2017

ARAB 202: A Peer Review of Teaching Project Inquiry Portfolio

Abla Hasan
University of Nebraska - Lincoln, abla.hasan@unl.edu

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ARAB 202:

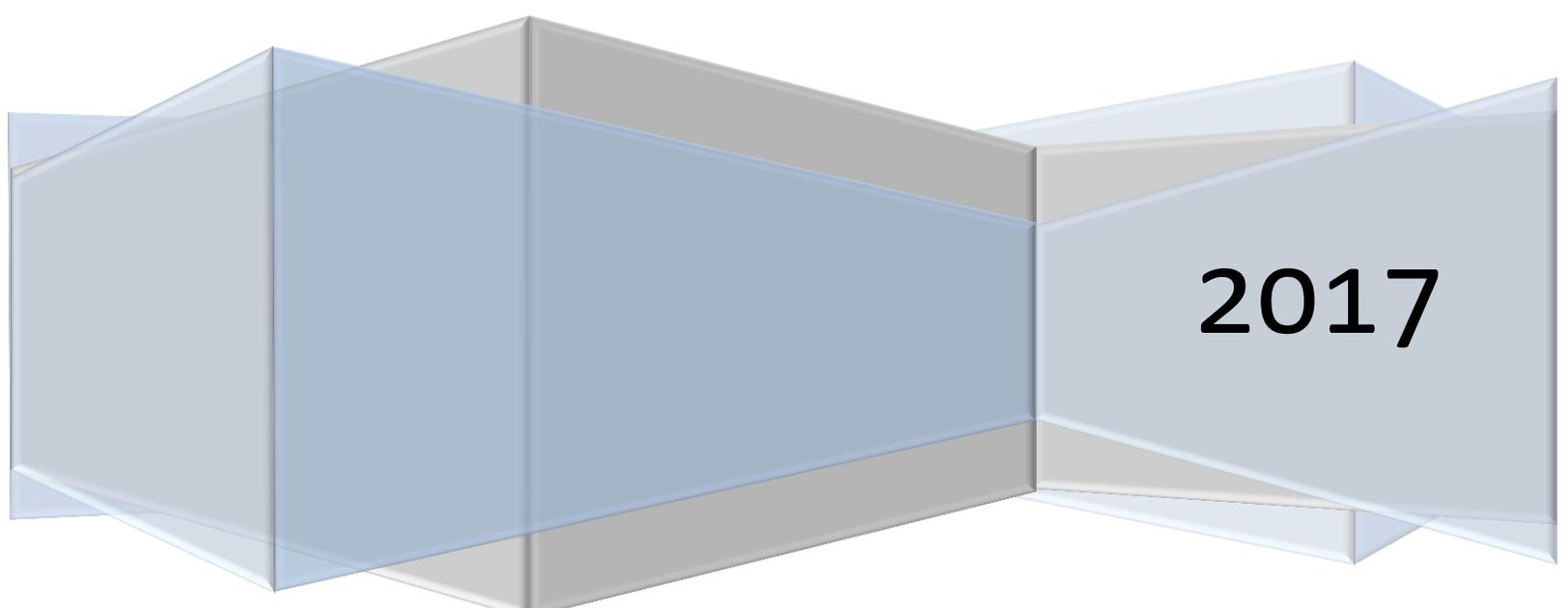## A Peer Review of Teaching Project Inquiry Portfolio

Professor Abla Hasan
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

2017

The Impact of Full Pedagogical Implementation of

Target-Language Textual Curriculum from a Student Perspective

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Abstract

This project examines the impact of adopting a text book of teaching Arabic for nonnative speakers that doesn't use any English. The project targets "ARAB 202", second year Arabic, since this course has already used a text book that uses English for instructions and grammar for 3 semesters, ARAB 101 , ARAB102, ARAB 201 and before the new curriculum was available in the market. Students of ARAB 202 will be the first to experience the switch to the new curriculum and therefore can be the best to evaluate the experience. For the project, students were asked to complete a pre-course survey that has been carefully designed to document their evaluation for the previously used text book before the beginning of the new course, then they were asked to complete an end of course survey of the same set of questions. The purpose of the study is to evaluate student's different attitudes of the new pedagogical approach, increasingly dependent on reducing English to the minimum in the classroom instruction and radically eliminating English from the used text book.

Keywords:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Arabic .English. Text book.

ARAB 202

Spring 2017

Welcome to ARAB101. Your next adventure to the Arabic world, language and culture starts here!

