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VIEWS OF EGYPTIAN STUDENTS ON THE USE OF ARABIC AS A MEDIATING LANGUAGE IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING TURKISH¹

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify Egyptian students' views on the effects of using Arabic as a mediating language in the process of learning Turkish on the four fundamental language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as well as on vocabulary learning. It also examines the effects of pedagogical translation methods implemented in foreign language departments at universities on the process of learning Turkish. Adopting a quantitative research design, the study was conducted through a questionnaire administered to 200 students enrolled in Turkish language departments at universities in Egypt. The findings revealed that the use of Arabic as a mediating language facilitates learning, particularly in reading and vocabulary instruction, by supporting the comprehension of abstract concepts and the understanding of grammatical rules. However, it was also found to result in significant limitations in listening, speaking, and writing skills. In addition, the pedagogical translation methods employed in translation courses were found to contribute positively to students' learning processes. In this respect, the study is among the relatively limited body of research that addresses the advantages and disadvantages of using a mediating language in foreign language teaching from a holistic perspective.

Keywords: Teaching Turkish as a foreign language in Egypt; mediating language; pedagogical translation method.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The language that should be used as the medium of instruction and communication in foreign/second language classrooms has been a subject of debate for many years (Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008). An examination of the historical development of foreign language teaching approaches reveals two main perspectives regarding the language of instruction and communication in language classrooms:

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monolingual and bilingual approaches. According to the bilingual approach, learners' first language has a positive role in the language learning process. Several teaching methods, including the Grammar-Translation Method, are based on this approach.

The monolingual approach, on the other hand, stands in contrast to the bilingual approach. According to this perspective, the use of learners' first language may negatively affect the foreign language learning process; therefore, the only language that should be used in the classroom is the target language. Numerous approaches and methods, such as the Communicative Language Teaching approach, support this view (Cook, 1999). This monolingual approach is based on the following principles: (i) "second language learning should model first language learning by maximizing exposure to input"; (ii) "successful learning requires the separation and distinction of the first language and the target language"; and (iii) "the importance of the target language should be demonstrated to learners through its continuous use" (Cook, as cited in Miles, 2004, p. 10). Accordingly, the use of a mediating language is considered inappropriate within this perspective.

A mediating language refers to any language other than the target language that is used by the teacher. This language is employed to facilitate the acquisition of target language skills. It is referred to as a "mediating language" because it functions as a bridge between the teacher and the learner, enabling students to understand what the teacher says and allowing the teacher to assess what students have learned (Rady, 2021, p. 97). Generally, the mediating language is either the learners' first language or, particularly in multilingual classrooms, a widely used international language such as English. From a theoretical perspective, there is no consensus regarding the use of a mediating language in the classroom. However, observations of classroom practices indicate that teachers frequently use a mediating language extensively as a medium of instruction and communication. This tendency becomes particularly evident in countries where the target language is not spoken as a foreign language.

Turnbull (2001) analyzed the functional units of the first language and the target language used by four French teachers in secondary school classrooms in Canada. The findings indicated that the use of the first language (English) ranged from 28% to 76% (see also Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Similarly, Kim and Elder (2005) examined the lessons of seven secondary school teachers teaching Japanese, German, French, and Korean in New Zealand. The proportion of first language use (English) was found to range from 12% to 77%. In South Korea, Liu et al. (2004) calculated the percentages of first-language (Korean) and target-language words used in the lessons of thirteen high school English teachers. The study reported that even in a "model lesson" designed to provide instruction entirely in the target language, the rate of first-language use ranged from 10% to as high as 90%. Although the overall average was calculated as 40%, the researchers suggested that, given the particular nature of the data, teachers may have consciously adjusted their own audio recordings. Therefore, they argued that the teachers' self-estimated rate of first-language use, which was 68%, might more reliably reflect their everyday classroom practices.

These and other studies support the conclusion reached by Macaro (1997, p. 96), who reviewed various studies on the use of the first language (L1) and the target language (TL) by secondary school teachers in the United Kingdom (UK). According to Macaro, except in classrooms comprising students with different first languages, the exclusive or near-exclusive use of the target language is rarely encountered in any learning context. A similar situation can also be observed in the teaching of

Turkish as a foreign language in Egypt. In particular, Arabic appears to be used extensively as a mediating language in four-year Turkish language departments at universities.

In its most recent update in 2020, the CEFR addressed the issue of mediating language use through the concept of “mediation.” In the 2001 CEFR, the Council of Europe initially suggested that mediation was partially synonymous with translation and interpreting. Oral mediation was associated with simultaneous interpreting (at conferences and meetings), consecutive interpreting (in speeches and guided tours), and informal interpreting (in social situations, such as translating texts among friends and family members). Written mediation, on the other hand, was associated with the translation of legal and scientific texts as well as literary translation. Although mediation was subsequently included as a communicative competence, it was not provided with descriptors to the same extent as other communicative activities, namely reception, interaction, and production.

