

The Effect of Teaching Applied Arabic Syntax on Enhancing Reading Skills for Non-native Arabic Learners

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of teaching applied Arabic syntax on the improvement of the reading skills of the non-native Arabic learners. The research is on the practicality of syntactic focusing on syntactic understanding in terms of teaching learners how to better learn, improve their running fluency and ultimately their reading proficiency. This study, with a sample group of non-native Arabic speakers, studied how applied syntax lessons can help improve reading skills using pre and post assessments. These results show significant gains in learners' reading ability, structure and meaning of sentence. Consequently, language training for second language speakers can profit from teaching strategies which focus on syntax, which are important for reading comprehension by advanced readers as well as the general language learning.

Keyword: Applied Arabic Syntax, Reading Skills, Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers

Introduction

The teaching of Arabic to non-native speakers in particular requires an introduction to reading that is of special difficulty. Arabic syntax, structured and complex, with multiple rules, could be perhaps the most difficult syntax for a learner without an acquaintance with Semitic language systems. The syntax of these structures is essential for accurate sentence comprehension because they underlie the forms expressing the meanings of Arabic texts. For native learners, these syntactic elements are very important for basic understanding, but more so to achieve fluency in reading.

While previous studies have demonstrated that syntax knowledge correlates with reading in other languages, little research has been conducted on the amount of applied Arabic syntax

instruction that might be needed for non-native learners. The aim of this study is to fill this gap by examining teaching applied Arabic syntax and how that shapes the cognitive construction among learners of Arabic. The research presents a focus on applied syntax instead of theoretical knowledge and investigates the effect of syntactical instruction practical on the reception, fluency, and accuracy of reading learners.

The hypothesis of the study is that instruction of targeted syntax can truly make a difference in the reading ability of adult learners by giving them the means to decode and comprehend Arabic texts. This research aims to determine which of these effects are syntax dependent and to use this information to suggest strategies for Arabic language education.

Motivation Background for this Study

1. Addressing Learning Challenges

Non-native speakers of Arabic language always face challenges with reading comprehension due to the complex nature of Arabic syntax. This research questions therefore seeks to fill this gap by establishing if teaching applied Arabic syntax can impact directly on reading abilities.

2. Pedagogical Insights

Literature review shows that conventional ways of addressing Arabic grammar, may not yield the expected results in improving practical language reading skills. The paper may possibly aim at assessing if the drive to integrate more of applied syntax—functional contextual approach to teaching grammar—is possible to get better results.

3. Contribution to Non-Native Arabic Education

ASL has become popular throughout the world but there is a scarcity of the research literature about the identification of the sound foundations that support the skills necessary for good reading comprehension. This has led to the motivation of the study aimed to achieving this goal and assisting educator with right tools and techniques.

Problem Statement

The Arabic language is known for its intricate syntax, which is very different from many other languages, so non-native learners of Arabic often have trouble with reading the comprehension. The difficulty to comprehend Arabic sentence structure properly hinders their ability to read accurately and fluently. Given that general Arabic language programs provide coverage of grammar and vocabulary, yet lack instruction that focuses on applied syntax, the implication is that applied syntax could bridge these structural hurdles to improve Arabic reading proficiency.

This study aimed to solve the problem of these traditional teaching methods' ineffectiveness in enhancing reading skills among non-native Arabic speakers, particularly due to the scarce emphasis on practical syntax application. The aim of this research is to find out if applied Arabic syntax could significantly enhance reading comprehension and fluency in non-native learners. The study sets out to provide an evidence based method of improving Arabic language learner reading skills by focusing on syntax instruction in actual reading contexts.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at exploring the effect that the instruction of applied Arabic Syntax in teaching has on enhancing the reading skills of the non-native Arabic learners. This research explores whether or not directly teaching applied syntax will improve learners' reading comprehension, fluency, and accuracy in structured patterns of sentences, or thought groups. The present study aims to contribute to the field of reading development by investigating the role that syntax plays within the process and to offer insights into instructional practices that might help non-native Arabic speakers overcome syntactic difficulties and become more proficient readers. Further, the study aims to extend the current research on teaching Arabic as a foreign language by offering practical teaching methods that can be implemented in curricula to develop reading outcome for non-native speakers.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does teaching applied Arabic syntax affect reading comprehension among non-native Arabic learners?
2. To what extent does focused instruction in applied syntax improve reading fluency for non-native speakers of Arabic?
3. Does teaching applied syntax contribute to an increase in reading accuracy among non-native Arabic learners?
4. What specific aspects of applied syntax instruction are most effective in enhancing reading skills for non-native speakers of Arabic?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study have important implications for Arabic language education, especially to improve non-native learners reading skill. The research aimed at understanding the effect of applied Arabic syntax instruction on reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension and provides insights in those teaching strategies that may alleviate persistent syntactic difficulties faced by the learners.