Instructor: Prof. Abla Hasan

 T-R OLDH-304

Time: 02:00:PM03:15:PM

Office: 1025 Oldfather

Office hours:

T and TH from 1:30 to 2:00p.m

M and W from10:00 to 11: 00 p.m

Or by appointment

Email address: abla.hasan@unl.edu

Course Description

This course introduces students to basic standard Arabic. The four essential skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening will be equally stressed and practiced. Students will have an opportunity learn essential vocabulary, including vocabulary needed for self- introduction, travel and social communication. They will be able to understand basic Arabic grammar and apply it correctly.

In addition, the course introduces students to the culture and traditions of the Arab &Islamic world. The curriculum is carefully designed to integrate technology and to address students' different learning styles: visual, auditory or hands on (to be determined by taking simple tests) and to meet the 21st century national standards of teaching foreign languages, adopted by STARTALK and ACTFl , known as the five Cs: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Community. Short Arabic YouTube video movies, designed computer games and authentic written materials are to be used. The course also introduces students to the Arabic and Islamic social and cultural life.

Textbooks
1- Silsilat Al-lissan, Al-Kitab Al-Mubtadea,pre-intermediate 2, MELCC, First edition 2012, UAE, ISBN 978-9948-16-576-7. Distributed in the USA by MELCC (WWW.MELCC.NET)

Course Goals and Objectives

The course aims at building students linguistic abilities to help them gain confidence in using the language, consistently with their level. According to ACTFL standards of assessment students taking this course should be able to produces vocabulary on variety of everyday topics, topics of personal interest, and topics that have been studied. Students will be assisted in getting more confidence in expressing their ability to tell or retell a **very** simple story and provide **some** additional description. They will practice using the four different tenses to express themselves in all major time frames on familiar and some unfamiliar topics.

They will practice how to use verb conjugation in a more natural way. Students will practice prepositions, asking questions, subject pronouns, and relative pronouns and sentence structure analyses.

Requirements

20% Quizzes

20% Attendance and Participation

20% Mid-Term Exam

20% Final Exam,

20% Final Oral Exam.

Optional Extra credit opportunities for participating in certain activities or writing additional assignments as well as competitive extra credit opportunities will be presented in this class.

Grading Scale

The grading scale in percentage is: A+ 97-100, A 93-96, A- 90-92, B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82,

C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72, D= 67-69, D 63-66, D- 60-62.

Instructor Contact

If you need guidance, additional assistance or if you simply like to have further discussions other than what we do in class, please feel free to come to my office during my office hours or email me to arrange for an appointment if you prefer times other than my office hours.

Course Policies

<u>Attendance Policy</u>

Students are expected to attend **every** class, if you have a serious reason to be absent please make sure to contact **the instructor** to talk about that. Missing classes for no legitimate reason will automatically lower your final assessment of attendance (one point for each absence). Maximum absences shouldn't exceed 5 times for any reason in an academic Semester (UNL DMLL/LCTL Policy).

<u>Disabilities:</u>

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

<u>Academic Integrity Policy:</u>

UNL Policy of academic integrity and academic honesty applies. Please see UNL Student Code of Conduct for more information.

<u>Cell phone and electronic device usage in class:</u>

Using electronic devise for purposes that exceed class needs can be extremely distractive and shows no appreciation to the instructor as well as to other students; therefore it is totally unaccepted to use your cell phone or your laptop for other purposes in the class. Violations will not be tolerated and every violation will reduce your final grade one degree (from A+ to A, from A to A- and so on).

Important Dates

Tuesday 2/21 Exam 1
Thursday 2/23 no class (volunteers are needed for the Big Arabic Day)
3/21 spring break
3/23 spring break
Tuesday 4/25 final oral Exam
Thursday 4/ 27 suggested day for the final Exam

Course Inquiry

This study examines closely one pedagogical approach to teaching less commonly taught languages via an exclusive usage of the target languages. While this approach is commonly viewed as a goal that every instructional plan should try to implement, students theoretical attitudes might vary in terms of overestimating the difficulty level using an Arabic textbook or an exclusive instruction in Arabic might involve. The study document students' attitudes before and after a semester of using a text book that fully drops English. What makes this study unique is the fact that the chosen group of students have an experience studying Arabic by using a textbook that occasionally uses English. In other words, this specific group of students can provide a comparative feedback that can enrich any attempt to evaluate an exclusive target language approach in second language acquisition.

