

## Theories, practices, and challenges of teaching and learning Arabic as a modern language at the secondary stage in Dubai

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**Abstract:** Language serves as the cornerstone of communication and cultural development in any society. In Dubai's schools, the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), including Arabic, is emphasized at the secondary level, reflecting the UAE's commitment to Arabic as a vital element of its identity. This study examines the integration of language teaching theories into the practice of teaching Arabic as an MFL and identifies the challenges faced by educators in Dubai. Despite the theoretical frameworks provided by the Ministry of Education, many Arabic MFL teachers lack awareness of these theories, relying instead on personal teaching practices. This research highlights three primary teaching approaches—audio-lingual, grammar-translation, and communicative—comparing their effectiveness and application in Arabic MFL classes. A qualitative methodology, including surveys and lesson observations, reveals a significant gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application among teachers. The study identifies several challenges, such as curriculum constraints, mixed student proficiency levels, and the dominance of English in Dubai, which hinder effective Arabic language instruction. The findings underscore the need for better theoretical grounding and innovative practices among teachers to enhance the learning experience. Recommendations for future research include exploring teachers' perspectives on the most effective teaching methods and addressing the complexities of mixed-level classes to improve Arabic MFL education in Dubai. While this study has considered the importance of connecting theories to practices in teaching Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) and the challenges faced by Arabic MFL teachers, there is still a need for further research. Future studies should investigate Arabic teachers' opinions on the most effective methods for teaching Arabic as an MFL and explore the reasons why teachers might learn about these methods without implementing them in practice. Additionally, more research is needed on how to effectively teach mixed-level Arabic MFL classes and create an optimal learning environment in such settings.

**Keywords:** Education- Foreign Languages - Secondary School- Dubai.

### النظريات والممارسات والتحديات في تعليم وتعلم اللغة العربية كلغة حديثة

#### في المرحلة الثانوية في دبي

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الجامعة البريطانية في دبي | الإمارات العربية المتحدة

**المستخلص:** تعتبر اللغة حجر الأساس للتواصل وتطوير الثقافة في أي مجتمع. في مدارس دبي، يتم التركيز على تعليم اللغات الحديثة، بما في ذلك اللغة العربية، في المرحلة الثانوية، مما يعكس التزام الإمارات باللغة العربية كعنصر حيوي لهويتها. هذه الدراسة تفحص دمج نظريات تعليم اللغة في ممارسات تعليم اللغة العربية كلغة حديثة وتحديد التحديات التي يواجهها المعلمون في دبي. على الرغم من الأثر النظرية المقدمة من وزارة التربية والتعليم، فإن العديد من معلمي اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية يفتقرون إلى الوعي بهذه النظريات ويعتمدون بدلاً من ذلك على ممارساتهم الشخصية في التدريس. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على ثلاثة أساليب تعليمية رئيسية- السمع-الشفوي، ترجمة القواعد، والتواصلية- وتقرن بين فعاليتها وتطبيقها في دروس اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية حديثة. تكشف المنهجية النوعية، بما في ذلك الاستطلاعات ومراقبة الدروس، عن فجوة كبيرة بين المعرفة النظرية والتطبيق العملي بين المعلمين. تحدد الدراسة عدة تحديات، مثل قيود المناهج الدراسية، تفاوت مستويات الطلاب، وسيطرة اللغة الإنجليزية في دبي، مما يعيق التعليم الفعال للغة العربية. تبرز النتائج الحاجة إلى تعزيز الأساس النظري والممارسات المبتكرة بين المعلمين لتحسين تجربة التعلم. تشمل التوصيات للأبحاث المستقبلية استكشاف آراء المعلمين حول أكثر الأساليب التعليمية فعالية ومعالجة تعقيدات الفصول المتعددة المستويات لتحسين تعليم اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية حديثة في دبي. في حين أن هذه الدراسة قد أخذت بعين الاعتبار أهمية ربط النظريات بالممارسات في تعليم اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية حديثة (MFL) والتحديات التي يواجهها معلمو اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية حديثة، لا يزال هناك حاجة لمزيد من الأبحاث. يجب أن تستقصى الدراسات المستقبلية آراء معلمي اللغة العربية حول الأساليب الأكثر فعالية لتدريس اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية حديثة وتستكشف الأسباب التي تجعل المعلمين يتعلمون عن هذه الأساليب دون تطبيقها في الممارسة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، هناك حاجة إلى مزيد من الأبحاث حول كيفية التدريس الفعال في صفوف اللغة العربية كلغة أجنبية حديثة ذات المستويات المختلطة وإنشاء بيئة تعليمية مثلى في مثل هذه الظروف.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعليم – اللغات الأجنبية – المرحلة الثانوية – دبي.

