HW1: Peer Teaching

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# 1. Introduction

The topic for the peer teaching activity will be introductory conversational Arabic. This is the topic I chose as I am a fluent heritage speaker and believe I possess the necessary knowledge and understanding to be able to teach it to beginners.

## 1.1 Learning Objectives

1. To be able to say “Hello, how are you?” in Arabic.

2. To be able to say basic phrases like “I’m sorry” and “Please” in Arabic.

3. To be able to say “My name is” in Arabic.

4. To be able to exhibit beginner level pronunciation of Arabic.

5. To be able to have a conversation of around 30-40 seconds that includes and introduction of themselves and the beginnings of a casual conversation.

6. To understand that there are different dialects or Arabic and in what ways they differ.

7. To understand when to use certain conjugations of words in certain contexts.

## 1.2 Mastery of Lesson Objectives

Mastery of the lesson objectives lies in being able to have a successful conversation with the teacher in order to demonstrate the ability to communicate using the phrases that were taught. At the end of the lesson the student will need to have a conversation with the teacher using all the phrases they were taught, with the correct pronunciation and with the use of the right conjugation.

# 2. Background

The reason the lesson is designed like this is due to the content of what they would be learning. Since this is a spoken language with an alphabet that would be foreign to new learners, there is little need for visual aids. Therefore, the learners would need to learn with the use of speaking and pronunciation practice.

## 2.1 Knowledge and Expertise in [your topic]

Knowing and expertise would constitute being able to have a fluent conversation and understand when a person speaks to you in Arabic. To reach the level of an expert it would be necessary to have either been speaking it as a first language from a young age or consistently practice and focus on learning as much of the language as possible, to the point where the person can be considered fluent. I developed expertise since I have been speaking Arabic ever since I was wrong. The knowledge someone would need to understand would be the correct pronunciation of the letters as well as correct conjugation and when to use it, which falls under the realm of memorization.

## 2.2 Assumptions about Learners

I went into the lesson knowing they might already know one or two words from general knowledge but nothing more. The misconceptions they would have would probably be related to general misconceptions of Arab culture from the media. The major challenge would be mastering the pronunciation of foreign sounds they may not be used to as English speakers.

## 2.3 Theory of Change

I believe my lesson plan worked due to the unpacked approach of teaching I took (Cohen, pg. 111). The students were given general background knowledge on the Arabic language. I made sure to start by making sure the learners understand how to pronounce each part of a word before they tried to pronounce the whole word by themselves. In this way, they are not forced to completely attempt to pronounce a foreign word they have basically no familiarity with. I also provided context for the learner in the form of introducing different Arabic dialects to them and the ways in which those dialects differ.

# 3. Methods

## 3.1 Participants

Emily Zhou and Ninad Varshney.

## 3.2 Platform

I did not use any technologies in specific except the notes app available on iPhone in order to help the students better understand how to pronounce the words they are learning by seeing how they are written out in the English alphabet.

## 3.3 Procedure

I slowly pronounced the words they were to learn and let them repeat after me. They repeated the words a few times and heard it used in a sentence to understand the context. They were then made to practice with the word in order to cement the connection between the sound of the word and its meaning.

## 3.4 Assessment

Participants were asked to have a conversation with the teacher at the end of the lesson. This conversation included all the words they learned and tested to see if they were able to pronounce it and use it in the right context and with the right connotation. They were not graded.

# 4. Findings

I believe that the lesson went pretty well since the students were able to grasp and understand much of the material that was covered. There was some difficulty for the learners as they struggled to grasp the correct pronunciation and use of words with different conjugation in the right context. A change that was made to the lesson plan was the use of the notes app on iPhone in order to spell out the correct pronunciation of certain words in English in order for the learners to better visualize what they’re supposed to be saying.

# 5. Discussion

I believe I have a better understanding of the process of teaching a topic as a person very familiar to it to people who are very new to it. Although in my head it seemed simple and easy to grasp and like I was going slow enough for them to understand, I think the reality was that there are a lot of nuances that require for more time and effort to be put into it than I expected. This lesson was effective, and the learners left having gained new knowledge. The knowledge that was being conveyed to the learners was factual and the lesson focused mostly on memorization and the use of that knowledge being in the right context. The lesson utilized a lot of repetition in order to ensure the student fully understood what it is they needed to learn.

## 5.1 Limitations

If I had more time, I would definitely try to include the Arabic alphabet as that would allow for me to present the visual representation of actual Arabic words and allow for reading and writing practice, not just speaking practice. Additionally, I would have liked to add more phrases for the learner to take about which university they attend and their major.

# 6. Conclusion

In the future, I believe I would try to figure out how to incorporate other resources and learning technologies as the lesson plan I created did not require anything but simply talking between the teacher and student. I would probably narrow down what is being taught and focus on learning the alphabet and possibly a few words and phrases as well.

# 7. References

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (1999). How Experts Differ from Novices. *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*, 31-50.

Cohen, D. (2011). Chapter 5. In Teaching and It’s Predicaments . essay, Harvard University Press.