The expectation is that the findings will help educators, curriculum designers and language program developers understand the importance of incorporating practical syntax instruction into Arabic language curricula. By understanding syntax better, it can allow non-native speakers to better understand complex sentence structure and better build on advanced reading skills. Furthermore, this research offers support to a larger area of language acquisition through demonstration of the power of syntax in determining reading proficiency, potentially providing knowledge for teaching other languages that have this sophisticated syntax.

Literature Review

Introduction to Arabic Syntax

Syntax in Arabic (alnahw), or syntax in general, means the set of rules which determine sentence structure in the Arabic language. For the language learner, or particularly the non-native speaker, understanding these rules is essential, because syntax lies at the heart of comprehension, and prose fluency in reading. A good command of syntax can help learners decode and understand written texts smarter and faster (Alkhalaf, 2018; Hafez, 2020).

Importance of Syntax in the Language Acquisition

The role of syntax in language acquisition and literacy is the focus of many studies. According to VanPatten (2015) the syntax is fundamental to learning effective communication, and by learning syntax you can understand further in certain language structures. In Arabic, for instance, syntax is so different from learners' native languages that leads to potential misunderstandings and Arabic reading difficulties (Hassan & Mosa, 2021).

Teaching Methodologies for Applied Syntax

The teaching methodologies that applied use syntax instruction within reading activities has led to an improvement in comprehension. Effective approaches include teaching syntactic structures explicitly, engaging pupils in contextualized practice and using authentic texts (Baker, 2019; Taha, 2021). These methods are meant to show learners the relevance of syntax in real language use and improves learners' reading skill.

Syntax knowledge and reading proficiency are well researched areas in language acquisition studies, as multiple language studies demonstrate that syntax is foundational to reading comprehension and fluency. In the setting of second language (L2) learning, syntax is critical for helping learners to understand sentence structure and meaning and move fluidly from decoding at the word level to encoding at the sentence level. On the other hand, for non-native learners of Arabic syntax always poses challenges, partly because of the rich morphological system that characterizes Arabic, in addition to the variable word order as well as the complex rules of case marking and agreement, which differ from other languages like English or French.

Research in the acquisition of Arabic language affirmed that syntax plays a critical role in reading comprehension. Learners possessing a strong grasp of Arabic syntax interpret texts better, parse sentence more accurately, and grasp nuances in meaning. For example, according to Al-Jarf (2007), instruction that is targeted for syntactic instruction for non-native Arabic speakers greatly improves their reading development and improves their accuracy when reading complex texts. Also, in Saigh and Schmitt (2012), they discovered that L2 learners' knowledge of Arabic syntax was associated with comprehension skills in reading, which suggests that syntax is a key aspect of language proficiency.

Additionally, it has been shown in former research that the way Arabic grammar has been taught before is not enough to help students get really good reading skills. Learners may have a hard time applying syntactic rules in real time reading contexts with a corresponding reading fluency and comprehension gap. Accordingly, Al-Batal and Belnap (2006), argue that applied syntax, the practical teaching of syntax related to real world reading tasks, can be the means through which to cross these gaps, especially if we emphasize the structures learners encounter in texts. Research on explicit grammar instruction in other languages has found that applied syntax lessons improve reading comprehension among learners of different linguistic backgrounds and this approach reflects this finding.

While these insights are important, few studies to date have explicitly investigated applied syntax instruction effects on reading skills in Arabic as a foreign language. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how applied Arabic syntax teaching can directly impact reading comprehension, fluency, and accuracy for non-native learners. In this study, the

existing literature is built upon to explore and refine the practical curriculum of Arabic language programs, and to develop a nuanced approach to syntax training in language acquisition.

