

Enhancing Pedagogical Practices in Online Arabic Language Instruction: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies

Salah Algabli

Abstract—As online learning takes center stage, Arabic language instructors face the imperative to adapt their practices for the digital realm. This study investigates the experiences of online Arabic instructors to unveil the pedagogical opportunities and challenges this format presents. Utilizing a transcendental phenomenological approach with 15 diverse participants, the research shines a light on the unique realities of online language teaching at the university level, specifically in the United States. The study proposes theoretical and practical solutions to maximize the benefits of online language learning while mitigating its challenges. Recommendations cater to instructors, researchers, and program coordinators, paving the way for enhancing the quality of online Arabic language education. The findings highlight the need for pedagogical approaches tailored to the online environment, ultimately shaping a future where both instructors and learners thrive in this digital landscape.

Keywords—Online Arabic language learning, pedagogical opportunities and challenges, online Arabic teachers, online language instruction, digital pedagogy.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN the dynamic landscape of contemporary education, the surge in online learning has catalyzed a transformative shift, especially within higher education institutions in the United States. The prevalence of online courses has witnessed unprecedented growth, driven by the imperative to meet the evolving needs of students seeking flexible schedules, improved access to education, and expanded course availability [1]. This paradigm shift has been marked by a substantial increase in enrollments in online or hybrid/blended courses, with over six million undergraduates engaging in online university and college courses in the past fourteen years [2].

As part of this broader trend, the domain of online language learning has emerged as a highly promising avenue, reflecting the changing landscape of academic offerings. Educational institutions are responding to students' demands by integrating online language courses into their curricula [3]-[5]. This trajectory positions online education as a pivotal force shaping the future of education in the United States, with over seven million students currently enrolled in online courses at postsecondary schools [6]. However, the rapid expansion of online education, particularly in response to the global upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought forth a myriad of challenges and opportunities. While online

learning has become a necessity, language instructors, in particular, have found themselves grappling with the demands of effectively translating their teaching methodologies to the digital realm [7]. The unanticipated transition to emergency remote teaching has underscored the critical need for instructors to adapt swiftly to online modes, acquire new pedagogical skills, and navigate the intricacies of virtual learning environments [8]-[10].

Within this context, the focus of this research is on the experiences of online Arabic language instructors, shedding light on the unique realities of online language teaching at the university level in the United States. While prior research has explored obstacles in online foreign language teaching, the specific experiences of Arabic language instructors within the U.S. educational context remain understudied. Addressing this gap, the research contributes valuable insights and pedagogical strategies, aspiring to enhance the efficacy of online Arabic language education programs [3], [11]-[13].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Online Learning

Online learning, also known as e-learning, has become a prominent mode of education, facilitated by the internet and electronic devices [14]. Utilizing Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Blackboard and Canvas, institutions provide efficient content delivery, feedback, and communication in contemporary online classrooms [15]. While online education's roots can be traced back to the late 1800s, its prevalence has surged, with over seven million U.S. students currently enrolled in online courses [6].

Online learning takes various forms, including hybrid models and fully online courses, operating synchronously or asynchronously [14], [16]. Synchronous learning involves real-time interactions, while asynchronous learning allows students to access pre-prepared resources over time [17]. The evolving nature of technology, exemplified by platforms like Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic, contributes to the adaptability of online learning formats [18].

Distinguishing between structured online learning and emergency remote learning is crucial. While structured online learning follows a planned approach, emergency remote learning is an unplanned response to unforeseen circumstances, such as the onset of COVID-19 [19]. The pandemic prompted extensive research on online teaching experiences, with specific attention to language education

Salah Algabli is with University of Florida, USA (e-mail: salahalgabli@ufl.edu).

[20]. Reference [7] categorized research on language teachers' responses into shifts in practices, technological competencies, and initial online teaching experiences. The transition to online language teaching, especially during the pandemic, revealed challenges for both inexperienced and experienced teachers [7]. Despite ongoing technological integration, the sudden shift underscored the lack of preparedness among language instructors [19].

B. Online Learning Opportunities and Challenges

Online learning presents various opportunities by offering flexibility, eliminating geographical constraints, and promoting engagement through asynchronous interactions [21]. Research suggests that online learning enhances student engagement, personalizes instruction, and provides diverse opportunities for language acquisition [18], [22]. Online ESL classes show potential in fostering independent learning and improving language proficiency [23]. The benefits of platforms like Zoom in synchronous language teaching are recognized, enabling assessment, group interactions, engagement with instructional materials, and interactive learning experiences [5], [24]. However, online learning does come with challenges, including limited social interaction, a higher likelihood of procrastination, and increased distractions [14]. Furthermore, concerns arise regarding insufficient student interaction and engagement in the online learning format, presenting additional hurdles [25]-[27].

C. Arabic Language

Arabic, spoken by approximately 400 million people worldwide, holds official status in the Arab League and is utilized in various countries across Africa and Asia, including Mali, Niger, and Senegal [28]. As one of the top five most widely spoken languages globally, Arabic is also one of the official languages at the United Nations [29]. Despite its global significance, learning Arabic presents inherent challenges for American students, including non-Latin alphabets, a right-to-left script, and the duality of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and spoken dialects [30], [31].