Project Methodology

The study starts by a pre-course survey that detects students' evaluation of the pervious book and their anticipated attitudes of a different textbook that would replace English instruction by

Arabic. Students were given an option to rate 30 questions from 1 to 5(1 strongly agree). After one course of studying Arabic by using the new text book, students were asked to answer the same set of questions by using the same evaluative key scale.

Pre-Course Survey

Please rate from 1 to 5 (1 strongly agree – 2 agree- 3 I don't agree- 4 I strongly don't agree- 5 unable to decide)

1- This book is helpful in terms of helping me speak Arabic

2- This book helped my reading skills

3- The reading topics in this book are useful

4- The reading topics in this book are interesting

5- The book helped me learn new vocab

6- The book helped my spelling skills

7- I believe using English in Arabic book texts is helpful

8- I wish the book was designed differently

9- I prefer a book that uses more English

10- I prefer a book that uses less English

11- I think Arabic text books that uses Arabic ONLY are difficult for nonnative learners of Arabic

12- Arabic text books that uses only Arabic are confusing when it comes to understanding Arabic grammar

13- Arabic text books that uses only Arabic need a good instructor

14- This text book was easy to use

15- I prefer a book that uses only Arabic as the language of instruction

16- I don't prefer a book that uses only Arabic as the language of instruction

17- Illustrations in this book are really useful

18- The design of this book is interesting

19- The colors of the book are useful

20- Exercises in the book are useful

21- Exercises in the book are challenging

22- I prefer a challenging text book

23- I prefer an easy text book

24- The book motivated me to learn more

25- The assignments are challenging

26- The assignments are easy

27- The instructor help was always needed to use the book

28- I would recommend the book to others

29- The book helped support my learning skills

30- My comments about the book:

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End-of-Course Survey

Please rate from 1 to 5 (1 strongly agree – 2 agree- 3 I don't agree- 4 I strongly don't agree- 5 unable to decide)

1- This book is helpful in terms of helping me speak Arabic

2- This book helped my reading skills

3- The reading topics in this book are useful

4- The reading topics in this book are interesting

5- The book helped me learn new vocab

6- The book helped my spelling skills

7- I believe using English in Arabic book texts is helpful

8- I wish the book was designed differently

9- I prefer a book that uses more English

10- I prefer a book that uses less English

11- I think Arabic text books that uses Arabic ONLY are difficult for nonnative learners of Arabic

12- Arabic text books that uses only Arabic are confusing when it comes to understanding Arabic grammar