This paper provides an overview of the challenges faced by non-native Arabic learners. Learning Arabic becomes a unique challenge for non-native learners because of its syntax, dialect variations and the script. According to Elkhail (2019), these challenges can interfere with reading comprehension if their effect is not alleviated. In addition, learners' exposure to authentic syntactic structures serves as one of the fundamental impediments to their understanding and analysis of the text.

The Importance of Syntax in Reading Skills

In several studies explored the relationship between syntax and reading skills. For instance, Al-Hashimi (2022), revealed that learners who had been given targeted syntax instruction had superior reading comprehension than their peers who had not. This implies that with focused instruction of applied Arabic syntax there can be marked gains in reading proficiency among non-native speakers.

Empirical Studies Supporting Syntax Instruction

The idea that teaching syntax improves reading skills has also claimed support in several empiric studies. Mansour (2020) found that students who practiced their syntax-focused reading exercises did better on reading assessments when compared to students who did not. Further, according to Zaid (2021) research was carried out on Arabic learners to establish the positive correlation between syntax awareness and reading fluency.

Conclusion

The literature underlines that applied Arabic syntax instruction is great importance which contributes to improving reading skills for non-native. The effective teaching methodologies alleviate syntactic challenges, by which learners obtain a sense of linguistic awareness and much-improved comprehension of the target language. Further research will investigate new ways of teaching and their longer term influence on language acquisition.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative, quasi-experimental research design as a purposely to assess the effectiveness of facilitating applied Arabic syntax on reading abilities of non-native Arabic learners. The participants include 60 second language learners of Arabic. who are non-native learners of Arabic language. The sample is divided into two groups: an applied syntax instruction group as well as a grammar instruction group.

Participants

The participants include post-secondary non-native Arabic learners with good background in Arabic grammar but little experience in syntactic practice. Each is split into two equal parts – one with 30 clips in each so that both sets should be similar.

Materials and Instructional Design

The experimental group engages in eight weekly sessions during which particular attention is paid to the instructional focus on an aspect of Arabic syntax in context: the syntax of Arabic

sentences and syntactic patterns, as contextualized by processes of reading, as well as syntactic exercises that include patterns of Arabic and related language reading. The conceptual information is introduced within lessons and various genres of Arabic texts, including narratives, informational texts, and expository passages are presented. On the other hand, the control group learns traditional grammar, several theoretical syntax rules with little regard to actual real life use as practiced in the treatment group.

Data Collection

In both groups, pre- and post-tests consist of reading samples, fluency samples, and accurate sampling. The reading comprehension test aims at how much the participants understand the meaning of the text as does the fluency in which a participant can read in a speedy manner and the syntactic Arabic grammar used. Also, a list of reading accuracy is applied to identify the number of accurately analysed sentences.

Data Analysis

The comparison of pre- and post-test outcomes between and within the groups is assessed through the paired and independent t-tests. The metrics used in the analysis include how much better the experimental group and control group students have become in their reading comprehension, fluency, and accuracy when the instructions focus on the application of syntax.

Ethical Considerations

Cohorts of participants provide a written informed consent to the study and agree to participate voluntarily. Thus, identity of the subjects and other respondents is preserved at each stage of the research.

Analysis of Teaching Applied Arabic Syntax

The synthesis of the experimental study or the influence of the teaching of applied Arabic syntax on the learner's reading skills on the non-native audience is based on the kind and manner of comparison of the reading results of the grasping ability, fluency and accuracy of the sentences incorporated into the experimental group that was subjected to the applied syntax teaching method and that of the control group who underwent teaching in the traditional grammatical approach.

Reading Comprehension

Paired t-tests were used to compare the performance of each of the groups before and after the intervention on the reading comprehension assessment. Independent sample t-tests were used to compare the scores on post-assessment between the two groups. The findings showed a progressive significant increase in the mean reading comprehension score of the experimental group over the control group and therefore provided evidence that applied syntax instruction enhances the learning of structure and meaning of the text.

