

# Teaching Arabic as a Second Language in Sulaimaniyah Schools from Teachers' Viewpoints : Difficulties and Remedies

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## Abstract

The study is an attempt to find out the difficulties of teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages and suggesting remedies and solutions in the schools of Sulaimaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan from the viewpoints of teachers. It is aimed to identify the difficulties by the use of a questionnaire given to a number of teachers who teach Arabic. The sample of the current study consists of six schools for male and six schools for female. The total number of teachers included in the sample of the study is 44. The findings of the study reveals that attention should be paid to teaching Arabic by the use of recent theories and methods of teaching.

**Keywords:** Arabic language, difficulties, remedies, Sulaimaniyah schools.

## I. Introduction

The problem of teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages starts with the issue that the teachers are not native speakers of Arabic and unskilled to teach it as well (Ismail: 1990: 2). As a result, there are various difficulties arise like the curriculum and the methods of teaching. Additionally, since the teaching method is an important element to ensure the success of any educational process, so it is necessary to use modern means, methods that facilitate the learning process (Al-Bayati: 1990: 28). Hence, the teacher has a prominent and distinctive role in students' acquisition of skills and experiences. This is what was confirmed by the fourth international conference held at the College of Education - Ibn Rushd - for Human Sciences, on the importance of developing the teaching and educational process according to contemporary and modern teaching methods, and the need to stimulate student participation in the lesson (University of Baghdad: 2016: 1-124). Thus, the problem of the study manifest itself to answer the question: What are the difficulties, levels and obstacles to teaching Arabic as a second language in Iraqi Kurdistan?

Since the second language is the language of participation and it is concomitant to the mother tongue, the learner seeks to learn it for daily communication or for social, economic or cultural circumstances that life demands to learn

a second language beside the native language, and it was mentioned in Ibn Khaldun's linguistic law with – "the process of language is the predominance of its people, and its place among languages is a picture of the status of its state among the nations" (Joseph: 2007: 20). So, today, it has become an important thing to teach it in schools, as it has received the attention of educators all over the world, and this importance comes within the principles of Education (Zayer and Sabri: 2014: 288). On the other hand, Ghazda et al, (1983: 22) state that the teacher remains the main cornerstone in manipulating the educational goals, means and good planning for the method of teaching, taking into account the selection of vocabulary, sentences and language structures appropriate for the learner,

In the light of the above mentioned, there are justifications through which it shows the difficulties of learning the second language. So the justifications can be summarized through the pressures that exist for the subjects in the schedules, beside the negligence and lack of attention to the difficulties at an early period which leads to the disruption of the education process (Abdul-Tawab, 1981: 240-6).

As regards the difficulties, they are mentioned to be poor level, a sense of helplessness, failure and slowness in skill mastery for the purpose of teaching a second language. Hence, the

importance of the current study can be manifested in the following points:

1. Knowing the difficulties of learning the Arabic language in Iraqi Kurdistan is prerequisite for developing the teaching of the subject under study.
2. Getting benefit from the current study to reveal the difficulties and obstacles to address the difficulties.
3. Getting benefit from the conclusions of the current study in avoiding weaknesses, whether in the method used to teach the Arabic language.
4. For the best knowledge of the researcher, the current study is one of a kind that deals with the difficulties of teaching/learning the Arabic language in Iraqi Kurdistan schools which is considered a motive to endeavor the phenomenon.

So, the study sets to identify the difficulties of teaching the Arabic language in the schools of Sulaymaniyah from the point of view of male and female teachers and to suggest a remedy for these difficulties. And, it is limited Arabic language teachers in Sulaymaniyah schools and to the subject matter taught for the academic year (2019/2020)

## **2. Second Language Teaching Theories**

There is a number of recent theories and trends that deal with second language teaching. Some of these theories are as follows:

### **2.1. Congruence Theory**

This theory reveals that learning the second language and the native one are identical or congruent. And, here, this theory fails as it ignores the factors affecting the learning process, including cognitive development, social, environmental and educational conditions. It focuses on the outlook on the similar strategy of teaching the native and the second languages.

### **2.2. Variation Theory**

The process of teaching a second language in this theory is determined by the phonological and linguistic patterns of the mother tongue. This entails that there is a positive interference

when the structures and language formulas are similar. A negative interference occurs in the linguistic structures and formulas of the second language, as it causes linguistic errors, and that the process of similarity, and the difference between the linguistic system on the one hand and learning that is based on understanding, on the other hand, are two different matters. Therefore, the structural characteristics of the two languages should not be compared. Variation is based on the method of learning and understanding the linguistic characteristics. (Kharma and Hajjaj, 1988: 16-8)

### **2.3. Error Analysis Theory**

This theory came as a response to the variation theory as it defines the true errors and distinguishes them from the errors resulting unintentionally during the use of language, and classifies them as phonemic, grammatical or morphological errors (AL-Salamani, 2002: 162).