Arabic language education in the United States has witnessed substantial growth, with an increasing number of programs in K-12 schools, universities, and government initiatives [32]. Ranked eighth in enrollment among foreign languages in higher education, Arabic education has a rich history dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries [31]. The demand for qualified faculty capable of handling online education in Arabic language programs emphasizes the need for research in this field [31]. Research highlights initiatives such as "Arabic Without Walls" (AWW), demonstrating the success of online language learning, with positive student feedback on well-designed online exercises and activities [33].

D. Research Questions

The study employed the following three research questions to examine the pedagogical experiences of Arabic instructors:

- (1) What pedagogical benefits emerge from teaching Arabic as a world language in an online environment?
- (2) What challenges do educators face in the instructional

process when delivering Arabic as a global language in an online setting?

- (3) What pedagogical strategies do instructors offer based on their experiences teaching Arabic to ensure the effective delivery of online language courses?

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, specifically phenomenology, to investigate the experiences of university-level Arabic language instructors teaching online in the United States. Phenomenology, as outlined by Moustakas, serves as the methodological framework, emphasizing the exploration of participants' experiences without undue researcher influence [34]. The transcendental phenomenological approach, aligned with Moustakas's methodology, focuses on describing participants' experiences and setting aside the researcher's interpretations.

The study aims to comprehensively understand the intricacies of teaching Arabic online, employing interviews as the data collection method with 15 purposefully selected participants. This diverse group includes native and non-native speakers of Arabic, individuals of different ages, and varying levels of experience in online Arabic language instruction. The participant selection process follows the recommendation of Creswell & Poth [35], ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives.

The setting encompasses four-year colleges and universities in the United States, providing varied contexts for participant experiences. The inclusion criteria focus on instructors with a minimum of one semester of experience teaching Arabic language in a fully online format. The study excludes individuals who have not taught online or used blended teaching methods and those who exclusively taught online during the pandemic-induced emergency transition.

Ethical considerations hold utmost importance in this research, adhering strictly to Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Participants grant informed consent for the use of their anonymized data in research, presentation, and publication. The consent form comprehensively outlines the study's objectives, IRB requirements, and potential contributions to the field of Arabic language education.

The primary data collection method employed in this study is semi-structured interviews conducted via the Zoom platform. These interviews play a pivotal role in delving into instructors' past and present experiences with online teaching, establishing a connection between theoretical frameworks, pedagogical expertise, and practical application. The interview protocol, crafted in alignment with Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology and pertinent literature, facilitates a conversation that is both flexible and guided. The main interviews, guided by the refined protocol, take place after providing participants with an overview of the study's context and obtaining their consent. Recordings, executed through Zoom and an external voice recorder, ensure accuracy during transcription. Confidentiality is upheld through the use of pseudonyms, and participants are given their transcripts for member-checking, a vital step ensuring data accuracy.

The phenomenological approach in this study incorporates the concept of *epoché*, encouraging researchers to suspend preconceived judgments and beliefs to better attune to their feelings about the research topic. Phenomenological reduction, akin to transcendental reduction or phenomenological *epoché*, is employed to foster an open-minded approach among researchers toward participants' descriptions of the phenomenon. In the realm of phenomenology, data analysis aims to unveil the essence of the study's phenomenon by categorizing data into meaningful themes that encapsulate the core of the experience.

Qualitative data collection and analysis occur concurrently in this study, aligning with Savenye and Robinson's recommendation [36] to preserve the data in its comprehensive form for diverse analytical perspectives. Moustakas' phenomenological reduction technique, involving six key steps—Bracketing the Topic, Horizontalization, Clustering into Themes, Textural Description of the Experience, Structural Descriptions of the Experience, and Textural-Structural Synthesis—is applied for a thorough exploration.

Ethical integrity remains a cornerstone of this study, backed by IRB approval. Participants are fully informed about voluntary participation, rights, and confidentiality. Anonymity is safeguarded through pseudonyms, and data are securely stored. The study poses minimal risks, with ethical measures underscoring a commitment to participant welfare and research integrity.

IV. RESULT

In the initial phase of the analysis, we followed Moustakas' recommendations by listing and grouping data [34]. The "horizontalization" technique was employed to catalog each expression relevant to the experience. This process involved evaluating expressions to pinpoint crucial and self-contained aspects for a comprehensive understanding. Those meeting the criteria became "horizons" of the experience, while redundant, overlapping, or unclear expressions were refined for precision. The persisting horizons represented the unchanging and fundamental components of the experience.

Phenomenological themes in this study were derived from 15 Zoom interviews with university and college instructors of online Arabic language courses. Initial data analysis, guided by Creswell and Poth's guidelines, identified specific statements in the interview transcripts related to participants' experiences [35]. These significant statements, aligned with Moustakas' approach, were directly drawn from the transcripts, presenting diverse perspectives on the phenomenon [34].