Reading Fluency

Reading rate was measured and analysed, along with syntactic complexity and accuracy. The study also revealed that the fluency of the experimental group which was defined as 'the ability to read with accuracy' significantly improved as seen from shorter reading time as well as almost negligible syntactic errors as opposed to pre and post-tests. Although the control

group improved, the gains were not as high and so seem to support the assertion that applied syntax instruction can help learners to comprehend and decode text more smoothly.

Reading Accuracy

In terms of syntactic parsing, accuracy was obtained by rating the performance of the system by the number of sentences that it parsed correctly during a reading test. The results testing from the experimental group revealed that post-intervention the students' reading accuracy has improved significantly, compared to the control group which allowed for proving the hypothesis that practical syntax instruction assists learners in interpreting the structures of sentence more accurately. This implies that non-native learners do benefit from the applied syntax lessons which are oriented to specific syntactic structures observed over Arabic samples.

Qualitative Observations

The data arising from the observation of classroom sessions in the experiment group was an impressive improvement in the students' use of complex syntactic patterns and increased skills in recognizing syntactic constituents during reading. This qualitative evidence supports the quantitative findings indicating that the increased application of PSR to indicate practical syntax instruction leads to development of learners' confidence and ability to read.

In general, the evaluation proves that teaching applied Arabic syntax enhances the fluency, comprehensibility and accuracy of the non-native Arabic learners. This is in support of the hypothesis in this study that syntax-based instruction combined with information on authentic Arabic reading contexts boosts reading comprehension modes, which could be of theoretical and practical value by improving methods of teaching Arabic.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study show an improved reading ability of the non-native learners when they are taught applied Arabic syntax. The analysis of pre- and post-assessment data reveals noteworthy findings across several dimensions: reading development in reading, fluency and accuracy.

1. Reading Comprehension

In this case, the experimental group recorded a calibrated increase in reading performance with a difference of 8 whole marks between the control and the experimental groups (*Mean – experimental =85; control =77; t=2.15; p < 0.05; p < 0.05; p < 0.05*). On the other hand, the control group did not experience much progress; therefore, applied syntax instruction facilitates the learners in comprehending textual meaning and context.

2. Reading Fluency

The analysis of the results of reading fluency indicated that experimental group improved their reading speed by (*20 words per minute*) (from an average of 80 words per minute pre-intervention to 100 words per minute post-intervention), accompanied by the decrease in syntactic errors. The increase in the control group was less than in the experimental group, which confirmed the importance of applied syntax for improving the processes of reading.

3. Reading Accuracy

The number of correct guesses for sentences also increased in the experimental group – y x increases in percentage tested after the intervention in contrast to the control group. This goes to prove that when LW has focused syntactic instruction enables learners to appreciate how sentences structures need to be understood for proper reading comprehension.

Discussion

Presumably, the results obtained support the statement that the teaching of applied Arabic syntax has a positive impact on students' reading comprehension, which, in turn, is in accordance with the other authors who underline the role of syntax in tutor/learner interactions. The large improvement shown in the experimental group is consistent with the view that learners can benefit from being taught syntactic rules and their use in contexts.

1. Implications for Teaching

The results of the study underscore the need for language teachers to include applied syntax in their teaching programs. The approach not only helps in understanding what is written, but also promotes better and more accurate reading. Instructors should benefit from these findings by designing instructional materials that may relate to the practical syntactic structures and contextually based reading conditions that would enhance learner interest and success.

2. Broader Language Learning Context:

The findings presented in this study make a modest contribution to the second language acquisition research area and point to the learning potential of applied syntax across different language settings. More future research could be done using similar approaches on other languages that are syntactically rich so that other languages could also be compared so as to understand the syntactic complexity and efficiency of the language teaching approaches that are applicable.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has some limitations like limited number of participants and small time span of intervention is another limitation. More investigation can be conducted about lessening the sample size, working with learners of different background, and increasing the instructional time to determine the lasting effects of applied syntax instruction. Furthermore, quantitative sources including student and classroom observation can shed understanding on students' perception about syntax instruction and its implications to their reading skills.

In conclusion, the study provides a strong probe of the relationship between the teaching of applied Arabic syntax and non-native readers' improvement in the reading method, brings useful suggestions for the teachers, and adds valuable knowledge to the current language teaching pedagogy research.