The 2020 Companion Volume of the CEFR introduced a new perspective on the concept of “mediation” and expanded its definition. In the process of mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who builds bridges and facilitates the construction or communication of meaning. This process may occur either within the same language or from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). In its broadest sense, mediation can be defined as the facilitative role assumed by an individual to support and facilitate the communication process (Deniz et al., 2021). In light of these considerations, studies examining the effects of using a mediating language on the four fundamental language skills—speaking, writing, listening, and reading—in foreign language teaching contexts where the target language is not spoken appear to be limited. Based on this gap in the literature, the present study examines the functions of Arabic as a mediating language in language skills courses offered in Turkish language teaching departments at Egyptian universities and investigates its effects on the development of students’ language proficiency.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The question of which language should be used as the medium of instruction and communication in foreign language teaching has been debated for many years. Although official discourse advocates either the exclusive use of the target language or the appropriate use of a mediating language alongside the target language, classroom practices do not fully reflect this approach. Particularly in public institutions, the extensive use of a mediating language in foreign language teaching is notably observed.

Arabic is extensively used as a mediating language in Turkish language teaching departments at universities in Egypt. However, research examining the effects of this practice on language skills remains limited. This study aims to examine in depth the effects of using Arabic as a mediating language on students’ four fundamental language skills—speaking, listening, writing, and reading—as well as on vocabulary learning. Furthermore, within the context of “translation,” which constitutes one of the primary functions of a mediating language, the study aims to investigate the effects of pedagogical translation methods implemented in university foreign language departments on the process of learning Turkish through the use of Arabic as a mediating language. By identifying the advantages and limitations of using Arabic as a mediating language, the study also seeks to determine the difficulties and facilitators encountered by students during the process of learning Turkish.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study aims to closely examine the use of Arabic as a mediating language in Turkish language teaching departments at universities in Egypt. It investigates the functions Arabic performs in language skills courses where it is used as a mediating language and examines how this practice affects the development of students' language proficiency. Based on the findings, the study focuses on identifying the difficulties and facilitators encountered by students during the process of learning Turkish by revealing the advantages and limitations of this practice.

Accordingly, the study is expected to provide a clearer understanding of the effects of mediating language use on language learning, both within the context of teaching Turkish at universities in Egypt and in foreign language teaching more broadly. The findings are expected to contribute to improving the efficiency of Turkish language teaching at Egyptian universities and to offer recommendations for the conscious and effective use of a mediating language in foreign language teaching.

1.4. Research Question and Sub-questions

The use of a mediating language is a debated issue in both foreign language teaching in general and the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language, with differing perspectives expressed in the literature. Within this context, the main research question of the study is formulated as follows:

What are the effects of using Arabic as a mediating language on students learning Turkish at universities in Egypt?

Based on this main research question, the following sub-questions were developed:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Arabic as a mediating language in terms of speaking skills?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Arabic as a mediating language in terms of reading skills?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Arabic as a mediating language in terms of listening skills?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Arabic as a mediating language in terms of writing skills?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Arabic as a mediating language in terms of vocabulary instruction?
6. Do the advantages of pedagogical translation methods identified in the literature regarding the use of Arabic as a mediating language in Turkish language teaching positively affect students' language learning processes?

2. METHOD

This study employed a descriptive survey design to identify Egyptian students' views regarding the use of Arabic as a mediating language in the process of learning Turkish. The descriptive model (survey model) is a research approach that aims to describe a past or existing situation as it exists. In

this type of research, the phenomena and situations under investigation are examined in detail, and such studies are generally referred to as survey research (Erkuş, 2005).

Data were collected using a questionnaire. The study has a descriptive nature, and the collected data were analyzed quantitatively. In this respect, the study also incorporates characteristics of a relational survey design, as it examined whether significant differences existed among students' views.

2.1. Study Group

This study aims to examine the functions of Arabic as a mediating language in language skills courses offered in Turkish language departments at universities in Egypt and to investigate how this practice affects the development of students' language proficiency. A total of 200 students enrolled in the first, second, third, and fourth years of Turkish language departments at Egyptian universities voluntarily participated in the study during the 2024–2025 academic year. Since foreign language departments at Egyptian universities do not offer a preparatory year prior to undergraduate education, only undergraduate students were included in the scope of the study. The numerical distribution of the 200 participating students according to their year of study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants by Year of Study

Year of Study	n	%
First year	40	20.0
Second year	46	23.0
Third year	58	29.0
Fourth year	56	28.0
Total	200	100.0

As shown in Table 1, first-year students had the lowest level of participation, whereas third-year students constituted the largest proportion of the participants.