13- Arabic text books that uses only Arabic need a good instructor

14- This text book was easy to use

15- I prefer a book that uses only Arabic as the language of instruction

16- I don't prefer a book that uses only Arabic as the language of instruction

17- Illustrations in this book are really useful

18- The design of this book is interesting

19- The colors of the book are useful

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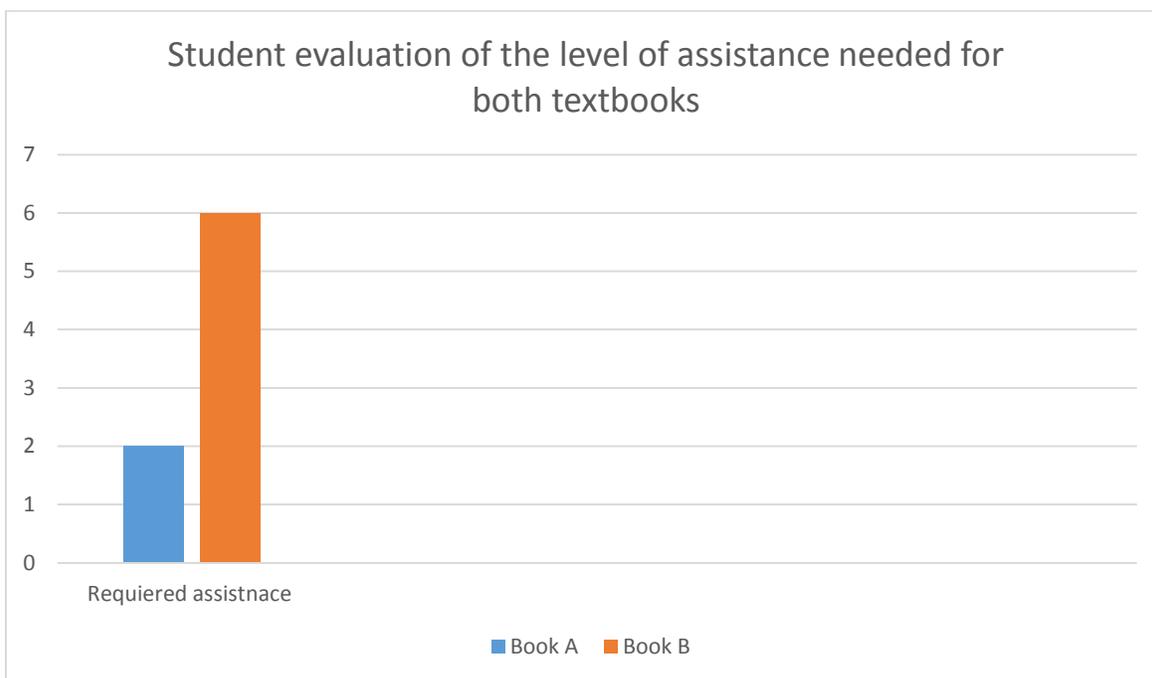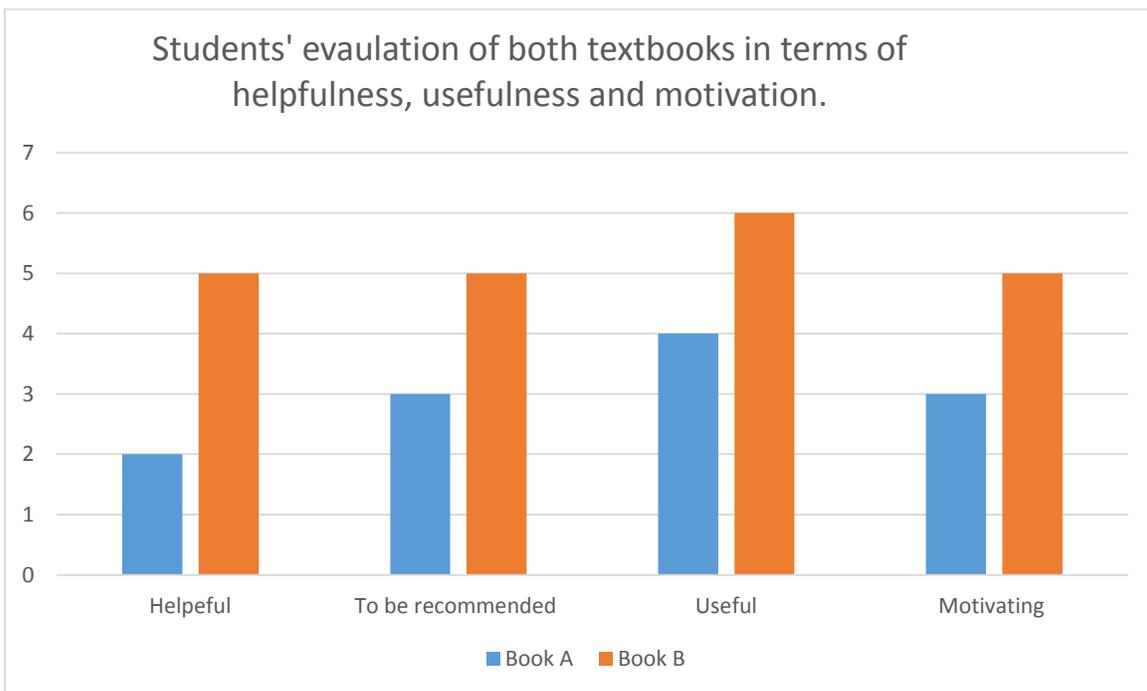……………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Visual Analysis and Project Conclusions

For my analysis I am going to use the following keys to refer to textbooks: A is the previous textbook which used English as a language of instruction and B for the new book which uses only Arabic. Here are some observations from students' answers.

Students' evaulation of both textbooks in terms of helpfulness, usefulness and motivation.

Student evaluation of the level of assistance needed for both textbooks

Discussion

Students in their answers have clearly preferred the new book in **all** aspects. However, using a text book that drops all English as a language of instruction required more dependence on the instructor, which can be challenging both to the instructor and students as well. Therefore, it is essential to make it clear when it comes to expectations that a text book that fully adopts the targeted language is not a self-taught book which instructors sometimes use. Practically speaking, the instructor should keep in mind that students' work in class and outside of class will still be strictly directed and even limited by the guidance he-she provides. A comment of one students says "*I thought this book was much better than the last one; but you really need good teacher to help guide you through the book if you are not fluent*". Another student who also showed preference to the new book wrote, "*I like to study on my own. This was very hard with this book*".