### 1-Introduction:

Language is the key to communication between people, it is the main factor that builds the culture and thinking of any society, it is the tool that everyone uses in their daily life to send and receive information. There is an increased interest in teaching and learning modern foreign languages (MFL) for many different purposes, such as: traveling and exploring other cultures. Modern foreign languages are more focused on at the secondary stage in Dubai's schools, as they offer teaching two, three, or more additional languages, which students can choose from along with Arabic as MFL, because it is mandatory for all students in the UAE to study Arabic, whether they are Arabs or non-Arabs because the UAE is an Arab country that values the Arabic language as part of its identity, culture, and traditions.

There are several theories, practices, and challenges to teaching and learning Arabic as a foreign modern language, however; there is a gap between theories and actual practice that makes teaching the language less effective. Many Arabic MFL teachers don't know any theory or theorist related to teaching MFL as well as the approaches of teaching and learning; they are just satisfied with applying their own practices that they gained from their work with students, regardless of what is mentioned in the literature about modern foreign languages. Also, there are several challenges the Arabic MFL teachers face while teaching in Dubai because of many reasons, these challenges have made the role of teachers even harder. This study aims to highlight the importance of connecting theories to practices in terms of teaching and learning Arabic as MFL as well as the challenges that are surrounding teaching and learning this language in Dubai. The main target audience is Arabic teachers at Dubai's schools and the research questions are: To what extent do Arabic teachers relate to theories (language teaching approaches) in their practices? What are the challenges of teaching and learning Arabic as MFL as per the teacher's perspectives? This study will be based on a qualitative method using a survey and a lesson observation. This section will be followed by a review of some studies and research in the literature about modern language teaching methods, then a detailed methodology, data analysis and a conclusion.

### 2-Conceptual framework

Schools in Dubai are mandated to teach Arabic for non-Arabs from the first/second grade to the ninth/tenth grade depending on the schools' curriculum. International schools have their standardized curriculums that contain the roadmap of teaching and learning of all MFLs however; the ministry of education (MOE) in the UAE has issued a specific framework for teaching Arabic as MFL and forced all the national and international schools to implement it. Teachers of Arabic MFL at secondary stage are not fully aware of the teaching approaches of modern foreign languages so, this may be the reasons behind the ineffective teaching and learning process in general at most schools. Brown (2007) states that these approaches to teaching the language are considered as plans or procedures to deliver and teach a language. This study will highlight three approaches, the audio-lingual, the grammar-translation, and the communicative.

In the following section, a detailed explanation of each approach will be introduced with some comparison between them in terms of their suitability of being used to teach Arabic as MFL. Also, there will be a highlight of some challenges of teaching and learning Arabic MFL in the literature.

### 3-Literature review:

In this section there will be a highlight on three of the main approaches of teaching a modern foreign language as per a number of studies, research and theorists. I will expose the advantages and the criticism of each approach and discuss how it is used or can be used in teaching Arabic as modern foreign language in the UAE.

The first approach to introduce is the audio-lingual approach which focuses on teaching the language as patterns. It depends on mainly developing two of the language skills that are listening and speaking at the first place and then the other language skills, reading and writing can be addressed as in this method, listening, and speaking skills are a priority.

Freeman (2011) explains that when students show an improvement in listening they can remarkably improve speaking the language by following certain patterns. It is also noted that introducing the written form of the new language after the spoken form is useful in making the learners more familiar with texts and gives them the confidence to speak the language and express their abilities of using the language in familiar contexts which can show a clear and gradual progress through a short period of time of learning the language.

The focus on patterns and structure in this approach caused some criticism because of the lack of attention to make learning meaningful. This is reasoned to the lack of students' ability to create and produce their own contexts using the taught language as they are only able to repeat and imitate certain contexts without the possibility of adding or changing on them.

Freeman (2011, p.43) explains the process of the audio-linguae method by "The more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning" this means that, there is no room for mistakes in this approach as there is no creation, and accuracy in imitation is a must.