Throughout this initial data analysis, we meticulously identified specific statements, creating an overarching view of participants' experiences. The significant statements were then organized and categorized based on sub-questions, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of perspectives on the phenomenon in accordance with Moustakas' framework [34].

After analyzing and coding the interview questions, three major themes were developed in response to the three research

questions.

A. Pedagogical Opportunities

Flexibility and Reduced Stress

All instructors unanimously agree that online teaching of Arabic provides valuable benefits in terms of flexibility and stress reduction, creating a positive environment for both educators and students. For instance, instructor 1 highlighted the flexibility introduced by online teaching, expressing that it "made it a bit flexible with preparation in advance". This newfound flexibility empowers instructors to organize and deliver content at their preferred pace, thereby diminishing the stress associated with tight schedules.

Instructor 4 echoed the sentiment, emphasizing the flexibility inherent in online classes: "The flexibility in online classes... students, wherever they are right in the comfort of their homes, they are able to log in and then interact". This flexibility not only caters to students but also alleviates the stress linked to commuting and managing logistical aspects of physical classrooms. Additionally, instructor 5 emphasized the advantages of online learning, stating, "The real advantage is the flexibility... switching to hybrid enabled some students to take it who wouldn't have been able to otherwise". The opportunity for students to learn at their own pace and customize their schedules contributes to stress reduction stemming from rigid timetables.

Instructor 12 characterized online teaching as flexible, noting that it "allows for flexible scheduling, saving time for both students and parents". This scheduling flexibility can relieve the stress associated with time constraints and foster a more balanced approach to learning. Instructors 5, 8, and 9 further enriched the discussion by highlighting how online teaching facilitates modular organization, provides streamlined access to resources, and supports personalized learning, all of which collectively contribute to reduced stress and increased flexibility in the learning process.

Convenience and Accessibility

All instructors unanimously agreed on the convenience and accessibility afforded by online Arabic teaching. For instance, instructor 5 emphasized this aspect by incorporating audio and video links directly into the course, eliminating the need for students to navigate separate external websites. This centralized approach simplifies resource access, sparing students from searching across various platforms for materials.

Instructor 5 further detailed a structured module system for weekly instruction, stating, "my model is to create modules for each week of instruction and pages for each of the 4 teaching days... Every day of instruction, synchronous or asynchronous, has its own page that is dated and clearly placed". This structured organization enhances convenience by providing students with a clear and organized learning path, reducing confusion and facilitating easy access to course content and assignments.

Moreover, instructor 7 highlighted the adaptation to online teaching platforms and the digitization of materials, making resources more accessible to students. They noted, "now the students had the books... Al Kitab does offer an online

platform... We started doing PowerPoint lessons on each lesson... We moved the material online, and immediately they provided the books online". This adaptation demonstrates how online teaching transforms traditional resources into digital formats, improving accessibility and minimizing the reliance on physical textbooks.

Instructor 9 focused on enhancing the learning experience's accessibility by incorporating engaging materials such as songs and games. The instructor stated, "we used songs and games sometimes... You know there are these online comics on Facebook". This approach showcases the flexibility of online teaching to integrate diverse and enjoyable learning materials, catering to students' preferences and enhancing the overall accessibility of the learning experience.

Recognizing the time investment in online teaching preparation, instructor 15 acknowledged its effectiveness and utility for students: "now students can access the materials at any time to revisit the information and study what they have missed". This acknowledgment underscores the trade-off between initial preparation time and the long-term benefits of convenience and accessibility, as online teaching ultimately streamlines the learning process and ensures resources are readily available to students.

Engagement and Interactivity

All instructors unanimously emphasized the substantial opportunities for enhancing engagement and interactivity through online Arabic teaching. Their insights and strategies underscored the advantages of online education in promoting active participation. For instance, Instructor 2 highlighted the significance of interactive writing, citing its benefits in facilitating direct communication between students and instructors through Zoom's chat function. This not only allows students to express themselves but also enables the instructor to provide immediate examples and explanations, fostering real-time interaction.

Instructor 4 emphasized how online teaching accommodates individual preferences and learning environments, thereby boosting engagement. They noted that online methods cater to diverse student preferences, stating, "I saw some students got engaged in the course because online provided them a method they prefer".

Furthermore, Instructor 11 stressed the role of online pedagogy in increasing student engagement and interaction. They pointed out that "online education offers various features such as emojis, chat discussions, and virtual breakout rooms," enhancing student participation and collaboration in the online learning environment.

Instructor 18 focused on incorporating multimedia and technology to promote active learning and engagement in online teaching. By integrating elements like songs, movie clips, poems, and lectures into online lessons, as well as engaging students in hands-on activities, this approach aims to create a dynamic and engaging learning experience.

Instructor 14 highlighted improvements in attendance and engagement in online classes. The instructor observed that online learning enhances attendance rates compared to

traditional face-to-face classes, attributing this to the convenience and accessibility of online education, which significantly contributes to increased student engagement and interaction.