During the selection of participants, whether Arabic was used as a mediating language in students' Turkish learning processes was also taken into consideration. Accordingly, participants were asked a screening question at the beginning of the questionnaire to determine this situation. Specifically, participants were asked, "Is Arabic used as a mediating language in the process of learning Turkish at your university?" The findings obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Extent of Arabic Use as a Mediating Language in the Process of Teaching Turkish at Egyptian Universities

Frequency of Arabic Use	n	%
Yes, frequently	139	69.5

Yes, but to a limited extent	51	25.5
No, rarely	10	5.0
Total	200	100.0

According to Table 2, the majority of the participants (69.5%) reported that Arabic was used very frequently as a mediating language in the process of learning Turkish at their universities. While 25.5% of the participants stated that Arabic was used to a limited extent, only 5% reported that it was rarely used. These findings indicate that Arabic is extensively used as a mediating language in the institutions where the majority of the participating students receive their education.

Accordingly, most of the research participants study in an educational environment in which the process of learning Turkish is supported by Arabic. This situation may influence the formation of their perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of Arabic as a mediating language.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used as the data collection instrument in this study. The questionnaire items were developed in accordance with the purpose and sub-problems of the study. The development of the items was based on the effects of using Arabic as a mediating language in teaching Turkish on the four fundamental language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), vocabulary instruction, and the pedagogical translation method.

The first section included two demographic questions concerning the participants' year of study and whether Arabic was used as a mediating language in their Turkish learning processes at university. These questions were intended to provide a general overview of the participants' backgrounds and learning contexts.

The second section included statements designed to measure students' attitudes and views regarding the use of Arabic as a mediating language. The statements in this section were grouped under seven different categories, with each category containing either three or four statements, resulting in a total of 24 items. The items were evaluated using a four-point Likert-type scale. For each statement, participants selected one of the following responses: "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," or "Strongly disagree."

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study were collected from a total of 200 first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students enrolled in Turkish language departments at different universities in Egypt during the fall semester of the 2024–2025 academic year. The data collection process was conducted entirely online using a questionnaire prepared through Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed to students through various social media groups and student representatives.

The data collection process began on January 1, 2025, and was completed on February 1, 2025. During this approximately one-month period, responses were obtained from a total of 200 students on a voluntary basis. At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purpose

of the study, and it was clearly stated that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for scientific purposes.

The questionnaire consisted exclusively of closed-ended questions and was structured using a four-point Likert-type scale. This scale enabled participants' views to be quantified, thereby generating quantitative data. The collected data were analyzed using Jamovi software.

2.4. Reliability and Validity

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire used in the study, the opinions of two academics specializing in the teaching of Turkish as a foreign language were obtained after the questionnaire had been developed. Based on their recommendations, some items were simplified and clarified. In addition, before the administration of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of students to assess the comprehensibility of the items.

In the analysis conducted to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .85. This value indicates that the scale has a high level of reliability. The questionnaire items were structured consistently and clearly and were designed appropriately to measure the intended areas of language skills, including speaking, listening, and writing.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Findings Regarding the Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Arabic as a Mediating Language in Terms of Speaking Skills

The effects of using Arabic as a mediating language on speaking skills were evaluated through four items. Three of these items were considered disadvantages, whereas one was considered an advantage.

3.1.1. Findings Regarding the Item "When Speaking Turkish, It Takes Me Longer to Form Sentences and Think Because I Think According to Arabic Logic"

The grammatical structure, sentence structure, and patterns of thought in Arabic differ from those in Turkish. When students attempt to apply the logic of Arabic to the language they are learning, their thinking process may become longer and more complex.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Agreement by Year of Study Regarding the Effect of Arabic Thinking Habits on Turkish Sentence Formation

Year of Study	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First year	35.0%	57.5%	7.5%	0.0%
Second year	28.3%	56.5%	10.9%	4.3%
Third year	34.5%	36.2%	27.6%	1.7%
Fourth year	41.1%	35.7%	19.6%	3.6%

Total	35.0%	45.0%	17.5%	2.5%
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As shown in Table 3, 92.5% of first-year students (“Strongly Agree” + “Agree”) reported agreement with the statement. Similarly, a high proportion of second-year students (84.8%) agreed with the statement. However, these rates decreased to 70.7% and 76.8% among third- and fourth-year students, respectively. When the overall data were considered, 80% of students across all year levels selected either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.”

3.1.2. Findings Regarding the Item “When Speaking, I Constantly Translate Mentally From Arabic Into Turkish; My Thoughts Are First Formed in Arabic and Then Translated Into Turkish”

Understanding and speaking through mental translation are natural components of language learning. Particularly at beginning levels, individuals generally formulate their thoughts first in their native language and then transfer them into the target language. As the learned linguistic patterns gradually become internalized, the need for translation decreases and language production becomes more automatic. However, excessive use of Arabic as a mediating language during the instructional process may slow down this process of internalization.

Table 4. Distribution of the Tendency to Mentally Translate From Arabic Into Turkish by Year of Study

Year of Study	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First year	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Second year	39.1%	45.7%	13.0%	2.2%
Third year	41.4%	37.9%	20.7%	0.0%
Fourth year	39.3%	42.9%	17.9%	0.0%
Total	41.0%	43.0%	15.5%	0.5%

As shown in Table 4, 90% of first-year students, based on the combined percentages of the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses, reported engaging in mental translation while speaking. Similarly, 84.8% of second-year students, 79.3% of third-year students, and 82.2% of fourth-year students indicated agreement with the statement. When the overall data were considered, 84% of students across all year levels selected either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.”

