

CHAPTER

8

CHALLENGES OF LEARNING ARABIC LANGUAGE

*Muhammad Amir Hussein Ramzan, Lokman Hafiz Asary,
and Halimah Ma'alip*

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is an exciting and enriching path that unlocks a plethora of opportunities and cultural comprehension. It entails grasping linguistic competencies, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, in a language distinct from one mother tongue. This adventure not only boosts cognitive skills but also encourages personal development, cross-cultural communication, and global understanding.

The process of learning a foreign language can be both challenging and enjoyable, as it requires dedication, patience, and consistent practice. It involves mastering the grammar rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural nuances of the target language. Numerous resources, such as language courses, textbooks, online platforms, and immersion programmes, are available to facilitate this learning journey.

Learning foreign languages is crucial for several reasons, including gaining insights into different cultures, enhancing intercultural communication, expanding job prospects, facilitating travel experiences, and enabling successful study abroad programmes (Hubackova, 2017). This is the rationale behind numerous higher education institutions incorporating foreign languages as elective options for their students. It

encompasses various aspects of personal and professional development. By offering foreign language courses, these institutions aim to provide students with a plethora of benefits that contribute to their overall growth and success in life. These advantages include career advancement opportunities, cognitive development, cultural awareness and sensitivity, enhanced communication skills, a broader worldview, networking possibilities, and personal growth, ultimately fostering well-rounded and globally conscious individuals. Study by Kioko (2018) further stresses that foreign language learning holds great significance for broadening a person opportunity in higher education, improving cognitive development, and plays essential roles in peace-keeping missions and international courts which contributes to global collaboration.

8.2 CHALLENGE EXPLORED

The problem of this study is related to the issue of learning Arabic among non-native speakers which are at the beginner level and face difficulties in pronunciation and understanding the gender concept in Arabic nouns.

This study is important to be carried out due to the problems identified earlier. Therefore, this problem will be addressed in this study to improve the learning skills. While the mastery of these two receptive skills is closely related to the challenges that learners facing learning Arabic.

8.3 THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

There have been numerous studies on foreign language learning (FLL) across different contexts and settings. These studies suggest that past research on foreign language learning has explored vocabulary acquisition (Meara, 1980), teaching methodologies (Lacorte, 2005), benefits of bilingualism, and has faced limitations due to a narrow focus on certain languages and learner populations.

Foreign language learning is a multifaceted process aimed at developing communicative competence, intercultural understanding, and effective communication across cultures, involving various teaching strategies, pedagogical approaches, and learning outcomes. The FLL is effective intercultural communication (Kohonen et.al, 2000) that involves studying foreign languages and using learning strategies to become more effective and independent. Study by Moeller and Catalano (2015) states that foreign language learning involves engaging learners in interactive communicative language tasks, with the teacher playing a facilitator and agent of change role. Additionally, study by Sun (2013) added that FLL is about learning to communicate in the target language, and promoting intercultural communication competence requires teaching foreign culture.

8.3.1 Challenges in Learning Foreign Language

Despite being offered by many higher education institutions, foreign language learning and teaching often present numerous challenges to students. These difficulties span multiple aspects, catering to diverse learner requirements and skill levels, while navigating the intricacies of diverse linguistic complexities. In order to address the issues, we need to identify what are some of the common challenges faced by the learners before we can navigate these hurdles while accommodating the students' individual needs, abilities, and the intricacies of various languages.

When it comes to teaching foreign language, several challenges arise that can impact the learning process. According to Madalińska-Michalak and Bavlı (2018) research, these challenges encompass various aspects, including difficulty to maintain students motivation and enthusiasm; emotional inhibitions where students may experience emotional barriers while learning a foreign language, such as fear of making mistakes, anxiety about speaking in front of others, or feeling embarrassed by their limited proficiency; managing large classes where the number of students can be overwhelming, differentiation in which teachers must adapt their teaching methods to cater to the diverse