

C.A.L.L. —
The Challenge
of Change

Research
&
Practice

Presented by
Keith Cameron

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Elm Bank Publications
Exeter
2001

Elm Bank Modern Language Studies

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First Published
in
2001
by
Elm Bank Publications
24 Velwell Road, Exeter, EX4 4LE, UK.

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Typeset by Julie Crocker

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data Available

ISBN 1-902454-13-8

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Quorn Selective Repro, Loughborough.

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INTERNET-BASED TEACHING OF ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Ibrahim Suliman Ahmed

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Abstract

Technology affects our lives in many different ways such – the media, education, and transportation, etc. This study focuses on the role of the Internet in learning Arabic. Eight Arabic language programs were collected from Web sites, analysed for their usefulness, and implemented in class. The students were instructed to use each program and answer the questionnaires, both as a group member and as an individual. The answers were collected and discussed with them. Finally, a questionnaire was distributed to the students in order to obtain their opinions regarding the use of the Internet in learning Arabic. This paper will look at some of the results of the questionnaire and make certain comparisons.

The Study

The problem: This research arose out of the need to teach the Arabic language to Malaysian students, who were unfamiliar with both the Arabic script and Middle Eastern intonations

Arabic is difficult to learn especially in an environment with so little input. Malaysia has few Arabic speakers; there are no newspapers or radio programs in Arabic; and the only Arabic models for students tend to be their instructors. It is the contention of this paper that the Internet could be used to overcome most of the problems.

The methodology: My hypothesis is that the Internet can be used successfully to provide both input and feedback to learners of Arabic. Using the Pre-test and Post-test method, and using the Questionnaire method tested this hypothesis.

A pre-test was conducted to determine the students' level of Arabic. It was expected that they would know very little apart from some of the religious terms that were incorporated into the Malay language and learned for prayers.

Following the pre-test, the students were supplied with a list of Internet sites (Appendix) to enable them to learn vocabulary concerning Arabic grammar and culture. The grammar aspects covered five categories: nouns, pronouns, verbs, numbers, and questions. The cultural aspects included cooking, eating habits, washing clothes, travelling, and social relations. Students were required to do assignments that measured their understanding of Arabic vocabulary relative to grammar and culture.

The post-test was used to determine how much the students increased their knowledge of Arabic vocabulary. The pre- and post-tests were the same and consisted of a dictation of sixty words covering the five grammar categories and Arabic culture.

The questionnaire consisted of questions dealing with student opinion towards the use of Internet in learning Arabic. The question which arose here was "Was there any