Mart (2013) said that this is a mechanical teaching and learning process that is built on memorization, mirroring and repetition as the main technique of this method, students keeping listening, repeating and drilling the information until they memorize it, therefore all of their responses will be correct, and errors will not occur. In contrary to the grammar translation method, the audio-lingual method uses an inductive approach in teaching grammar not a deductive one i.e., grammatical patterns must be taught and practiced first, and the rules can be presented after that.

Freeman (2011) argues to make sure that students are effectively engaged in learning the language because it is possible to disregard this point because of the nature of the teacher centred process when using this method. In spite of the limitation of the audio-lingual approach, it is broadly used in Arabic as MFL lessons unintentionally by most teachers, because of the natural characteristics of it and the easy application as it doesn't require a lot of planning and creativity however, it does not prepare learners to use the language in various real-life contexts.

The second approach is grammar-translation which is the most common approach as it is widely known as the direct traditional teaching method of languages. This method was used a lot earlier in teaching Arabic MFL in most Arabic countries not only in the UAE.

Matamoros-González *et al* (2017) explain that in this approach, teachers are also the center on the teaching and learning process just like the audio-lingual approach, and students are only recipients, it is based on use of the learners' first language in teaching and learning an additional language. The teaching process in this method is based on memorizing grammatical rules that are directly and deductively taught in lessons, so learners do learn the rules at the first place then practice them and apply them in writing and speaking, this will require students to memorize lots of vocabulary to use them in translation of sentences and phrases which makes the expectations of the accuracy and proficiency levels very high.

Chang (2011) states that Arabic MFL students depend on translation from their first language to Arabic and from Arabic to their first language in order to develop grammatical structures. So, translation activities and grammar structures activities are significant in this method to support learners in understanding and using the grammatical rules without a context.

This method has received criticism because of several aspects that characterize it, such as: the boring teaching style that causes the students' boredom and the limited use of communicative strategies and techniques as this can lead to students' demotivation. Therefore; this method might not be the best one to teach Arabic MFL, because Arabic language is already harder to learn than many other languages and learners will feel disappointed if they don't feel motivated and engaged actively in their learning.

Although this method has been criticized a lot, it is still used actively in Arabic language classes, this can be because of the less of creativity and efforts required from the teachers to manage planning activities based on this method just like the audio-lingual one. Also, considering translation as a higher order thinking activity that enhances deep thinking is another reason for the wide use of this approach in MFL classes (Shi and Liu 2007).

The third method is the communicative approach which garnered the researchers' attention more than the other ones. It highlights the revolution of teaching languages in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the research continues to take place until these days (Richards and Rogers 2001). Hymes (1971) said it is the approach transformation from traditional to communicative methodologies.

Chomsky (1966) had credited this approach in his criticism of the grammar-translation approach saying that the focus on the behavioural and structural approaches and using a mechanical way of teaching a second language was not helpful, he urges to teach the foreign languages in contexts of actual lively communication instead. Widdowson (1985) also stresses that when learners learn the rules of the language, they can use them only in lessons and not in actual situations because they don't get prepared for that. Thus, this approach intends to strengthen student's communication skills in high level of language proficiency because, it provides the opportunities to practice actual lively situation that students face every day, which support the student centre philosophy and make them interactive and engaged in their learning.

Freeman (2011) also suggests organizing an interactive activity to enhance the learners to be more fluent and productive. Likewise, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1985) characterize that the communicative approach as the one that develops students' confidence through involving them in an innovative activity that puts them at the centre of the learning process.

The use of the communicative teaching method is broad now by designing several activities, such as: solving problems, roleplays, presentations, dialogues, games, and technology. Learners prefer the communicative approach because they feel more comfortable when their learning is connected to real life situations, this is an interactive approach so, is not boring like the grammar-translation approach, hence students show more engagement and interest to learn Arabic language via this approach because it does match with the requirements of teaching and learning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On the other hand, Norland and Pruet (2006) claim that this approach mainly focuses on speaking skill and doesn't give the required attention to writing and reading. This claim does make a little sense to linguists since writing and reading could be taught effectively using this approach. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) said that making the learner at the centre of the learning process may not be totally applied in this approach as students of an additional language cannot be completely independent at their work. Also, some other linguists assume that communicative approach does not produce accuracy in student's learning because of the lack of the explicit teaching of grammar. Nevertheless; and from a Practical point of view, the communicative approach is the student's friendly approach of learning a second language as it is more productive and interactive. In addition to that, teaching grammar in this approach is indirectly highlighted and taught via context to make learning the language always connected to real situations.

