The Effectiveness of the Professional Fellowship in Teaching Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages Program (PF-ASOL) on Evolving the Teaching Capabilities of Arabic Teachers in Jordan

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Abstract

This study aimed at presenting the Professional Fellowship in Teaching Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages Program (PF-TASOL) and determining the effectiveness of the PF-TASOL on developing the teaching competencies of Arabic teachers in Jordan. The study subjects were (٢٦) Arabic teachers from different Jordanian Universities and institutes. A training group of Arabic instructors was studied at the beginning of their training and six months later. Evidence is reported of changes over time relating to the teaching capabilities performance scale improved by the researcher focusing on six competencies; Lecture Planning، Lecture Orientation، Teaching the Lecture، Asking Questions، Course Materials، and Classroom Management، The current study reports evidence of a range of positive changes in instructors' teaching competencies in the training group. The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the performance of the training group before and after training on the pre and post-observation scale، favoring to the post –observation in improving the teaching competencies. The study recommends adopting the PF-TASOL training program used in this study to develop the teaching competencies of Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages' instructors. It also recommends organizing the content of the Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages' text books to cope with the Active and modern learning strategies.

Key Words: PF-TASOL، Training Program، Teaching Competencies، eTurn ، Jordan، Universities and Institutions، Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages، Instructors.

Introduction and Background

Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages' instructors is now recognized in every university in Jordan and is becoming increasingly common in many other countries around. From being small in scale، low in credibility and poorly supported، Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages' instructors is now well rooted in many institutions، is often compulsory and is sometimes linked to experimentation or occupation.

The term Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages training often involves relatively sophisticated processes underpinned by theoretical models of professional development (Schon، ١٩٨٧) and change over time in teachers' conceptions of teaching (Trigwell، ١٩٩٤). The main objective of these training programs is to enhance the Arabic teachers' performance and help them acquire new knowledge and skills.

According to Salleh (١٩٩٥)، Teaching Languages' training programs are widely used to keep teachers up-to-date

on various educational areas. These programs are commonly used as means to enforce responsible self-renewal for language teachers and instructors. Trainers are often articulate about what they are trying to achieve and sophisticated about their training methods, even if they are not yet sophisticated about finding out whether they are successful.

Dilts (٢٠٠٢) indicates that Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages' programs help teachers: (i) to be better able to handle difficult students, to develop a great understanding of different learning styles; (ii) to enhance learners' self-esteem and therefore their desire for positive reinforcement; and (ii) to become more creative, imaginative and stimulating in their presentation.

Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages' teachers take dissimilar styles; Nielson (١٩٧٩) stated that Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages' training programs take different forms, such as training workshops, courses offered by the educational institutions or local agencies where the teachers work, or even courses offered by the institutions of teaching languages (Monjan and Gassner, ١٩٧٩; Killoran, ٢٠٠١). Furthermore, PF-TASOL includes workshops, curriculum development sessions, peer observation, independent study, and self-assessment.

According to Jones and Lowe (١٩٩٠) the effective training programs should have at least two potential outcomes: (i) change of teachers' classroom practice, and (ii) change in teachers' belief and attitudes. It might include specific training and educational courses in counselling. These techniques are typical short-term strategies used for changing individual instructors teaching methods and attitudes.