### **2.4. The Control Effort Theory**

This theory calls focuses on the relationship between the native language and the second language whether it's learning was automatic or directed. Furthermore, according to this theory, learning takes two methods. The first is learning the language subconsciously through real communicative situations towards the content and the effect manifested on the listener on the account of the accuracy. The other style of leaning is intentional by mastering the linguistic rules of the second language, so that the learner is under the teacher's supervision and guidance when diagnosing mistakes and correcting them. (Hassan, 1979: 81).

### **2.5. Staging Language Theory**

This theory suggests to use the potentials available to the learner in various circumstances, as it aims to use the language communicatively or for the purpose of training, then being able to learn it. Moreover, it is a transitional language as it precedes the stage of reaching full mastery (Al-Hanafi, 1975: 81). As regards its teaching, the second language has taken to go through multiple stages for the purpose of learning, including the traditional method or the grammar and translation methods, while in recent times, various teaching methods have appeared due to the emergence of psychology and sociology closely related to teaching languages. Direct

method came to be as response to the above two fields; psychology and sociology. Its principles is to let the teacher speak it and train learners to speak the language (Al-Issa, 1978: 60).

### 3. Methodology and Procedure

#### 3.1. Research Methodology

The researcher followed the descriptive approach to know the difficulties of teaching Arabic language as it implies the investigation of a specific phenomenon or issue with the intention of diagnosing it to reveal and define its educational, psychological and social elements. (Al-Zarabi and Al-Ghannam, 1981: 51).

### 3.2. The Sample

#### 3.2.1. Schools Sample

The number of schools in Sulaimaniyah province reached (12) schools, (6) schools for males and (6) schools for females for the academic year (2019-2020), a percentage of (88%) of the total number.

#### 3.2.2 The male and female teachers sample

The number of teachers of Arabic language reached (44); (14) teachers that represents (30%) of the total of the two schools, and (30) schools, (70%) of the total number of female teachers. The study manipulated the sample together. See table No. 1.

Total	%	Gender	Male Female	%	Gender	Schools	Directorate General
44	30% 70%	Male Female	14 30	88%	Male Female	6 6	Education in Sulaimaniyah

Table No. (1) the original population of schools and teachers

#### 3.2.3 Instrument

The instrument of the study is a questionnaire which is the most common and widespread educational research tool among educators to achieve the objectives of the research (Al-Kindi, 1988: 144). In addition, this kind of instruments is economical in terms of effort and time and it can collect data from a large number of sample in a short period of time (Dawood and Anwar, 1990: 92).

#### 3.2.4. The validity of the Instrument

Validity is the ability to measure what it is built to measure (Al-Huwaidei, 2015: 45) for the purpose of verification, the questionnaire has been exposed to jury members to judge its

suitability to measure what it is set to (Brown, 1980: 566).

#### 3.2.5. Reliability of the Instrument

It is a characteristic of measurement tools relied upon in research, as it represents stability and consistency of results when it is required to re-apply it again to the same sample (Return, 2002: 345). The instrument has been used to a sample of (20) teachers and schools for the purpose of verifying the reliability. The duration of the application of the first and second questionnaires was two weeks. And then, Pearson correlation coefficient was applied as it is the most common and accurate. See table No. (2).

Average	Assessment	Educational Means	Teaching Method
0,91	0,91	0,93	0.89

Table No. (2) Coefficients of the reliability of the questionnaire

#### 3.2.6. Application of the Instrument

The researcher applied the instrument by distributing the questionnaire at the end of the academic year (2019-2020) and before the start of the final exams.

### 4. Analysis and Discussion

#### 4.1.The Field of Difficulties in Teaching Methods

This field includes (7) difficulties that belong to teaching methods. So the item that reveals "weakness of modern teaching methods in terms

of teaching it in secondary and middle schools" came in the highest, with a rate of intensity (2.51) and a weight of (83.66). This rate can be ascribed to the need for material and scientific ability to apply modern teaching methods, or the needs of male and female teachers for continuous training to apply and use these modern methods. As for the item "paying no attention to the method of teaching the listening and speaking skill and before the skill of reading and writing", it came to be the second, with a rate of intensity (2.46) and its percentage weight (82). Most of educational studies confirm that

language skills should be taken according to their sequence, as it constituted (45%) for listening, (30%) for speaking, (16%) for reading and (9%) for writing (Trager, 1975: 18).

As for the item "the shortage of developmental and training courses for teachers of the subject", it came in the third order with a rate of intensity (2.13) and a percentage weight (71). This rate can be justified through the issue of the lack of the teacher for the principles of teaching the subject matter. See table No. (3).