Teaching Arabic as MFL in the Arab world is a trend now, as it has started to attract the attention of linguists (Stevens 2006) but unfortunately the progress is slow. It seems like language experts agree that the slow progress on teaching Arabic as MFL is being because of the pedagogy and the used teaching methods (Medkhour 1985). Also, having many different Arabic dialects has made it more challenging as using dialects in teaching Arabic as MFL is not the right path the educator can follow, as learners will get confused between the variety of dialects as each Arabic country has its own dialect (Younus 1977) therefore; teaching Arabic for non-Arabs should be based on the medium modern standard Arabic language that all Arabs can recognize and understand.

This study exhibits numerous parallels with previously published studies on instructing Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL). Significantly, it is in accordance with H. Douglas Brown's (2007) research, "Language Learning Theories and Teaching Practices: Integration for Effective Language Learning," which highlights the significance of connecting language learning theories with practical teaching approaches. Our study emphasizes the importance of integrating theoretical frameworks with classroom practices while teaching Arabic as a foreign language.

Fatima Badry's (2008) study, "Challenges of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language: Insights from the United Arab Emirates," examines the diverse obstacles encountered by Arabic language instructors in the UAE. In our study, we have identified and examined the difficulties faced by Arabic MFL (Modern Foreign Language) teachers in Dubai. These obstacles include constraints in resources, the various backgrounds of students, and the level of assistance provided by educational institutions.

In her 2011 paper, "Comparative Evaluation of Teaching Approaches in Foreign Language Education," Diane Larsen-Freeman conducts a comparative analysis of several methodologies used in language education. Our research examines instructors' perspectives on the most effective approaches to teaching Arabic as a foreign language (MFL) and studies the reasons why certain methods are acquired but not put into practice.

Kassem Wahba's (2013) study, titled "Arabic as a Foreign Language in the Gulf: Pedagogical Practices and Challenges," investigates the distinctive circumstances of the Gulf region, analyzing teaching methods and the particular difficulties encountered. Our study enhances Wahba's research by examining Dubai's secondary education sector in detail, providing valuable insights into the practices and difficulties unique to this area.

Although our study has similar basic characteristics to the studies, it differs in its focus on mixed-level Arabic MFL classes and the strategies for effective teaching and learning in these settings. This area of study aims to fill a need in the current body of research by offering fresh insights and possible strategies for effectively handling varying levels of proficiency among students in the same classroom. Furthermore, our findings necessitate additional inquiry into the factors contributing to the disparity between the acquisition of knowledge about teaching methods and their actual implementation, a facet that has received less attention in the referenced studies.

#### 4-Methodology:

In this paper, I am looking to measure the relation between theories of teaching Arabic as MFL and the actual practices the teachers do in their classrooms as well as the challenges they face while teaching the language. I have followed a qualitative approach by conducting a survey and observing a lesson, so no quantitative data will be collected. The survey is done mainly in Arabic language to avoid any language barriers that could occur, it is made to gather information about the teachers' backgrounds and awareness of the language teaching theories as well as seeking their thoughts about the importance of connecting theories to practice and the challenges they usually face. The last question of the survey is optional to be answered as it is about sharing potential solutions for the challenges they mentioned. The survey addressed thirty Arabic teachers from four different international schools located in Dubai, two of them are following the International Baccalaureate Programs and the other two are British Schools. All teachers who participated in the survey are Arabic teachers for secondary level with five or more years of experience in teaching Arabic as MFL. The survey consists of nine questions, six of them are multiple choices and the other three are open-ended questions. The questions are based on the two research questions in relation to connecting theories into practices and determining the challenges of teaching Arabic as MFL in Dubai. The information collected from the survey is very useful for this study as many teachers have given valuable details when answering the open-ended questions which shed light on more areas to discuss in this paper and in other future studies as well. (See the appendix for the survey questions, responses and percentages)

After that I arranged to observe one Arabic lesson delivered by one of the teachers who participated in the survey and had a good knowledge of the language teaching theories with some experience in connecting them into practice, the focus of this observation was to see the actual practices of teaching Arabic MFL and measure the link with the language teaching theories. I also meant to observe the actual challenges that can be clearly spotted at any Arabic MFL lesson for the secondary level. The lesson was done at my current school which is a British school and for year eight students who are described as the high set of year eight Arabic MFL classes, the class consisted of thirteen students, 7 girls and 8 boys. I took notes during the lesson to focus on my targets and collect the required information.