3.1.3. Findings Regarding the Item “The Use of Arabic as a Mediating Language in the Classroom Helps Me Use Cognate Words With Similar Meanings in Both Languages and Remember Words I Have Forgotten While Speaking Turkish”

The use of Arabic as a mediating language in the classroom may help students remember words they have forgotten while speaking Turkish, particularly by drawing on cognate words whose meanings overlap in Arabic and Turkish. For example, when a student cannot recall the Turkish verb *dayanmak* (“to endure”) during a conversation, the Arabic expression التحمل (*al-tahammul*) may help the student retrieve and produce the Turkish expression *tahammül etmek* (“to endure”). Such instances can contribute to helping students fill lexical gaps while communicating.

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Agreement by Year of Study Regarding the Effect of Using Arabic as a Mediating Language on Remembering Cognate Words

Year of Study	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First year	40.0%	45.0%	15.0%	0.0%
Second year	39.1%	41.3%	17.4%	2.2%
Third year	39.7%	44.8%	12.1%	3.4%
Fourth year	37.5%	42.9%	17.9%	1.8%
Total	39.0%	43.5%	15.5%	2.0%

As shown in Table 5, the percentages of students who agreed with the statement were 85.0%, 80.4%, 84.5%, and 80.4% among first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students, respectively. When the overall data were considered, 82.5% of students across all year levels selected either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” These findings indicate that drawing on cognate words with overlapping meanings may make a meaningful contribution to students’ ability to recall vocabulary, particularly during the early stages of the learning process.

3.1.4 Findings Related to the Statement: “The Use of Cognates with Different Meanings in the Two Languages May Lead to Misunderstandings in My Speech”

The use of Arabic as an intermediary language in the classroom may lead to misunderstandings in students’ speech, particularly when words that are pronounced similarly in Arabic and Turkish have different meanings. For example, while the word *cinsiyet* in Turkish refers to an individual's status as female or male, the corresponding term in Arabic is commonly used to refer to “nationality.”

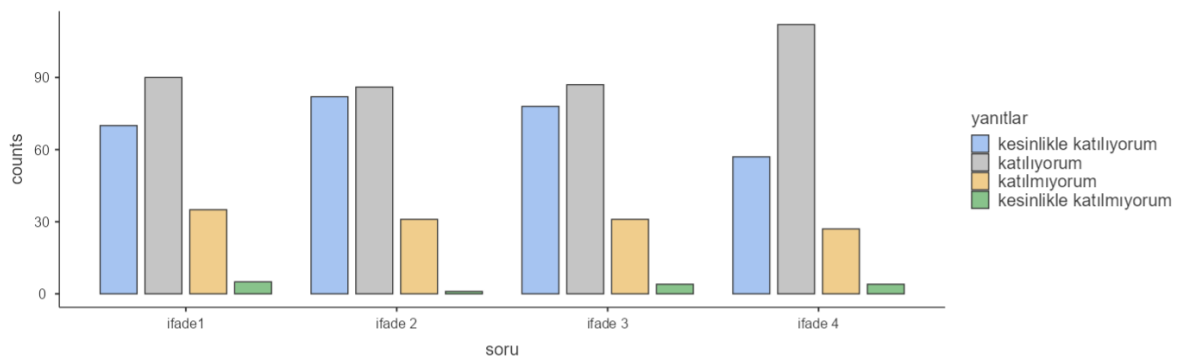
Table 6. Participation Rates by Grade Level Regarding the Risk of Misunderstandings Caused by the Use of Cognates with Different Meanings in Speech

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	32.5%	52.5%	15.0%	0.0%
Second-year	23.9%	63.0%	10.9%	2.2%

Third-year	34.5%	51.7%	12.1%	1.7%
Fourth-year	23.2%	57.1%	16.1%	3.6%
Total	28.5%	56.0%	13.5%	2.0%

As shown in Table 6, the proportions of students who agreed with the statement (“Strongly Agree” and “Agree” combined) were 85.0%, 86.9%, 86.2%, and 80.3% among first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students, respectively. When the overall data were considered, 84.5% of students across all grade levels selected either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” These findings indicate that cognates with different meanings in Arabic and Turkish may cause misunderstandings in students’ communication.

Figure 1. The figure illustrates the distribution of students’ responses to the four statements concerning the use of Arabic as an intermediary language in relation to speaking skills.



3.2 Findings Regarding the Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Arabic as an Intermediary Language for Reading Skills

The effects of using Arabic as an intermediary language on reading skills were evaluated through four items. Three of these items were classified as advantages, whereas one was classified as a disadvantage.

