

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Learning Management Systems in Foreign Language Education: Insights from Arabic Learners in the U.S. During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract:

This study investigates the adoption and utilization of various Learning Management Systems (LMS) and technological tools by Arabic language instructors in the United States during the transition to remote teaching under the COVID-19 pandemic contingency plan. Focusing on the perspectives of learners of Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL), the research explores the role of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) in enhancing the development of foreign language skills among Arabic learners in higher education. A mixed-methods approach was employed to gather comprehensive insights into the integration of LMS and technological tools in the context of the abrupt shift to distance learning prompted by the pandemic. Data were collected from the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) survey and through in-depth semi-structured interviews with twelve Arabic learners out of ninety-six participating Arabic learners from various institutions in the United States. The findings reveal that LMS and technological tools played a pivotal role in facilitating the delivery of course materials, as well as synchronous and asynchronous instruction. However, the study also uncovered unexpected negative impacts on learners' language proficiency in the post-pandemic epoch. Despite these challenges, the results underscore the critical importance of LMS and technological tools as essential components of AFL teaching and learning in the 21st century. This study contributes to the broader discourse on the integration of technology in language education by providing valuable insights into the teaching and learning of AFL within VLEs, framed within a constructivist perspective, and offers implications for the future development of AFL pedagogy in the digital age.

Keywords:

Arabic as Foreign Language, Learning Management System, Technological tools, Virtual Learning Environment, COVID-19 pandemic, Higher Education, distance teaching.