In fact, the importance of teacher preparation has generally emerged because it prepares teachers and provides them with the competencies necessary for achieving success in their work. This movement has had an enormous effect in preparing instructors for teaching. Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages movement came as a response to traditional educational methodologies used in Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages institutions and centers. This movement arose as a resent of criticism directed towards traditional methods of teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages where outputs depend on the amount of knowledge and the ability to retrieve it (Huizen, ٢٠٠٥). Teaching Arabic for Speakers of other Languages' training programs depend on analyzing the learning/teaching process into a group of competencies that every teacher must acquire, in order to increase his/her chances of successful achievement of objectives (King, ٢٠٠١). Borich (١٩٧٧) categorizes teacher training programs based on competencies into three types: (i) knowledge competencies (where a knowledge competency means a cognitive understanding derived from the instruction process or subject-matter content that the teacher is expected to demonstrate); (ii) performance competencies (which are the behaviors the teachers demonstrate in the classroom.); and (iii) consequence competencies (which are the outcome of the teaching and learning process between the teacher and his students). On the other hand, Houston (cited in Saeed and Mahmood, ٢٠٠٢) categorizes teaching competencies into five stages: (i) cognitive competencies, which are related to knowledge and intellectual skills and abilities that are expected of the learners; (ii) performance competencies, in which the learner demonstrates that he or she can do something; (iii) consequence competencies, to bring change to others; (iv) affective competencies, which are expected attitude and values that tend to resist the specificity and are more difficult to assess than the first three stages; (v) exploratory competencies, which includes activities that provide opportunities for teachers to learn about teaching.

Furthermore، for Lerner (٢٠٠٣)، the teachers in the university lecture room are in need of two kinds of competencies: (i) competencies in knowledge and skills، which include the professional knowledge، and (ii) competencies in human relationship abilities، such as cooperation، which requires teachers to be helpful، deferential، empathic، and open. The PF-TASOL requires competencies in assessment and diagnosis، curriculum، teaching practices، managing student behaviors، planning the teaching and learning environment، as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Ismail (٢٠٠٩) measured the effect of a training module in improving knowledge competencies for language education teachers in Jordan. The module consisted of ١٠ training sessions، covered three domains، namely، planning، instruction and classroom management، and evaluation competencies. The sample of the study consisted of ٥٠ teachers. The participants of the sample were distributed into two equal groups، with ٢٥ teachers in each group. The teachers in the experimental group were attached with the training module for five weeks؛ whereas the teachers in the control group were exposed for the same period to the conventional training adopted by the Ministry of Education in Jordan. The results of (ANCOVA) revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the means of the two groups 'means on the post-achievement test، favoring to the experimental group.

Bataineh (٢٠١٠) identified the core competencies belonging to general education teachers in Jordan. The sample of study consisted of ٣٢٠ male and female teachers. The results revealed that teachers' competencies of classroom management on a subscale ranked first، and that teachers' competencies of definitions، characteristics، assessing، and rights of students came in the last rank. The results also indicated that there are significant differences due to the interaction between gender and teaching experience.

The results of Brownell (٢٠٠٥) has vividly shown that language teachers need specific competencies for the advancement of their knowledge and skills، which are program characteristics that include extensive field experience، collaboration، and program evaluation، although the ways in which programs incorporated these components varied. In another empirical study، Gilberts and Lignugaris- Kraft (١٩٩٧) search for classroom management competencies address to teacher ability to manage the educational environment، and directly manage and assess students' classroom behavior. In that study classroom management competencies are divided into four categories address the educational environment: (i) arrangement of the physical environment to facilitate student management، (ii) formulation of a standard for student behavior in the classroom، and two categories address teachers' management and behavioral assessment؛ (iii) implementation of strategies to increase appropriate behavior or reduce inappropriate behavior، and (iv) assessing the effectiveness of the implemented strategies. In these programs، teacher educators used a variety of strategies to help students examine their beliefs about instruction؛ integrate the knowledge؛ acquire academic، social and cultural knowledge about their students؛ and reflect on the impact of their instruction.

In a detailed training program designed explicitly to change Arabic for speakers of other languages' teachers' conceptions of teaching، PF-TASOL has demonstrated this chain of influence through training goals and training processes، to teachers' approaches and to their students' approaches. PF-TASOL has oriented towards changing the teachers' approach to teaching they can، therefore، if they are successful، this will improve both student learning processes and outcomes.

Method

Population and Sample

The population of the study composes (١٢٠) instructors participated in the PF–TASOL program at eTurn during the period from June ٢٠١٧ till the end of the year ٢٠١٧. They are distributed within (٨) groups. The sample of the study consisted of ٢٦ instructors. All the twenty six instructors were chosen according to the stratified random sampling. The teachers in the experimental group enrolled into the PF–TASOL training program module based on instructional competencies for five–weeks.