3.2.1 Findings Related to the Statement: “When Reading Turkish Texts, I Tend to Transfer the Phonetic Characteristics of Arabic Letters to Turkish Words”

In Turkish, the letter ğ (soft g) represents a soft sound and generally functions as a transitional element between vowels. It is natural for learners, particularly at the initial stages of language learning, to transfer the phonetic characteristics of their first language to the target language. However, the intensive use of Arabic as an intermediary language in the classroom may prevent students from becoming sufficiently familiar with the distinctive phonetic features of Turkish. This situation may consequently lead students to transfer the phonetic characteristics of their native language to Turkish words during reading.

For example, the Turkish letter ğ is a soft transitional sound that generally occurs between vowels. In contrast, the Arabic letter ġ (*ghayn*) represents a relatively strong and distinct consonantal sound. Consequently, students may frequently pronounce the Turkish letter ğ as if it were the Arabic sound ġ.

Table 7. Participation Rates Regarding the Tendency to Transfer the Phonetic Characteristics of Arabic Letters to the Process of Reading Turkish

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1st year	40.0%	22.5%	5.0%	32.5%
2nd year	28.3%	10.9%	23.9%	37.0%
3rd year	25.0%	17.9%	17.9%	39.3%
4th year	32.8%	10.3%	20.7%	36.2%
Total	15.0%	31.0%	36.5%	17.5%

As shown in Table 7, the rates of agreement with the statement among first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students were 62.5%, 39.2%, 42.9%, and 43.1%, respectively. These findings indicate that the use of Arabic as an intermediary language increases the tendency, particularly among first-year students, to transfer the phonetic characteristics of their first language to Turkish words; however, this effect appears to decrease as students progress to higher grade levels. When the overall data were considered, the total agreement rate across all grade levels was found to be 46%. Since a considerable proportion of the students did not agree with this statement, this situation was not regarded as having a substantial negative effect.

3.2.2 Findings Regarding the Statement: “Explaining Turkish Reading Texts Sentence by Sentence and Word by Word in Arabic Helps Me Understand the Text as a Whole”

Explaining the entire text in Arabic helps students understand the main idea of the text more easily and may prevent them from making errors of interpretation based solely on guesswork.

Table 8. Participation Rates Regarding the Effect of Explaining Turkish Texts in Arabic on Understanding the Overall Meaning

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1st year	45.7%	43.5%	8.7%	2.2%
2nd year	40.0%	30.0%	27.5%	2.5%
3rd year	24.1%	51.7%	19.0%	5.2%
4th year	39.3%	35.7%	23.2%	1.8%
Total	36.5%	41.0%	19.5%	3.0%

As shown in Table 8, the combined agreement rate (“Strongly Agree” and “Agree”) was 89.2% among first-year students, 70.0% among second-year students, 75.8% among third-year students, and 75.0% among fourth-year students. When the overall data were evaluated, the total agreement rate across all

grade levels was found to be 77.5%. These rates indicate that a large proportion of the students benefited positively from the use of Arabic as an explanatory tool.

3.2.3 Findings Regarding the Statement: “Explaining the Reading Text Sentence by Sentence and Word by Word in Arabic Helps Me Improve My Knowledge of Turkish Syntax”

Explaining a reading text in Arabic, sentence by sentence and word by word, may help students improve their knowledge of Turkish syntax. This practice enables them to better understand the order of words and linguistic structures in the text. It also contributes to their awareness of how the syntactic structure of Turkish differs from that of other languages.

Table 9. Participation Rates Regarding the Contribution of Explaining Reading Texts in Arabic to Knowledge of Turkish Syntax

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1st year	40.0%	47.5%	10.0%	2.5%
2nd year	50.0%	37.0%	10.9%	2.2%
3rd year	25.9%	58.6%	13.8%	1.7%
4th year	46.4%	32.1%	21.4%	0.0%
Total	40.0%	44.0%	14.5%	1.5%

As shown in Table 9, the combined agreement rate (“Strongly Agree” and “Agree”) was 87.5% among first-year students, 87.0% among second-year students, 84.5% among third-year students, and 78.5% among fourth-year students. When the overall data were evaluated, the total agreement rate across all grade levels was found to be 84.0%.

3.2.4 Findings Regarding the Statement: “Explaining the Reading Text Sentence by Sentence and Word by Word in Arabic Improves My Ability to Understand the Meanings of Words Used in Different Contexts”

Explaining a reading text in Arabic, sentence by sentence and word by word, may contribute to improving students’ ability to understand the meanings of words used in different contexts. In particular, explaining polysemous words according to their contexts of use may help students recognize the boundaries of word meanings more clearly.