Focus and Attention

Several instructors unanimously agreed that teaching Arabic online provides unique opportunities to improve students' focus and attention. Instructor 1 highlighted the significance of student-centered and communicative approaches in online teaching, asserting that active student participation inherently contributes to enhanced focus and attention. According to instructor 1, "teaching online made it a bit flexible with preparation in advance and helped students to focus more on the lessons".

Instructor 15 recognized the challenge posed by human attention spans and underscored the need for engaging and interactive activities in online lessons to capture and maintain students' focus. This acknowledgment emphasizes the crucial role of creating compelling learning experiences.

Instructor 12 emphasized that online learning has facilitated increased student focus and attention by creating a comfortable environment that encourages student contributions. Additionally, Instructor 12 noted that online instruction helped introverted students become more active, further enhancing students' focus and attention, stating, "I have noticed that students are more focused on my online course because they had the opportunity to prepare and see everything in writing in advance".

Moreover, Instructor 6's experience affirmed that online classes indeed lead to enhanced focus and attention, particularly among beginners. The visual aspects of online instruction were identified as a contributing factor, making it easier for students to comprehend the material. As Instructor 6 pointed out, "I found out that students were more focused online, especially with the beginners' level", highlighting the supportive role of the online format in students' concentration through clear visual aids.

Innovative Approaches

All instructors unanimously agreed on the potential of teaching Arabic online to introduce innovative approaches to language instruction. According to Instructor 12, the online format presented an opportunity to develop a personalized teaching approach, stating, "the online format gave me the chance to invent my own approach". Instructor 1 emphasized a combination of teaching approaches, stating, "I used a student-centered approach! We want all the work to be on the students to be able to participate... communicative approach...I created a mix and a mingle of communicative approach as well as a student-centered approach". This blend fosters active participation and engagement.

Instructor 2 highlighted the use of the communicative approach, explaining, "communicative approach, when students don't show up, don't participate. I just record my session, explaining the topic, grammar, or vocabulary and make it available for students". This approach prioritizes real

communication and practical language skills, even in asynchronous settings. Instructor 4 discussed various approaches, including the communicative language approach, audiolingual method, and task-based method, stating, "so I use that approach which focuses on the practical use of the Arabic language... sometimes we use YouTube or any other audio material for the students... I also use tasks, this language teaching. And here are specific tasks like role play to build Arabic skills for the students". These diverse methods cater to different learning styles and preferences. Instructor 6 mentioned a combination of teacher and student-centered approaches, noting, "both teacher-centered and student-centered... is the reading mostly done by the student because they are actually the material it is available to them before class... in class, sort of facilitate and activate the activities that they have already been assigned to do". This approach encourages students to take ownership of their learning while benefiting from in-class facilitation. Instructor 10 discussed the use of a new communicative approach, stating, "the pedagogy that I follow is mainly the new communicative approach that fits the new online learning environment... engaging students with the lesson and promoting interaction... encouraging students to produce sentences and questions... giving them the opportunity to teach themselves". This approach focuses on meaningful communication and student-driven learning. Instructor 15 highlighted the ACTFL-oriented approach, emphasizing, "following the ACTFL pedagogy which emphasizes functional language skills... focusing on what students can do in the language... providing opportunities for students to work individually, in pairs, and in groups". This approach promotes practical language use and collaboration among students.

Instructor 4 emphasized the communicative teaching approach and constructivism, stating, "designing all my activities for practice around a communicative teaching approach... shifting away from lecturing and more work on the material... using breakout rooms for peer-to-peer interaction... encouraging students to communicate and collaborate with each other". These strategies prioritize active learning and interaction.

Instructor 7 mentioned a communicative approach, saying, "I use a communicative approach in my teaching... Focusing on promoting communication and language use... emphasizing the practical application of the language". This approach ensures that language learning is contextually relevant and applicable.

Integration of Culture

Several instructors unanimously recognized that teaching Arabic online creates opportunities for the seamless integration of culture into the language learning experience. Many instructors emphasized the significance of incorporating cultural elements into their teaching methods to enrich students' comprehension and appreciation of Arabic culture. For instance, instructor 1 noted a transformative shift in teaching practices, stating, "there are a lot of new ones, and we heard about translanguaging, and we heard about also mixing and

mingling culture together with [Arabic language]". This signals a departure from past practices, indicating a deliberate effort to intertwine culture more extensively in Arabic language education. They further underscored, "before, culture was infused in classes in a very limited way. Now every activity has to revolve around [culture]". This signifies a purposeful integration of culture into every facet of language learning. Moreover, they highlighted, "especially with the advanced level, we have culture portfolios where they have to be exposed to different types of stuff in the Middle East, like clothing, like wearing jewelry". This innovative approach demonstrates how online teaching facilitates the creation of culture portfolios, providing students with exposure to diverse aspects of Middle Eastern culture.

Instructor 7 emphasized the advantages of online teaching in exposing students to authentic cultural materials: "online teaching provides opportunities to expose students to authentic cultural materials, helping them gain a better understanding of Arabic culture, traditions, and customs. This immersion can contribute to a more comprehensive language learning experience". They highlighted the immersive nature of online learning, allowing students to engage with cultural content, fostering cultural awareness, and establishing a meaningful connection between language learning and profound cultural knowledge.