Tools

In order to measure the level of teaching competencies among the PF–TASOL's trainees، a classroom observation checklist was developed by the researcher based on the PF–TASOL teaching competencies. The checklist was given to a group of referees for validation and modification purposes from different Universities in Jordan. The final version of checklist was categorized into six competencies; Lecture Planning، Lecture Orientation، Teaching the Lecture، Asking Questions، Course Materials، and Classroom Management. The inter–raters reliability is the constancy of the agreement and disagreement among the observers concerning the observed subjects، for testing the inter–raters reliability in this study، ten Arabic for speakers of other languages instructors (pilot study) were randomly selected and each was observed by four (٤) different observers. The overall percentage of the inter–raters reliability was (٠,٧٨)، which is a reasonably satisfactory percentage.

This research reports the administration of a scale observation checklist to the training instructors. The observation checklist was administered twice: once as near as practicable to the beginning of the PF–TASOL training program and the trainee teachers' own course، and once approximately six months later، after the training was completed.

The observation checklists were machine read، data were collected and an individual report produced for each training instructor، showing their own scores before and after training in the PF–TASOL program. What matters here are any differences between the teaching competencies of the training groups in terms of the size or direction of change between before and after participating in PF–TASOL.

The observation checklist consists of six competencies: Lecture Planning، Lecture Orientation، Teaching the Lecture، Asking Questions، Course Materials، and Classroom Management.

Objectives of the study

The current study aims at :

– Presenting the PF–TASOL program to develop the teaching competencies of the Arabic for speakers of other languages instructors in language centers and institutions.

– Finding out the extent of the effectiveness of PF–TASOL on developing the teaching competencies among the ASOL's instructors .

Questions of the study

This study attempts to answer the following two questions :–

١ – What is the Professional Fellowship in Teaching Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages (PF–TASOL) training program?

٢ – To what extent is the effectiveness of the PF–TASOL training program on the development of the teaching competencies of ASOL instructors in Jordan ?

Importance of the study

This study may suggest a full program about PF–TASOL competencies and teaching skills during the service to train teachers of universities and institutions which will be ended by giving them a professional specialized certificate. In addition، it may help ASOL instructors of Language Centers and institutions to develop modern teaching competencies and improve them. Moreover، the current study may help the people who are intended to improve language centers and institutions curricula and allow the use of the new active learning methods and encourage it through improving the teaching competencies of their instructors .Finally،the results of this study may help researchers to do more researches about the effectiveness of training programs which focus on teaching competencies at language centers and istitutions that specialized in teaching Arabic for speakers of other languages .

Findings and Discussion

Question Number One ؛ What is PF-TASOL training program?

The Professional Fellowship in Teaching Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages (PF–TASOL) training program is a professional development program for ASOL teachers designed to enhance ASOL teaching effectiveness and provide an educational context for ongoing career development. It integrates key concepts of teaching and learning، teaching strategies and skills، reflection and the experience of actual teaching within a cooperative and scholarly learning environment. PF–TASOL offers immediate practical support as well as a framework for ongoing reflective practice and further development or study. Topics include teaching for active learning; assessment; group work; e–Teaching; teaching as part of an academic career; and teaching in a culturally diverse. The teaching practice component brings together theory and practice ASOL education as participants plan and implement a short teaching and learning episode. Reflective practice، collegiality in professional development، the application of research and other educational literature to inform teaching، and the use of feedback to improve teaching are emphasized as participants jointly explore pertinent issues، engage with relevant research and literature، undertake peer observation of teaching، respond to student evaluations، develop their teaching philosophy، and explore an aspect of their teaching practice through an independent project.

PF–TASOL consists of two units: Unit١: Building Blocks. A five–day intensive on foundational ideas and processes in teaching، learning، assessment and evaluation in TASOL. Unit٢: Peer Observation. A structured set of observations

of teaching Arabic for speakersof other languages.