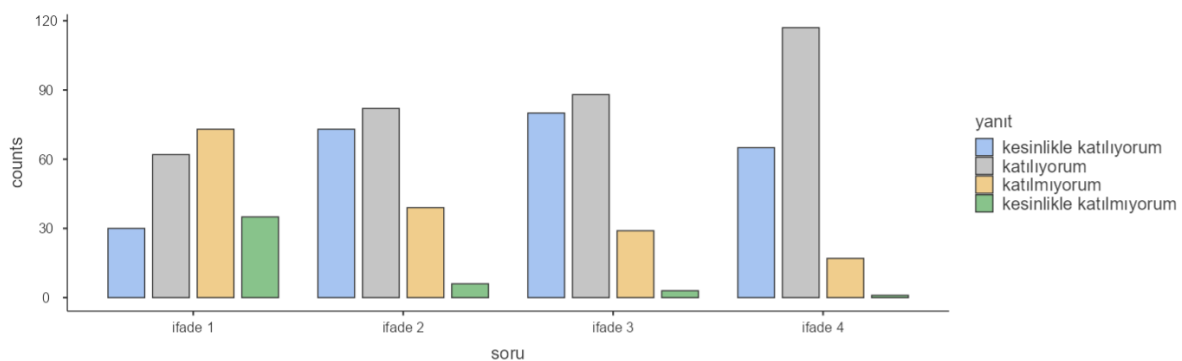
For example, the Turkish word *baş* may acquire different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. In the sentence *Başım ağrıyor* (“My head hurts”), the word *baş* refers to the “head,” whereas in the expression *O, bu şirketin başıdır* (“He/She is the head of this company”), *baş* refers to a “leader” or “manager.” Presenting such examples with explanations in Arabic may facilitate students’ ability to infer meaning by taking contextual factors into account.

Table 10. Participation Rates Regarding the Effect of Arabic Explanations on the Ability to Understand Word Meanings in Different Contexts

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1st year	30.0%	62.5%	7.5%	0.0%
2nd year	39.1%	54.3%	6.5%	0.0%
3rd year	25.9%	62.1%	10.3%	1.7%
4th year	35.7%	55.4%	8.9%	0.0%
Total	32.5%	58.5%	8.5%	0.5%

As shown in Table 10, the combined agreement rate (“Strongly Agree” and “Agree”) was 92.5% among first-year students, 93.4% among second-year students, 88.0% among third-year students, and 91.1% among fourth-year students. When the overall data were evaluated, the total agreement rate across all grade levels was found to be 91.0%. These findings indicate that explaining reading texts in Arabic also makes a significant contribution to students’ understanding of the contextual meanings of polysemous words.

Figure 2. The figure illustrates the distribution of students’ responses to the four statements concerning the use of Arabic as an intermediary language in relation to reading skills.



3.3 Findings on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Arabic as an Intermediary Language in Relation to Listening Skills

The effect of using Arabic as an intermediary language on listening skills was evaluated through three items. All three items were classified as disadvantages.

3.3.1 Findings Related to the Statement “Using Arabic in Classes Prevents the Creation of a Turkish-Language Environment Around Me and Prevents My Ears From Becoming Familiar With the Sounds of the Language”

The use of Arabic as an intermediary language results in students being exposed to Turkish to a lesser extent, making it more difficult for them to become accustomed to the structure and melody of the language. At the same time, insufficient exposure to the natural use of Turkish may lead to slower development of listening skills.

Table 11. Participation Rates Regarding the Effects of Using Arabic on Exposure to a Turkish-Language Environment and Familiarity With Turkish Sounds

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	57.5%	32.5%	10.0%	0.0%
Second Year	54.3%	21.7%	23.9%	0.0%
Third Year	53.4%	25.9%	20.7%	0.0%
Fourth Year	53.6%	26.8%	19.6%	0.0%
Total	54.5%	26.5%	19.0%	0.0%

As shown in Table 11, the combined agreement rate (“Strongly Agree” and “Agree”) was 90% among first-year students, 76% among second-year students, 79.3% among third-year students, and 80.4% among fourth-year students. When the overall data were considered, the total agreement rate across all grade levels was found to be 81%. In light of these findings, the use of Arabic as an intermediary language in the classroom appears to hinder the creation of a Turkish-language environment for students, which may negatively affect the development of their listening skills.

3.3.2 Findings Related to the Statement “When Listening to a Simple Text, I Have Difficulty Distinguishing Words Even if I Have Studied Them Before”

The intensive use of Arabic as an intermediary language in the classroom may result in insufficient emphasis on the rhythm and pronunciation of Turkish words. Consequently, students may experience difficulty distinguishing even previously learned words while listening.

Table 12. Participation Rates Regarding the Effects of Using Arabic in Classes on Distinguishing Words While Listening to Simple Texts

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	10.0%	52.5%	35.0%	2.5%
Second Year	23.9%	39.1%	30.4%	6.5%
Third Year	23.2%	39.3%	32.1%	5.4%
Fourth Year	15.5%	34.5%	43.1%	6.9%
Total	18.5%	40.5%	35.5%	5.5%

As shown in Table 12, fourth-year students had the lowest agreement rate (50%) compared with the other grade levels. In contrast, 62.5% of first-year students, 63% of second-year students, and 62.5% of third-year students indicated their agreement with the statement by selecting “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” When the overall data were considered, the total agreement rate across all grade levels was found to be 59%.