Students' Language Proficiency

All instructors unanimously agreed on the potential of teaching Arabic online to significantly enhance students' language proficiency through diverse approaches and strategies. These approaches prioritize active student participation and engagement, thereby fostering a more comprehensive language learning experience. For instance, instructor 1 advocates for a student-centered and communicative approach, aiming to actively involve students in the learning process. This approach encourages students to play an active role in their language acquisition, ultimately contributing to improved language proficiency.

Instructor 8 underscores the importance of students taking responsibility for their own learning, engaging in independent efforts to enhance their language skills: "my students now have tons of chances of enhancing their language proficiency due to online". This self-directed learning approach empowers students to work diligently, resulting in enhanced language proficiency.

Additionally, Instructor 8 emphasizes the utilization of visual elements and concise instructions in online teaching. The incorporation of visuals can make the learning experience more engaging, aiding students in comprehending and retaining language concepts effectively. Meanwhile, instructor 7 discusses the flexibility of online teaching, allowing instructors to tailor content to meet individual students' needs and interests. This customization ensures that students receive language instruction that resonates with them, further contributing to language proficiency: "now I tailor my instruction to facilitate reading and comprehension activities for students to better their language proficiency".

Instructor 13 actively promotes learning and student participation through hands-on activities and online discussions: "online learning encourages students to practice and apply their language skills actively, resulting in improved proficiency". Furthermore, instructor 9 asserts that online classes create a multicultural learning environment, encouraging interaction among students which help them to achieve the level of proficiency in learning the target language. This facilitates the sharing of diverse backgrounds, leading to cultural exchange and understanding. As a result, language proficiency is enhanced, as students communicate across various cultures.

B. Pedagogical Challenges

Managing and Monitoring Student Behavior

Numerous Arabic language instructors teaching online have emphasized the pedagogical challenges associated with managing and monitoring virtual classrooms. The difficulties encountered during the transition from traditional physical classrooms to online teaching have been a common theme among these educators.

Instructor 1 pointed out challenges related to adapting to the online environment, specifically mentioning the inability to control students' behavior in the virtual class. Similarly, instructor 2 discussed challenges in establishing rules of interaction, problems with camera usage, and the difficulty of assessing student engagement without visual cues, expressing a lack of control in the online format. Instructor 3 highlighted the struggle in reaching students, particularly due to the absence of immediate face-to-face interaction, resulting in difficulties reminding them of tasks. This instructor also noted challenges in assessing student understanding, limited interaction, and a lack of feedback in the online setting.

Instructor 4 explained issues with managing students' behavior in online courses, citing instances of students using phones or engaging in unrelated activities during lessons. Instructor 6 raised concerns about the limited visibility of students with cameras turned off, especially in breakout groups, making it challenging to monitor their activities. Instructor 14 focused on student behavior and attitudes in the online classroom, noting that some students may not take online classes as seriously as in-person ones, leading to challenges in maintaining control and ensuring active participation. Monitoring student behavior, particularly in virtual breakout rooms, emerged as a specific challenge, making it difficult to oversee interactions and enforce language guidelines.

Increasing Effort and Exhaustion

Several instructors have highlighted that online teaching can result in increased effort and exhaustion. Instructor 7, in particular, emphasized the heightened workload and mental fatigue associated with online instruction, expressing that teaching online demands more effort. They conveyed a sense of exhaustion, noting their constant preoccupation with the next steps, describing it as mentally draining.

Instructor 13 characterized the experience as "very, very

stressful," with their brain operating at full capacity. The instructor pointed out that teaching online can lead to exhaustion due to the need to adopt new pedagogical approaches tailored to students' learning styles. The shift to online teaching requires additional effort, contributing to heightened fatigue among instructors. Instructors also identified the absence of physical movement as a factor contributing to brain fatigue. Furthermore, the demands of multitasking and managing various online resources were cited as additional stressors, further exacerbating the challenges and exhaustion associated with online instruction.

Cheating

Numerous instructors, particularly instructor 2 and instructor 6, have shed light on the pedagogical challenges faced by Arabic language educators when dealing with issues of cheating in online classes. Instructor 2 highlighted the constraint imposed by university policies, preventing the mandatory enforcement of keeping students' cameras on. They recounted an instance where a student maintained a turned-off camera for most of the semester, expressing concerns about ensuring academic integrity and active participation when students can hide behind the anonymity of a deactivated camera.

Instructor 6 also voiced apprehensions that students might not approach online classes with the same seriousness as in-person ones, potentially leading to cheating or outsourcing their work. Instructor 8 shared concerns about designing tests that effectively prevent cheating, raising questions about the efficacy of assessment strategies. Instructors 1, 9, and 10 expressed uncertainties regarding whether students were independently completing assignments or seeking external assistance. Additionally, the challenge of monitoring students' activities and behavior in the online setting makes it difficult to detect instances of cheating, such as using a different language during assessments, without the instructor's awareness.