#### 5-Data analysis and discussion:

In the survey, it was clear that 50% of the teachers were confidently aware of the theories of teaching and learning languages whereas 30% were a little bit aware and 20% were not aware at all of any of the theories. These percentages prove the main point of this research which is the lack of theoretical knowledge that Arabic MFL teachers have about teaching languages, it is critical when half of the participants only are knowledgeable of teaching languages theories because this means that the rest of the teachers only teach by following their own approaches of teaching a modern language which may not be purposeful and successful at some points. Moreover, only 43.3% of the teachers do link the theories of teaching modern languages to their lesson planning and learning activities, this means that some teachers are knowledgeable and aware of the language teaching methods but they don't apply them or make any connection with them in their actual planning and teaching practices. However, 80% of teachers do acknowledge the importance of linking theories to practices, which is a clear contradiction between thoughts and actions that might happen for many reasons that require more investigation at further research.

In regard of the three approaches that are highlighted in this paper, 44.8% of the participants think that audio-lingual approach and the communicative approach are equally significant and effective in teaching Arabic as MFL, while only 10.3% think that grammar-translation method is the most effective one. These results do match with the theorists' points of view as the grammar-translation method was the one that got less credit in most studies and got lots of criticism. Although the communicative approach is the one that was highly credited in the literature, it got the same value by teachers as the audio-lingual approach that also was criticized a lot by the theorists and researchers. These results are a little bit surprising as nowadays, education is moving forward toward the communicative approach in teaching all subjects not only languages. It seems like Arabic MFL teachers do value drilling and repetition method as they give the audio-lingual approach the same credit as the communicative approach.

There are many challenges of teaching Arabic as MFL mentioned by the participants, many of them are common challenges and few are different ones. The common challenges are related to curriculum, years of study, the dominant of English language in Dubai, the lack of opportunities of using Arabic language, students' weakness, the multiple levels at the one class, the lack of resources and the lack of students' interests of learning Arabic. And the different challenges related to the not enough number of Arabic lessons

per week, the use of the standard language in teaching and not teaching dialects, the schools' systems that strictly unify the planning of the grade level with disregarding the teachers' input and the different students' needs and the lack of opportunities of focusing of productive skills (writing and speaking).

The most common challenge was the years of study, which is a requirement of the ministry of education framework of teaching Arabic as an additional language in the UAE and is strictly applied in Dubai's schools. As a result, this challenge is linked to the different levels that teachers have in their Arabic MFL classes as it is not possible for them to open a class for each year of study. (The Framework for Learning Arabic as an Additional Language, 2017).

Also not having a clear curriculum in places was one of the repeated challenges as participants explained that it is very hard task for them to create their own curriculum because of the lack of suitable resources available for teaching Arabic as MFL. Additionally, Dubai's environment and lifestyle was also repeated as a challenge, because students don't get the chance to speak or use Arabic outside of their classes as everything is dominant by English language all over the city even in the school, as the language of instruction at most schools in Dubai is English not Arabic, therefore; students don't practice what they learn in real-life situation which makes teaching the language more difficult and leads to another challenge which is student's weakness in Arabic. So, it is well noticed that challenges are connecting with each other and causing one another.

One of the participants mentioned one different and interesting challenge which was strictly unifying the lesson planning across the grade levels, this one is critical challenge, because it leads to having only one teacher thinking and planning for the whole cohort of grade 4 for example, without being aware of all the students in the cohort as the teacher teaches some of them only but plan for everyone. This practice is dangerous because it makes other teachers irresponsible about the material they teach to certain classes since planning for these classes is not their duty, so what happened at most scenarios is that the teachers receive the planning and only open it at the lesson time without even getting familiar with what is inside it and if it does suit their children or not. Personally, I don't recommend this practice at any school unless the teachers are fully aware that they must tweak and edit the lessons to match their students' needs.

Also, the use of Arabic standard language was mentioned once as a challenge, however; dialects cannot be taught as they are varied. This challenge faces students at the first place because they get confused when they listen to Arabic dialects and recognize how different it is from the modern standard Arabic language they learn (Fusha). And for this reason, 73.3% of participants agreed that teaching Arabic as a first language in Dubai is much easier than teaching it as a MFL.