3.3.3 Findings Related to the Statement “When Listening to a Turkish Text, I Focus on Understanding Each Word Individually, and When I Get Stuck on One Word, I Stop Listening to the Rest of the Text”

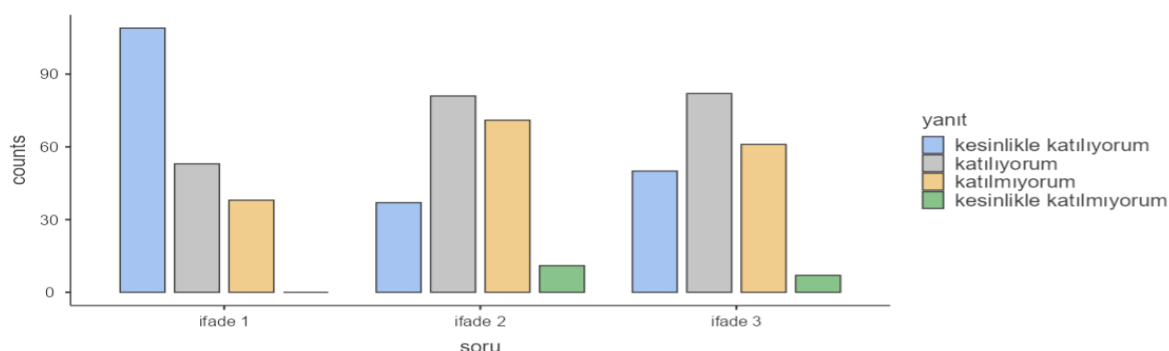
The intensive use of Arabic as an intermediary language in the classroom may lead students to attempt to translate every word and sentence into Arabic while listening, thereby delaying their comprehension of the main idea of the text. This situation may cause students to focus on individual words rather than grasping the overall meaning and to lose track of the remainder of the text when they encounter an unfamiliar word.

Table 13. Participation Rates Regarding the Effects of Using Arabic in Classes on Focusing on Understanding Each Word and Following the Overall Meaning of a Text During Listening

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	30.0%	52.5%	17.5%	0.0%
Second Year	32.6%	32.6%	26.1%	8.7%
Third Year	21.4%	42.9%	33.9%	1.8%
Fourth Year	19.0%	37.9%	39.7%	3.4%
Total	40.0%	44.0%	14.5%	1.5%

As shown in Table 13, 82.5% of first-year students indicated substantial agreement with the statement by selecting “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” The corresponding rates were 65.2% among second-year students and 64.3% among third-year students. The lowest agreement rate was observed among fourth-year students, at 56.9%. When the overall data were considered, the total agreement rate across all grade levels was reported as 84%.

Figure 3. The figure illustrates the distribution of students’ responses to the statements concerning the use of Arabic as an intermediary language in relation to listening skills.



3.4 Findings on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Arabic as an Intermediary Language in Relation to Writing Skills

The effects of using Arabic as an intermediary language on writing skills were evaluated through three items.

3.4.1 Findings Related to the Statement “When Writing, I Notice That I Think in Arabic and Translate Sentences From Arabic Into Turkish Before Writing Them”

In foreign language learning, particularly at the beginner level, it is generally considered a natural process for students to mentally translate from their first language into the target language while writing. However, the intensive use of Arabic as an intermediary language may cause this mental translation process to occur more frequently. This situation may lead students to first construct sentences mentally in Arabic and subsequently translate them into Turkish during the writing process.

Table 14. Participation Rates Regarding the Tendency to Think in Arabic and Translate From Arabic Into Turkish While Writing

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	32.5%	55.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Second Year	26.1%	60.9%	10.9%	2.2%
Third Year	30.4%	53.6%	16.1%	0.0%
Fourth Year	32.8%	48.3%	13.8%	5.2%
Total	30.5%	54.0%	13.5%	2.0%

As shown in Table 14, 87.5% of first-year students indicated their agreement with the statement by selecting “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” Similarly, 87% of second-year students, 84% of third-year students, and 81.1% of fourth-year students agreed with the statement. When the overall data were considered, the agreement rate across all grade levels was reported as 84.5%.

3.4.2 Findings Related to the Statement “My Writing Process Slows Down Because I Mentally Translate From Arabic Into Turkish”

The intensive use of Arabic as an intermediary language may lead students to first construct sentences mentally in Arabic and subsequently translate them into Turkish during the writing process. This process may, in turn, slow down students’ writing performance.

Table 15. Participation Rates Regarding the Effects of Translating From Arabic Into Turkish on the Writing Process

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	32.5%	57.5%	7.5%	2.5%
Second Year	35.7%	53.6%	10.7%	0.0%

Third Year	36.2%	46.6%	15.5%	1.7%
Fourth Year	26.1%	54.3%	17.4%	2.2%
Total	33.0%	52.5%	13.0%	1.5%

As shown in Table 15, 90% of first-year students indicated their agreement with the statement by selecting “Strongly Agree” or “Agree.” The corresponding rates were 89.3% among second-year students, 82.8% among third-year students, and 80.4% among fourth-year students. When the overall data were considered, the agreement rate across all grade levels was found to be 85.5%.