Through active participation in PF-TASOL، instructors were able to apply their developing understanding of learners and learning to their teaching؛ design and implement effective learning experiences for their students؛ reflect upon feedback from students and colleagues in order to evaluate and improve their teaching practice؛ access and use University policies and guidelines relevant to teaching، learning and assessment؛ access and utilize literature on teaching، learning and assessment in TASOL؛ value and share their own and their colleagues' experiences and knowledge of teaching؛ conduct a structured and scholarly exploration of an aspect of teaching and learning in their own context.

PF-TASOL was designed to help participants become more informed about teaching and learning in TASOL Centers and institutions، familiar with critical issues، and able to apply developing knowledge and insights to their teaching؛   independent learners in the field of ASOL learning and teaching، able to access ideas and practices from a variety of sources، and critically evaluate and apply these in the context of their own teaching practice؛   problem solvers when confronted with challenging issues in teaching، able to respond to these issues critically and creatively، seeking to attain high standards through flexible، innovative approaches to teaching ASOL؛ effective communicators about teaching and learning، willing and able to share ideas and practices with colleagues in the language centers and beyond؛ and responsible university teachers who are aware of the impact of their teaching on students and colleagues and who act with a high degree of integrity as a part of the local، national and international community of universities and institutions instructors.

PF-TASOL is normally completed over two weeks. An extension can be requested by completing the PF-TASOL Application for Extension form. Participants will be recorded as discontinued in week ١ of the third semester if this procedure is not followed.PF-TASOL Unit ١ is offered before the commencement of each teaching session and involves a series of face-to-face sessions over five days. Participants can then undertake Unit ٢.

According to PF-TASOL assessment process؛ first ،Unit١ is assessed through a teaching practice report prepared by each trainee. Its length is between ١٢٠٠-٨٠٠ words. This task requires the trainees to report on their teaching practice session، including their plan for the session، summary of، and response to، the feedback they received، what they have learnt through watching a video of their session، and a short statement of their conception of teaching. Second، Unit ٢ is assessed through preparing a Peer Observation Report between ٢٠٠٠-١٥٠٠ from each trainee. Reflection is an active process involving exploration of the trainees' own experiences، conversations with their colleagues، feedback from students، and 'conversations' with educational literature. These dimensions are canvassed in the assessment for this Unit.

Question Number Two: To what extent is the effectiveness of the PF-TASOL training

program on the development of the teaching competencies of the instructors in Jordan ?

To answer this question the researcher used an observation tool of teachers' teaching competencies (See appendix ١)

based on the focused competencies of PF-TASOL program .This observation tool was used in the trainees'classes before and after training. The first observation was at the beginning of the academic year ٢٠١٨/٢٠١٧ and before the training program .The second observation took place at the end of the academic year ٢٠١٨/٢٠١٧ and after training. The collected data was analyzed and a comparison was undertaken of matched pairs of before and after data for the trainee competencies who completed the PF-TASOL both before and after training (see Table ١). Table ١ displays an almost identical pattern of change to that for the entire training group.

Table ١

Means and Standard Deviations of Teaching Competencies before and after PF-TASOL program at eTurn Company

Teaching Competencies	Test	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lecture Planning	pre	٢٦	٢٢,٢٦	١,٨٥	.٣٦٤
	post	٢٦	٢٨,٢٧	٢,٢٧	.٤٤٦
Lecture Orientation	pre	٢٦	١١,٨١	١,٦٥	.٣٢٤
	post	٢٦	٢١,٨١	٢,٠٢	.٣٩٦
Teaching the Lecture	pre	٢٦	١٩,٦٥	٢,١٩	.٤٢٩
	post	٢٦	٢٨,٨٥	٢,١٤	.٤٢١
Asking Questions	pre	٢٦	١٢,١٢	١,٥٤	.٢٩٥
	post	٢٦	١٥,٤٢	١,٧٤	.٣٤٣
Course Material	pre	٢٦	١١,٤٢	١,٠٦٥	.٢٠٩
	post	٢٦	١٤,٢٨	١,٢٦	.٢٤٩
Class Management	pre	٢٦	٢٢,٢٧	١,٦٦	.٣٢٦
	post	٢٦	٢٧,٥٤	٢,٢١	.٤٢٤

