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, including the utilisation of "communicative games" or "language games." These approaches are regarded as being among the most significant contemporary approaches, founded upon modern theoretical frameworks. The objective of these approaches is to identify the most efficacious and efficient methodologies for the instruction of languages.

These activities represent a fundamental strategy in language development and an effective method that language education programs have utilised, yielding positive results in numerous countries. The programme concentrated on the development and enhancement of language education systems to achieve linguistic communication, providing comprehensive training in a natural way while reducing the monotony of lessons. Therefore, many experts in this field have recommended the use of communicative educational games in the educational field. Education experts in the Arab world have identified the efficacy of this approach in improving Arabic language acquisition among this group and have advocated for its wider implementation in Arabic language teaching for non-native speakers, especially in the initial stages of learning. Consequently, numerous textbook models incorporating this approach have emerged.

I. The Conceptual Framework of Language Games :

Language games represent a modern pedagogically sound approach to learning, grounded in a substantial body of academic research and studies. They are sometimes referred to as learning through practice, recreational learning, or learning through play. The term "language games" has emerged in the field of education under various names and concepts, including verbal games, communicative games, educational games, and pedagogical games. The following presentation outlines the key definitions of this concept :

Mohammed Saleh Samak defines them as : “Linguistic training in several areas of grammar, such as questions and answers, affirmation and negation, commands and prohibitions, reference, subject and object, predicate and subject, and other areas

suitable for training through language games.” It is a form of competition in linguistic knowledge focused on promoting linguistic expertise among students, with a focus on both cooperation and competition within the framework of established rules. It emphasises experiential learning, facilitating interaction and communication among learners to achieve linguistic objectives. (Nasif, 1980)

Nasif Mustafa Abdulaziz defines them as : “ those games that have a specific beginning and an end, and are governed by rules and regulations. They are a fun way to train students in language elements and provide incentives for developing various language skills " (Abdo, 1993, p. 12)

Another defines it as: “A teaching technique that makes the language learner active and effective while acquiring facts, concepts, principles, and instructions within realistic learning situations. (Nasif, 1980, p. 9) This occurs through the learner’s interaction with instructional materials or with other learners to achieve the objectives the teacher seeks to accomplish.” (Khaled Abu Loum, 2002, p. 11) Language games, then, are behaviors performed by the learner for educational purposes.

Hani Abu Loum and Suleiman Abu Hani define a language game as: “a purposeful activity involving specific actions performed by the teacher and students by following specific rules; The language game possesses many and varied features that serve to achieve affective and cognitive objectives if the teacher selects and employs them appropriately” . (Al-Huwidi, 2002, p. 30).

It is clear from these definitions that language games are a well-structured method based on a set of rules that is designed to achieve specific and clearly defined objectives ; This means it plays a vital role in presenting the important mechanisms and concepts, conveying them, simplifying them, and integrating them into the learning process. It provides a genuine Arabic language acquisition process thereby facilitating the attainment of the intended learning objectives.

II. Criteria for Selecting Language Games in Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers :

There are several criteria to consider when selecting a language games strategy, which educators must take into account in order to achieve educational benefits.

These criteria are divided into two categories:

1. General criteria for selecting language games :

These are represented by the following guideline :

a. In order to motivate students, it is essential that learning materials are appealing, engaging, (Al-Tubaji, 1979, pp. 19–20) and provide enjoyment, entertainment and excitement.

b. It is essential that the game is well-known in terms of its rules, activities, and the skills required to play it.

c. It should be suitable for the students' respective age groups and align with their individual interests. Furthermore, it should be adapted to meet their developmental and cognitive levels, as well as being suited to their level of understanding and experience.

d. It must be relevant to the educational objectives the teacher is seeking to achieve with the learners, and it must achieve those objectives more effectively than any other instructional method.

e. In order to be feasible, it must not be overly complex, as it may be so complex that understanding its rules becomes difficult. There is a possibility that it could endanger the wellbeing of learners as a result of its use.

f. It must be measurable: meaning that the game's outcomes are clear, specific, and can be measured. (Abdulmajeed, 2006, p. 5)

2. Specific criteria for selecting language games :

There are many rules specific to language games, the most notable of which are :

These activities are intended to enhance students' speaking and expression skills, cultivate their ability to identify relationships within texts, facilitate speed reading, and promote the interpretation of vocabulary through context.

In summary, the principles on which language games are based require teachers to prepare and plan them well. This ensures that they are appropriate for the learners' age and academic and physical level, facilitating the proper acquisition of the Arabic language.

III. Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers :

The pedagogy of the Arabic language for non-native speakers differs from that for native speakers, i.e. Arabic-speaking children. It is therefore incumbent on Arabic language teachers for non-native speakers to select appropriate strategies for the educational situation in which they find themselves. By adopting appropriate strategies, they can ensure the success of their students. Teaching Arabic is challenging, and there is a risk that learners to despair of successfully mastering the language. Therefore, when teaching Arabic, it is crucial to consider both composition and instruction. Teachers must familiarise students to Arabic sounds and help them differentiate between them, pronunciation, writing their phonetic symbols, and providing the learner with core vocabulary for their linguistic lexicon. (al-Farab, p. 70). The accuracy of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers derives from the fact that the learner speaks another language. The learner's ears and tongues have been imprinted with its sounds, and their eyes and hands with its letters ; The production mechanisms of the language shape its users' linguistic competence, and in turn, their consciousness, culture, and worldview are also influenced". (Al-Yubi, 2017, p. 65) This refers to the non-native Arabic-speaking student who, while not yet proficient in the language like a native speaker, has the capacity to learn it.