Enforcing the use of the target language in online classes becomes challenging, as students may find it more convenient to switch to another language in breakout rooms or feel less accountable for adhering to language guidelines. This scenario poses a potential threat to the integrity of the Arabic language learning experience. As pointed out by instructor 13, students tend to use English in breakout rooms, deviating from the assignment's requirement to communicate in Arabic, highlighting the difficulty in maintaining language consistency in the online learning environment.

Lack of Seriousness and Engagement

Numerous instructors have emphasized the formidable task of fostering student seriousness and active engagement in the online learning environment. Instructor 5 pointed out the observation that "students don't take the online days as seriously," indicating a noticeable disparity in student commitment between online and in-person classes. Similarly, instructor 14 noted that "students may not take online classes as seriously as in-person classes", implying potential

implications for student dedication and participation. Instructor 3 expressed concern about students' lack of seriousness affecting engagement, highlighting the difficulty in actively involving students in their learning process in the online teaching context. The instructor stressed the unique challenges of online teaching, citing difficulties in reaching students compared to face-to-face instruction.

Instructor 6 further underlined the challenges faced by instructors in engaging students in online classes, noting instances where students seemed disengaged from the course. Moreover, instructor 9 discussed the hurdles in ensuring student engagement and the difficulties in monitoring students' screens, emphasizing the challenge of maintaining effective oversight in the online learning environment.

Addressing the constrained engagement of students on online platforms, Instructor 6 expressed concerns, highlighting the limitations posed by students not being on camera, hindering effective interaction and pronunciation correction. Similarly, instructor 4 conveyed the struggle, stating, "It is very difficult to sometimes motivate and engage the students," underscoring the challenge of securing active student participation. Additionally, instructor 15 mentioned, "I did not know how to make some students get engaged; they will not talk or will turn their cameras off".

These instructors' experiences shed light on the significant hurdles faced by online Arabic language instructors as they navigate students' diminished seriousness and engagement in the virtual classroom. These challenges may arise from various factors, including the absence of in-person accountability and the distractions students may encounter in their home environments. Effectively addressing these issues necessitates innovative strategies and pedagogical approaches to enhance student engagement and commitment in the online Arabic language learning experience.

C. Strategies for effective Online Arabic Language Instruction

Comprehensive Teacher Training

All instructors agree on the pivotal role of "comprehensive teacher training" in ensuring successful online Arabic language instruction. Instructors 1, 2, and 6 emphasized the imperative nature of teacher training and the adaptation of pedagogical techniques, advocating for workshops and webinars as effective avenues for learning from experienced online teaching experts. Instructor 1 stressed the substantial training required for online instructors to proficiently navigate the necessary pedagogical tools. Acknowledging initial challenges in transitioning to online teaching, Instructor 2 underscored the critical role of comprehensive teacher training in addressing these difficulties.

Instructor 6, while recognizing both the advantages and drawbacks of online teaching, advocated for additional training, particularly for instructors less acquainted with digital tools. Instructors 10, 12, and 9 also underscored the significance of teacher training and pedagogical skills, emphasizing the need for all online teachers to receive comprehensive training. Instructor 10 specifically expressed

the necessity for further training to enhance online teaching skills. Highlighting a commitment to continuous professional development, instructor 12 actively seeks student feedback to refine and improve their pedagogical abilities. Instructor 7, pointing out the potential of online courses to reach a broader audience, emphasized the crucial role of universities in providing support for online Arabic language education. Their key recommendation is to offer proper training for teachers, guiding them through potential challenges and providing strategies on how to handle various situations.

Thoughtful Course Design and Materials

All instructors stress the paramount importance of careful course design and relevant materials for achieving success in online Arabic language instruction. Instructor 10 emphasizes the need for teachers to undergo comprehensive training in both technology and pedagogy, coupled with the provision of appropriate materials, stating that "the course should be well designed".

Instructor 8 places strong emphasis on investing time in course preparation as a key factor for success. They advocate for a meticulously crafted curriculum, manageable workloads, and a comprehensive learning experience encompassing language, culture, and more. Additionally, they stress the significance of engaging in research, exploration, and tailoring instruction to learners' interests. Instructor 13 recommends the development of a well-thought-out syllabus, assessing the level of student engagement, steering clear of readily available information, and fostering student struggle as integral components of the learning process. They advocate for the approach of "design a well-thought-out syllabus".

Instructor 14 highlights the critical importance of skillful technology use, adaptation of materials for online courses, teaching with passion, and a nuanced understanding of the distinctions between online and in-person teaching. They assert, "we need to understand the difference between online and in-person teaching and how each format is different and the materials that need to be designed for".

Instructor 16 advises, "choose a teacher or institute with a well-designed curriculum". Lastly, instructor 4 underscores the necessity for thorough training of teachers, ensuring an understanding of the student perspective, providing flexibility in syllabus design, and adapting materials to the online learning environment.