From the first sight of the table، it is obvious that teaching competencies scores were improved .The training groups' scores on the six competencies، which concerned about teaching skills، were compared before and after training. The training group's scores after training improved significantly on all six competencies. The maximum score on each scale is ٢٠. One scale of the teachers'competencies increased significantly for the training group after training; teaching the lecture was the competency that improved the most (m=٢٨,٨٥) this was not the case before training (m=١٩,٦). This result reflects that PF-TASOL main focus was on the teaching methods inside the lecture hall. However، Asking questions competency was improved very slightly; since the PF-TASOL dedicated very small number of training hours to improve this competency. The researcher recommends to modify the number of the training hours of asking questions to guarantee the improvement in parallel with teaching methods inside the classroom.

The t-test analysis was run to determine whether the difference between the means of the pre-teaching competencies and Post – teaching competencies of the experimental group are statistically different. Table ٢ summarizes the

descriptive statistics for the performances of the participants before and after training.

Table ٢

T.Test

Pre-Post Teaching Competencies of the Participants in PF-TASOL Program at eTurn

Teaching Competencies	Paired Differences			٪٩٠ Confidence Interval of the difference		t	Sig. -٢tailed
	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.ErrorMean	Lower	Upper		
Lecture Planning	١٤٬٦٥-	٢٬٩٦٦	.٥٨٢	١٥٬٨٥٢-	١٣٬٤٥٦-	٢٥٬١-	.٠٠
Lecture Orientation	١٠٬٠٠-	٢٬٢٨٣	.٤٦٧	١٠٬٩٦٣-	٩٬٠٣٧-	٢١٬٢-	.٠٠
Teaching the Lecture	١٣٬١٩٢-	٣٬٤٥٣	.٦٧٧	١٤٬٥٨٧-	١١٬٧٩٨-	١٩٬٤-	.٠٠
Asking Questions	٣٬٣٠٨-	٢٬١١٢	.٤١٤	٤٬١٦١-	٢٬٤٥٥-	٧٬٩	.٠٠
Course Material	٢٬٩٦٢-	١٬٧٧٧	.٣٤٩	٣٬٦٧٩-	٢٬٢٤٤-	٨٬٤-	.٠٠
Class Management	٥٬٢٦٩-	٢٬٩٨٧	.٥٨٦	٦٬٤٧٦-	٤٬٠٦٣-	٨٬٩-	.٠٠

To examine whether there is a significant statistical difference at $(a=٠٬٠٥)$ between the groups' mean scores and to test the assumption that the participants across the two observations are equivalent in term of the level of teaching competencies، t-test technique was conducted. Table ٢ presents the results of the t-test، showing the overall differences in the teaching competencies performances of the pre-TC and post -TC of the training group. These significant differences are in favor of the experimental group. Table ٢ also shows differences in the performance of the experimental group at pre and post-TC، and the differences are in favor of the post -TC.

From the previous results in table ٢، it is very obvious that the level of TC is significant at $(a=٠٬٠٥)$.It is less than.٠١.This means that the difference between pre teaching competencies and post teaching competencies of ASOL instructors at eTurn is statistically significant at $(a=٠٬٠٥)$ after PF-TASOL training program. Based on this result، PF-TASOL training program has changed the teaching competencies of ASOL instructors positively. The result is proved by the negative value of (t).

In short، after the completion of the PF-TASOL training program with the experimental group members، they have achieved their objectives of developing the teaching competencies. It is clear that the training program has developed the teaching competencies of eTurns' ASOL instructors. The analyses of the data of the post-observation for

the experimental group members support the results of the study.