IV. The Necessity of Teaching Through Language Games for Non-Arabic Speakers :

In our current era, communication is the most important aspect, with its various forms, methods and media, including interactive applications, having multiplied and evolved significantly. In this context of knowledge-based systems, the capabilities for interaction and transfer of information provided by advanced information technology are of great benefit. In addition to the acquisition of knowledge through diverse methods and approaches, as well as speed and synchronicity, the use of sound, images and colours has become essential. This enhancement will promote

greater efficiency and effectiveness in educational processes at all levels. By integrating these features, we ensure a flexible and multifaceted approach to interaction with educational systems in communicative games and educational content. The use of language games in instruction should be grounded in an integrated framework of scientific theories and their technological applications. Teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers through interactive, communicative games is a widely accepted method to develop language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing , (Abdelkader, 2011, p. 3) based on a scientific methodological vision that aims to combine the latest developments in linguistic research with technological advancements in terms of:

1. The integration of recent advances in language game-based instructional systems should be carried out in accordance with clearly defined standards that ensure both the quality of presentation and the flexibility of use.
2. The organisation of educational content is to be conducted in a manner that aligns with the levels and expectations of non-Arabic-speaking learners. This objective will be realised through the implementation of modern scientific approaches to language instruction, utilising various linguistic strategies. taking into account cognitive level, age, gender, and culture of the learner
3. Taking into account the principles of gradual progression in learning and cumulative development across each skill and level, based on the sequencing and coherence of educational content, its appeal, and the use of integrated strategies appropriate to this sample.
4. Providing clear and well-structured instructional methods that are appropriately defined and carefully guided, reflecting the learning performance of non-native Arabic speakers. These methods highlight their progression through academic levels and accurately measure their performance development in each linguistic skill.

V. Language games and their application in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers :

The extent of the use of communicative games in the field of education among the non-Arabic-speaking sample is evident in the following mechanisms :

1. Listening skills :

Various definitions of the listening mechanism have been proposed within the framework of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. One of the experts in the field, Eliga, defined it as: "A process in which the listener pays special attention and focuses intentionally on the sounds received by the ear, and involves the perception of linguistic symbols and spoken language, To understand the meaning of the communication, identify its function, and evaluate the interaction between the experiences communicated by the symbols and the listener's personal experiences, values, and standards. To provide feedback and evaluate these experiences objectively and fairly. And to judge them in light of the appropriate objective standards" . (Al-Naqa, 1985, p. 145)) From this definition, we can conclude that the listening mechanism refers to a means of understanding and thinking aimed at communicating with others.

2. Conversational Skills :

Speaking in Arabic language teaching for non-native speakers is a cognitive process involving three key elements. First, there is a motivation to speak. Next, there is the content of the speech. Finally, there is a linguistic system through which the motivation and content are translated into speech. It is not possible to observe these processes in precise detail, as they are internal processes, with the exception of the spoken verbal message. Instead, we approach this experience through training, recognizing it as an effective and social process that begins phonetically and culminates in successfully communicating with a non-Arabic-speaking interlocutor in a social setting. The purpose of speech is to convey meaning, and meaningful communication is fundamental to business interactions and outcomes . (Al-Dhanjani, 2011, p. 22) Speech is a productive skill that requires the ability to use sounds accurately and master them.

3. Reading Skill :

The reading mechanism is considered a cornerstone of linguistic communication and an important linguistic skill among non-Arabic speakers. The purpose of writing cannot be achieved without reading, since reading is fundamental to all writing. Therefore, it is characterized as an affective, motivational mental process . (Sharif, Learning Speed Reading, 2009 , p. 217) "That process involves interpreting symbols and images, and expressing them visually through the perspective of a non-Arabic speaker." The mechanism of reading is an interactive mental process involving the reader's perception of the written text, understanding it, and comprehending its contents. It is considered an activity for acquiring information.

4. Writing Skill :

The writing mechanism represents the integration of fundamental language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). These skills are based on the pillars of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. The objective is to express letters, movements, and visual and tactile symbols denoting sounds as they are conceived. These symbols express the ideas and meanings intended to be conveyed to others . Writing is a process of constructing linguistic symbols and converting spoken discourse into a written text. This process falls within the context of the productive use of the Arabic language, based on the learner's existing auditory or reading repertoire. It is intended to be a key skill through which the linguistic proficiency of non-Arabic learners is assessed, as it reflects their linguistic, intellectual, and cultural capabilities.

Conclusion :

After a thorough review of the use of "language game strategies in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers," we have formulated a set of conclusions that encapsulate the discussed points, including the following :

1. Language games represent a new method that Arabic language programs for non-native learners have adopted in recent years. Their application has yielded positive results in many countries interested in developing their language education systems.
2. Some consider language games to be a linguistic luxury, but their positive impact on learners and the progress and growth they bring to language learning is undeniable. Language games are a valuable tool for alleviating the monotony of

traditional lessons and drills, making them an essential component of effective language education.

3.A method for developing language skills and facilitating communication among non-Arabic-speaking learners in natural, casual social settings..

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