

A Comparative Analysis of the Pedagogical Challenges of Learning and Teaching English and Arabic Languages from the Perspective of Iranian High School Teachers: A Grounded Theory Study

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The aim of this qualitative paper is to comparatively and critically study the problems, deficiencies and limitations of teaching English and Arabic languages in Iranian high schools by means of grounded theory research. Data were collected through the structured and semi-structured interviews with five English high school teachers and seven Arabic high school teachers through the theoretical sampling procedure in the city of Sabzevar. Data analysis was conducted by the Maxqda software and was based on the Straus and Corbin's (1990) model comprising of open coding, axial coding and selective coding procedures. Consequently, two theoretical pathological models of teaching English and Arabic were proposed. In each of these models, the problems of learning Arabic and English languages were the core categories and the teachers, students and educational facilities were extracted as the axial codes. The results showed that, despite the differences between the two languages, some of the problems for teaching and learning both languages were common. Additionally, lack of educational facilities such as supplementary text books, language laboratories, and the limitation of the time devoted to teaching these languages were among the main concerns of teachers. From the psychological standpoint, the results were illustrative of both students and teachers' lack of motivation which was attributed to the socio-political and cultural aspects of the context in which they lived. It is worth mentioning that the lack of teachers' familiarity with the newest achievements in the field of teaching methodology including task-based teaching, communicative and functional approaches to teaching, and managing student-centered classes added to the undesirable pedagogical practices of both English and Arabic teachers. From a different perspective, many of the students remarked that they were not interested in learning Arabic because it was not applicative for their future academic and occupational purposes. In this respect, consistent effort is expected to be made to change the attitude of the students, as around 50 countries consider Arabic as their standard language. In this study, many educational implications have been

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discussed in relation to teachers, students, and curriculum developers. This study was novel due to the use of grounded research to conduct a pathological analysis of the learning and teaching procedures and has constructive implications for the wide range of practitioners within the field of teacher education.

Key words: Pedagogical Challenges, Arabic language, English language, Grounded Study.