Conclusion

The discussions of the qualitative and the quantitative results revealed the importance of in-service training programs، especially who adopt the workshop method aiming at enhancing the performance of the teachers and improving their teaching competencies in order to help them acquire the skills and the knowledge .This program keeps the instructors informed about the latest developments in the educational field of Arabic for Speakers of other Languages. It was also found that there are significant effects of the PF-TASOL training program based on teaching competencies on improving the teaching knowledge of ASOL teachers، performance، professional، and personal competencies of the experimental groups' instructors. These effects can be attributed to the content of the PF-TASOL training program. It included instructional experiments، activities، and instructional skills، which helped provide the instructors with the appropriate teaching competencies to develop their knowledge and performance. Furthermore، the PF-TASOL training program based on teaching competencies plays an important role in upgrading skills، knowledge، and performance of ASOL instructors to be more effective and active teachers.

The data presented here provide support that PF-TASOL training can increase the extent to which instructors adopt active learning skills as a strategy that maximizes students roles and minimizes teachers' role at ASOL lectures. Active learning strategy is known to be associated with students taking a deep approach to a greater extent، and hence to improved quality of student learning outcomes، and so this is an important finding. In addition، PF-TASOL training program can improve a number of aspects of instructors' teaching competencies. Without the support of training، changes may be insignificant or negative. Moreover، PF-TASOL training program can change instructors such that their students' improve their learning. Without the support of training no such positive change in student learning is evident. Whereas the positive impact of training is easy to understand، they sometimes negative impact of no training requires some explanation. On the training programs teaching was seen to be valued and the improvement of teaching encouraged. Innovation and change were supported and openly discussed. These and other forms of support and encouragement may well have contributed to the positive changes in the instructors' identified in this study.

In light of the findings of this study، the researcher recommends to use and support this program for a larger number of trainees in the universities and institutions . In addition، it is recommended that the Jordanian Universities adopt the PF-TASOL program as one of the successful development programs in teaching Arabic for speakers of other languages allover the world.

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Appendices

١ Appendix

Arabic Instructors Competencies' Tool

Information of Arabic Instructor

Name:

Major:

Course Code:

Subject:

Date:

Time\Start:

Time\Finish:

Number of Students:

Not at all well	Not very well	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Performance Indicators	Competencies
					Determines the level of the target learners	
					Defines the goals of the lesson	Lesson Preparation
					Determines the learners' preliminary consideration (previous knowledge)	
					Defines the students' expected learning skills	
					Expects learning problems	
					Determines strategies to solve the learning problems	
					Chooses teaching tools and technical aids that are suitable for the lesson.	
					Introduces the lesson in an appropriate way that motivates students to learn more.	
					Spends an appropriate time for the introduction.	Lesson Preparation
					Divides students into suitable groups.	
					Follows suitable teaching methods.	
					Uses appropriate worksheets.	
					Determines the required time of the lesson	

					Determines the required period of time to do assignments.	
					Defines the teacher's activities	
					Give students clear instructions before each assignment.	Teaching the lesson
					Encourages students to learn and do their activities by themselves.	
					Provides students with interesting experiences	
					Connects the lesson with learners` real life.	
					Puts learners into learning challenging situations .	
					Provides students with realistic problems and situations	
					Guides students to follow the steps and strategies of solving problems.	
					Asks clear questions	
					Enhances the distinguished answers and shows them to the learners to take their advantage.	A s k i n g Questions
					Gives students time to think about the answers.	
					Enhances learners` answers.	
					Uses the b.board effectively.	

					Uses lecture aids in an interesting way for the learners.	C o u r s e Materials
					Uses the right lecture aid for the lesson.	
					Uses the course book in an active way.	
					Makes learning process interesting and negotiates with students about meanings and ideas.	C l a s s Management
					Helps students to communicate.	
					Observes students` discussions and interferer to offer help.	
					Divides students into bilateral groups for discussion	
					Divides the roles between students in cooperative groups	
					Uses suitable communication skills with the students	