Finding Strategies to Enhance Student Engagement

Multiple instructors converge on the pivotal significance of student engagement and participation in successful online Arabic language instruction, offering insightful recommendations to attain these objectives. Instructor 3 emphasizes the necessity of teacher training, resource provision, and the implementation of project-based assessment to elevate student engagement.

Instructor 7 advocates for the use of compelling materials, interactive teaching methods, and the cultivation of participation through breakout rooms and presentations, asserting that "the materials should be created to engage

students". Instructor 11 underscores the importance of well-defined course objectives, varied teaching methods, constructive feedback, and the incorporation of authentic materials, hands-on projects, and a growth mindset to amplify student involvement.

Instructor 12 recommends a well-designed curriculum, a manageable workload, and a holistic learning experience encompassing both language and culture to sustain student engagement. Instructor 13 highlights the significance of a well-structured syllabus, the assessment of student engagement levels, avoidance of easily accessible information, and encouragement of students to navigate learning challenges, asserting that "the information of the course should be short, concise, and accessible".

Instructor 15 suggests the continual enhancement of pedagogical skills, student involvement in decision-making processes, breaks during extended classes, and giving students a voice in course content decisions as methods to uphold engagement, emphasizing the need to "provide breaks during long classes and give students a voice and consider their preferences". Instructor 3 emphasizes the essentiality of proper teacher training to comprehend the student perspective, flexible syllabus design, and the adaptation of materials for online learning.

Flexibility and Adaptation

Several instructors agree on the crucial necessity of incorporating flexibility and adaptation strategies for successful online Arabic language instruction in the digital realm. Instructor 1 acknowledges the initial challenges associated with transitioning to online teaching but underscores the subsequent benefits, placing particular emphasis on adapting to new pedagogical methods.

Instructors 4 and 7 recognize the significance of fostering flexibility in online courses, advocating for diversity in exercises, tasks, and lessons. They assert, "to create a successful online course, we need to diversify our tasks to fit students' needs and create a flexible course". Instructor 8 recognizes the vital role of adapting new technologies to establish online language courses in universities.

Instructors 9, 11, and 12 collectively stress the need for substantial flexibility in online instruction, emphasizing the importance of creativity and adaptability. In particular, Instructors 11 and 12 stress the ongoing process of learning and adaptation. Instructor 11 asserts, "Online Arabic language instruction is evolving, and it is the future of our learning as long as we embrace and adapt the right technologies and pedagogies".

Communication and Collaboration

All instructors unanimously agree that the cornerstone of successful online Arabic language instruction lies in the art of effective communication and collaboration, a consensus vividly echoed in their insightful statements. Instructor 1 succinctly emphasizes the necessity of meticulous preparation, ongoing professional development, and the cultivation of a culture that values collaboration and communication as

fundamental pillars of achievement.

Instructor 4 recommends that instructors actively engage in interaction with their peers and remain open to learning from each other. "Try to interact with other teachers... be open to other people around you in the same area". Instructor 11 expertly advocates for "a collaborative environment where teachers support one another and freely share resources and tools, creating a positive and supportive community of educators". Instructor 16 encourages the enhancement of technology skills, empathizing with students, collaborating with other teachers, learning from successful peers, staying updated with new applications and tools, and incorporating popular platforms and media that resonate with students.

Instructors 8 and 7 foster a collaborative culture among Arabic language instructors by actively seeking opportunities to interact with fellow teachers. As one teacher wisely suggests, "try to interact with other teachers... be open to other people around you in the same area". This exchange of ideas and experiences can lead to valuable insights and shared best practices. Instructor 18 recommends cultivating open communication channels with students and actively involving them in decision-making processes. This approach empowers students and fosters an inclusive, collaborative learning environment. Instructor 18 states, "It is important for us as instructors to communicate with our students and involve them in decision-making because this as you know creates an inclusive learning atmosphere and a sense of collaboration."

Instructor 9 emphasizes the need for programs to create a positive and supportive community of educators by encouraging a collaborative environment. Teachers thrive when they support one another, freely sharing resources and tools. This philosophy not only enhances individual teaching practices but also contributes to the overall improvement of online Arabic language instruction. Instructor 9 asserts "In online learning, we should encourage a collaborative environment where all teachers support one another and freely share resources and tools, creating a positive and supportive community of educators, which will help us thrive".

V. DISCUSSION

1) What Pedagogical Benefits Emerge from Teaching Arabic as a World Language in an Online Environment?

The study underscores numerous pedagogical opportunities inherent in online Arabic language instruction, revealing the potential for enhanced flexibility, reduced stress, and improved engagement. These benefits arise from the adaptability, accessibility, and time flexibility provided by online instruction. Convenience is emphasized, as online resources streamline the learning process, replacing traditional materials and contributing to a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

Online teaching is shown to foster greater student focus and attention through engagement and interactive learning methods. Innovative approaches, such as communicative and student-centered methods, play a pivotal role in making online Arabic language instruction more engaging. The integration of

culture within language teaching not only enhances cultural awareness but also deepens understanding of the Arabic-speaking world. Strategies within the multicultural online learning environment are identified as effective tools for enhancing students' language proficiency through active participation and self-directed learning.