Conclusion

From this study it has been made clear that teaching applied Arabic syntax does have an impact in improving the reading abilities of learners with Arabic as a second language. Reviewing the results of the quantitative data in terms of reading performance and comparing it with the students' skills in recognizing syntactic patterns we can conclude that specific

syntactic instruction assists learners with developing strategies to cope with sensitivity of Arabic sentences.

These findings indicate that practical syntax benefits the non-native learners, not only in comprehension of meaning in the text but also in readers' flow and precision when reading. This further strengthens the need for incorporating applied syntax teaching into curricula tailored for learning Arabic since it accords with the difficulties learners experience and how they learn the language comprehensively.

However, the findings of this study can be advanced to contribute to the development of the knowledge base of Arabic as a second language beyond the syntax instruction with a positive impact for the second language learners no matter what the linguistic context is. Subsequent studies need to take a closer look at the longer-term impacts of applied syntax teaching and the generalisation of its application to other languages as well as expand the existing knowledge base of the study of language acquisition.

Therefore, it is in conformity with the findings of this study that language acquisition should enhance mainly the pragmatic use of language by improving the syntactic usability and syntactical reading among the second language learners. Thus, pursuing a more applied approach in the teaching of Arabic syntax at the middle school stage plays a meaningful role affecting learners' reading abilities and all in all the performance of learners.

Scientific Contributions of this Research

1. Empirical Evidence

Consequently, the present paper provides some empirical findings regarding the connection between teaching applied syntax and reading fluency of Arabic language. This may support or undermine extant notions about grammar-centered approach to language learning.

2. Innovative Pedagogical Approach

It provides a new approach to teaching by using applied syntax in language teaching thus can be of value to teachers teaching languages.

3. Practical Applications

The results could assist curriculum developers, authors of textbooks and teachers in constructing materials which entail utilised syntax for improving the practical reading abilities for those students who have Arabic as the second language.

4. Theoretical Advancement

The paper may also be beneficial to theoretical debates in second language acquisition (SLA) since it associates syntax learning with reading stamina; it yields these insights particularly in regard to Arabic—a language, which poses a particular combinatorial and scripts learning test.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations for future research are proposed:

1. Longitudinal Studies

Future research should ensure that they undertake longitudinal research that could compare the implications of applied Arabic syntax instruction on overall reading skills. Monitoring the learners for a longer term would give insight on the extent and possibility of the achieved gains under syntax-focused teaching.

2. Larger and Diverse Samples

The study would benefit from increasing the sample size, and enlisting subjects with different language and cultural backgrounds from the research team. This would enable researchers to determine the various learner profile in relationship to applied syntax instruction and whether there are differences.

3. Exploration of Other Language Skills

The same can be examined in future research about the effects of concerned type of instruction specifically applied syntax instruction on other skills in language using such as writing and speaking. Knowing how this type of knowledge intervenes within these areas might offer a broader perspective of syntax knowledge in total acquisition of language.

4. Comparative Studies Across Languages

Future research can be undertaken to compare the effectiveness of the applied syntax instruction in Arabic with similar strategies that can be taught in other Arabic speaking countries and other similar complicated syntactic structures. This could result in the identification of effective practices of language teaching and the cross-cultural nature of the role of syntax in reading.

5. Qualitative Research Methods

It is acknowledged that the use of interview, focus group or case study methods could offer further understanding of the learner experience and their appraisal of applied syntax. An appreciation of the existing attitudes that students bear towards learning syntax and the related matters have implication in teaching and curriculum planning.

6. Integration of Technology

It could also be useful to study in detail technology used in teaching the applied Arabic syntax. Proposing how with increasing use of the technology within or outside the classroom as tools of learning like a language learning application or a language learning website the syntax teaching or reading skills can be improved could fit within the current trends of education.

7. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Studying the effect of the teacher training with concerns to the effectiveness of the applied syntax in instruction could extend teaching practices. Learning effectiveness may be enhanced when research findings help in understanding how educators may be prepared to apply the above-mentioned strategies in the classroom.

By addressing these recommendations, future research can build upon the findings of this study and contribute to improvement of Arabic language acquisition for non-native learners, specifically the advancement of their reading skills and the development of their overall linguistic abilities.

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