Field	No. in questionnaire	Field of difficulty	Average	%
1	2.51	Shortage of modern methods of teaching	6	83.66
2	2.46	paying no attention to the method of teaching the listening and speaking skill and before the skill of reading and writing	5	82
3	2.13	the shortage of developmental and training courses for teachers of the subject	2	71
4	2.1	Teachers are poor in methods of second language teaching	1	70
5	1.95	The lack of teacher's guide	7	65
6	1.82	The shortage of use for individual differences	3	60.66
7	1.76	The adoption of grammar translation method in teaching the subject matter	4	58.66

**Table (3) the responses of male and female teachers according to the field of teaching method difficulties**

#### **4.2. The Field of Difficulties in Using Educational Aids**

This field includes (8) items, so the item "unavailability of educational aids, including films and audio recordings" came in the first order, with a rate of intensity (2.55) and a percentage weight (85). The reason may be due to their lack of availability in schools. It saves effort and time and increases the learning senses of speaking, hearing and sight of the linguistic components. As for the item "lack of availability of Arabic language publications in the school library", it came in the second order, with a degree of intensity (2.51) and percentage weight (83.66). Information and simplified stories in the school library, and in this way it will hinder

students' practice of various and varied activities, while publications are of great importance for teaching the second language through stories, especially if these stories are well selected (Al-Danan, 1996: 32). As for the item "lack of teachers' interest in using educational aids", it came in the third order, with a rate of intensity (2.46) and a percentage weight (82.66). Studies and research confirm that the subject is better understood when a suitable teaching method is applied (Azal, 1988). The item "lack of teachers' interest in preparing educational aids" came in fourth order, with a rate of intensity (2.11) and a percentage weight (70.33). The reason is that they did not give the

teaching method the attention needed, as well as their misunderstanding of it. See table (4).

Field	No. in Questionnaire	Field of Difficulty	Average	%
1	1	Unavailability of educational aids, including films and audio recordings	2.55	85
2	6	Lack of availability of Arabic publications in school library	2.51	83.66
3	2	Lack of teachers' interest in using educational aids	2.46	82.66
4	4	Lack of teachers' interest in preparing educational aids	2.11	70.33
5	5	Unavailability of phonetics lab	1.65	55
6	8	Rarity of educational dictionaries of the second language	1.60	53.33
7	7	Rarity of educational lessons in Arabic	1.55	49.22
8	3	Unavailability of educational technology lab in the schools	1.43	47.66

**Table (4) The responses of male and female teachers according to the field of educational aids difficulties**

#### 4.3. Scope of Evaluation Difficulties

This field includes (8) items. So, the item "lack of tests to measure Arabic language skills" came in the first order, with a rate of intensity (2.51) and a percentage weight (38.66). The reason behind this rate is that the teachers are unable to measure the mastery of Arabic language. With reference the item "difficulty in evaluating students for the lack of measurable behavioral goals", it came in the second order, with a rate of intensity (2.45) and a percentage weight (81.65). It can ascribed to the idea of that teachers don't know what and how to measure. It can be mentioned that the lack of behavioral goals lead to inaccurate results.

As for the item "students' lack of interest in the Arabic language", it came in third place, reaching a rate of intensity (2.28) and percentage weight (75.62). This rate can be justified through the idea that teachers show less aptitude towards teaching which, in turn, leads to the lack of students' interest.

In the fourth place, it comes the item "The tests applied do not measure students' linguistic ability", with a rate of intensity (2.21) and a percentage weight (74). This can be explained that the subject matter relies heavily on memorization on the account of understanding and comprehension (Ministry of Education, 1994: 46). See table No.(5)

Field	No. in Questionnaire	Field of Difficulty	Average	%
1	3	Lack of tests to measure Arabic language skills	2.51	83.66

2	4	Difficulty in evaluating students for the lack of measurable behavioral goals.	2.45	81.6
3	2	Students' lack of interest in the Arabic language	2.28	75.62
4	7	The tests applied do not measure students' linguistic ability	2.21	74
5	1	The tests applied do not measure students' linguistic ability	2.21	74
6	8	The lack of teachers' experience in test design	1.87	62.66
7	5	Most test don't have the characteristics of a good test	1.87	62.66
8	6	Most tests focus on memorization	1.6	57.67

**Table (5) Responses of male and female teachers according to the field of evaluation difficulties**

#### 4.4. Suggestions for Remedy

1. Defining clear goals for teaching Arabic as a second language in Iraqi Kurdistan.
2. Teachers should be scientifically and educationally qualified to teach Arabic language.
3. Increasing the number of teaching hours of Arabic language with the necessity of providing talking books and magazines in school libraries.
4. Paying more attention to modern methods and aids of educational methods to teach Arabic.
5. Providing developmental and training courses for Arabic language teachers.
6. The necessity of conducting oral examinations for the purpose of evaluating students and following up on daily preparation and assignments.

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