Some of the findings are consistent with prior research that underscores the benefits of online learning [5], [14], [21], [24], [23], [37], [38].

Identified pedagogical opportunities in online Arabic language instruction pave the way for a more effective and enriching learning experience for both students and instructors in the online format. Recognizing these opportunities is crucial for educators to harness the full potential of online instruction and create innovative pedagogical approaches that seamlessly integrate into online learning environments, leveraging advancements such as AI to further enhance the learning experience. The discussion in the research paper can delve into the importance of developing and adopting new, innovative pedagogical approaches that align with the unique features of online learning and take advantage of AI methodologies to optimize language instruction in the digital realm.

2) What Challenges Do Educators Face Teaching Arabic as a World Language in Online Format?

The study not only uncovered notable pedagogical opportunities but also shed light on various challenges associated with teaching Arabic as a world language online. These challenges highlight the complex obstacles instructors face in adapting to this instructional mode, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive examination of the difficulties involved.

Among the identified pedagogical challenges, managing and monitoring student behavior emerge as significant hurdles. These challenges encompass issues such as establishing interaction rules, assessing engagement, and maintaining control over the online learning environment. Technical problems and the absence of in-person interaction further complicate these difficulties. The sedentary nature of the online teaching environment intensifies the effort and exhaustion experienced by instructors, exacerbated by multitasking demands and resource management challenges. Cheating concerns become more pronounced due to the absence of camera policies, posing a substantial obstacle to ensuring academic integrity.

Motivating students for active participation and addressing the lack of student interaction and engagement present additional formidable challenges [26]-[28]. Instructors must grapple with these issues during the transition from traditional teaching methods to effective online language instruction.

Recognizing and proactively addressing these challenges are imperative for the successful delivery of online Arabic language courses and the achievement of learning goals. The discussion in this research paper can delve into the specific strategies and solutions proposed by instructors to overcome these challenges, fostering a more nuanced understanding of

the complexities associated with online language instruction.

3) What Pedagogical Strategies Do Instructors Offer Based on Their Experiences Teaching Arabic in Online Format?

The strategies proposed by instructors for effective online Arabic language instruction present a thorough and strategic framework for effective teaching in the digital realm. They highlight the ongoing professional development of teachers and the acquisition of crucial technological skills, the meticulous design of courses and materials, approaches to boost student engagement and participation, and the importance of effective communication and collaboration among instructors and institutions. Together, these recommendations form a comprehensive guide for establishing an interactive and inclusive online learning environment, showcasing educators' dedication and adaptability to optimize learning experiences for their students.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In conclusion, the study's findings underscore the pedagogical advantages of online Arabic language instruction, aligning with previous research on online learning. The flexibility, convenience, and independent learning opportunities inherent in online instruction contribute to enhanced student engagement and knowledge acquisition. Future research should explore technological aspects, factors influencing student engagement, and specialized training for language instructors in technology integration. Investigating specific design elements, the impact of digital tools, and cultural factors affecting online language instruction is recommended. Research on the intersection of online teaching with emerging technologies, the changing roles of instructors, and transcendental phenomenology in diverse contexts is suggested.

Moreover, the study highlights benefits for instructors, enabling exploration of new pedagogical methods. Challenges like the lack of social interaction, concerns about cheating, and issues related to student engagement are s. Recommendations include incorporating digital tools, thoughtful course design, and fostering a multicultural online learning environment. Strategies promoting active participation, self-directed learning, and cultural integration contribute to enhanced language proficiency. Institutions must support instructors in transitioning to online teaching and implement policies and technologies for a fair learning environment. Emphasizing active student participation through video cameras is crucial for social interaction.

The study provides practical recommendations for institutions, emphasizing flexibility in course schedules and access. Pedagogical strategies in online courses should differ from traditional settings, and efficient time management with technology is crucial. Streamlined assessment processes facilitated by technology and fostering student engagement are recommended. Institutions should support instructors in establishing rules, monitoring behavior, and mitigating physical and mental strain. Addressing concerns about

academic integrity requires collaborative efforts between institutions and instructors, focusing on technology solutions for assessments.

Instructors are urged to prioritize digital skills through training programs, emphasizing planning and organizing course materials. Innovative teaching methods and activities contribute to a more enriching educational experience. Continued research efforts are essential to understand opportunities and challenges, inform instructional practices, and contribute to the theoretical landscape of online education.

Additionally, asynchronous pedagogy requires a distinct approach compared to synchronous pedagogy. As online education evolves, there is a pressing need for innovative pedagogical approaches and platforms designed to cultivate an advanced learning environment tailored to the unique dynamics of online instruction. These considerations further emphasize the importance of adapting pedagogical strategies to align with the evolving landscape of online language instruction.

In conclusion, these future recommendations guide stakeholders in adapting and improving online Arabic language instruction. Incorporating these suggestions contributes to the ongoing evolution of online education, ensuring its effectiveness in meeting the unique needs of Arabic language learners in a digital environment.

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