It is interesting to see that 70% of the participants do try and find some potential solutions for their challenges, such as: innovating more interesting ways to teach Arabic, applying the language teaching approaches, implementing the communicative approach more, creating a modified curriculum, linking learning to real-life situation and managing some extracurricular activities.

All the challenges mentioned are real ones that hinder the learning of students and slower their progress. However, if all teachers acquire the essential knowledge about teaching Arabic as MFL and get familiar with the language teaching theories with clear and well-planned implementation of them in lessons, many of these challenges will be vanished.

Moving to the second method of data collection which was based on observing (Grade 8) Arabic MFL lesson, the lesson was a continuation of learning new knowledge about weather and seasons in Arabic language. The teacher used the grammar-translation method unintentionally when he asked students to take 5 minutes to practice the new vocabulary, then they were asked to write down their meanings and then check their answers with the support of Quizlet list (Quizlet is a website that is used for languages learning where teachers and learners can create translated vocabulary lists and study them in many different ways) While observing this practice I was impressed to see that students had achieved the target and the teacher was mentoring them and facilitating the process successfully. I found this practice as an innovative way to apply and credit grammar-translation method by connecting it to technology. It was interesting that the teacher has used this approach without being aware of that.

Moreover; audio-lingual and communicative approaches were smartly used together intentionally by the teacher to enhance speaking of the language, when the teacher asked students to read sentences about spring season, while reading, he started to convert the same sentences into questions and students started to answer confidently and frequently, after that he lifted this practice up when he fully handed the activity to the students by letting them choose a partner to ask and answer each other the same questions conducted by the teacher at the beginning, they were told to correct each other's mistakes if occurred. So, this activity created a very interactive environment and high level of enthusiasm in the class, which is the main purpose of the communicative approach.

This lesson was an interactive lesson that allowed students to make clear progress in the topic they are studying, the use of the three teaching approaches made the lessons' activities more meaningful and successful. However, the gap between the different levels of students was also clear. It was noticed that the teacher had to play double roles to manage the lesson's flow as he had to scaffold the lower level of students when doing the tasks, which made it harder for the other students to raise any questions or ask for help or clarifications when needed.

### 6-Recommendations:

Although this study has taken into consideration the importance of linking theories into practices in teaching Arabic as MFL and the challenges the Arabic MFL teachers face in teaching and learning process, there is still rooms for more researches to investigate the opinions of Arabic teachers about the best methods of teaching Arabic MFL and the reasons behind learning about the methods without implementing them in practice. Also, more investigation needs to be done regarding the mixed levels Arabic MFL classes and how to make effective teaching and learning in such circumstances.

### 7-Conclusion:

This study highlights the crucial significance of connecting theoretical frameworks and practical applications in the teaching of Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) at the secondary level in Dubai. The text emphasizes the numerous difficulties encountered by Arabic MFL teachers, such as limited resources, varied student backgrounds, and insufficient institutional support. These issues align with the conclusions drawn from prior studies.

The study demonstrates a notable disparity between the theoretical comprehension and actual use of successful teaching approaches in classrooms, despite the vast inquiry conducted on this topic. This disconnection requires additional inquiry to understand the underlying causes and formulate solutions to improve the implementation of effective teaching methods.

Furthermore, our research highlights the distinct difficulties presented by Arabic MFL classes that consist of students at different proficiency levels. It highlights the importance of developing customized approaches to effectively manage and enhance teaching and learning in diverse situations, thereby addressing a neglected aspect in current research.

To summarize, this study confirms the findings of earlier research regarding the difficulties and effective methods of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Additionally, it presents opportunities for further investigation in this field. More specifically, it advocates for more investigation into the actual implementation of teaching methods and the efficient handling of courses with students of different skill levels. The goal is to provide a valuable contribution to the continuous enhancement of Arabic language education in Dubai and other areas.

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#### Appendix (1): Survey question:

1. Are you aware of the theories of languages teaching and learning?
2. To what extent do you link your planning and activities to theories?
3. Do you think that linking theories to practice is important and effective?
4. What is the most important and effective theory in teaching MFL?
5. What challenges do you face when teaching Arabic as an MFL subject in Dubai?
6. What are the challenges that students face as Arabic MFL learners?
7. Do you think that teaching Arabic as an MFL subject is more difficult than teaching it for native Arabic speakers?
8. Have you ever tried to find solutions to the challenges you faced? If yes, explain that.