3.4.3 Findings Related to the Statement “I Have Difficulty Writing Clear and Grammatically Correct Sentences Because I Mentally Translate From Arabic Into Turkish”

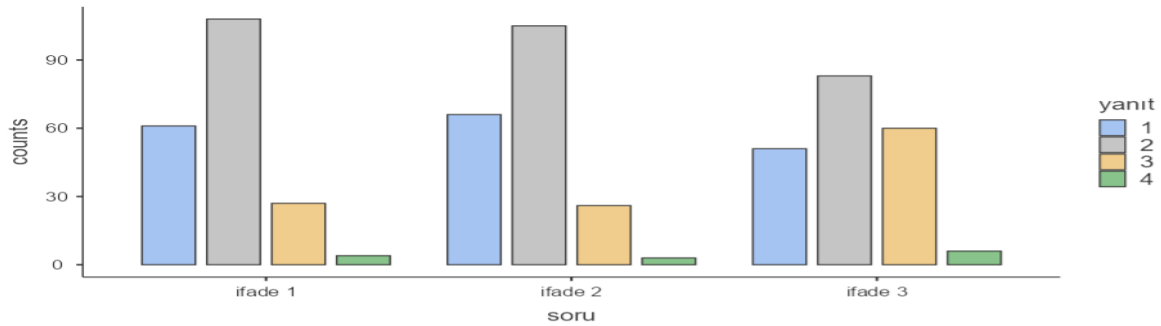
The intensive use of Arabic as an intermediary language may lead students to first construct sentences mentally in Arabic and subsequently translate them into Turkish during the writing process. This situation may result in disruptions to semantic coherence and grammatical accuracy in students’ written productions.

Table 16. Participation Rates Regarding the Effects of Translating From Arabic Into Turkish on Difficulties in Sentence Construction

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	35.7%	44.6%	19.6%	0.0%
Second Year	25.0%	50.0%	22.5%	2.5%
Third Year	19.0%	37.9%	36.2%	6.9%
Fourth Year	21.7%	34.8%	41.3%	2.2%
Total	25.5%	41.5%	30.0%	3.0%

As shown in Table 16, the agreement rates among first- and second-year students were 80.3% and 75.3%, respectively, whereas the corresponding rates among third- and fourth-year students were 56.9% and 56.5%. These findings indicate that first- and second-year students, in particular, experience greater difficulty in producing clear and meaningful sentences during the writing process, which may be associated with the intensive use of Arabic as an intermediary language in the classroom. When the overall data were considered, the agreement rate across all grade levels was found to be 67%.

Figure 4. The figure illustrates the distribution of students’ responses to the statements concerning the use of Arabic as an intermediary language in relation to writing skills.



3.5 Findings on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Arabic as a Mediating Language in Terms of Vocabulary Instruction

The effect of using Arabic as a mediating language on vocabulary instruction was evaluated based on four items.

3.5.1 Findings Related to the Statement, “When the Meanings of Turkish Words in Texts Are Explained in Arabic, These Words Remain in My Memory for a Long Time”

Using Arabic as a mediating language in vocabulary instruction helps students associate newly learned words with words they already know in their native language. Such mental associations facilitate the transfer of words into long-term memory. However, unless students use these words in their daily lives, the words do not become part of their active vocabulary and remain in their passive vocabulary.

Table 17. Rates of Agreement Regarding the Effect of Arabic Explanations on the Retention of Turkish Words in Memory

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	17.5%	72.5%	10.0%	0.0%
Second Year	30.4%	55.4%	14.3%	0.0%
Third Year	28.3%	54.3%	17.4%	0.0%
Fourth Year	27.6%	46.6%	24.1%	1.7%
Total	26.5%	56.0%	17.0%	0.5%

As shown in Table 17, 90% of first-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses), 85.8% of second-year students, 82.6% of third-year students, and 74.2% of fourth-year students indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 82.5%.

3.5.2 Findings Related to the Statement, “Knowing the Arabic Equivalents of Idioms and Proverbs Helps Me Memorize and Remember Them Better”

Using Arabic as a mediating language in vocabulary instruction helps students retain the words they learn more permanently in their minds. Particularly in the teaching of idioms and proverbs, providing their Arabic equivalents facilitates students’ memorization processes and contributes to their ability to

remember these expressions. For example, the Turkish proverb “*Ne ekersen onu biçersin*” (“You reap what you sow”) corresponds to the Arabic expression “من زرع حصد”.

Table 18. Rates of Agreement by Grade Level Regarding the Effect of Knowing the Arabic Equivalents of Idioms and Proverbs on Memorization and Retention

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	45.7%	52.2%	2.2%	0.0%
Second Year	42.9%	53.6%	1.8%	1.8%
Third Year	43.1%	50.0%	5.2%	1.7%
Fourth Year	37.5%	52.5%	10.0%	0.0%
Total	42.5%	52.0%	4.5%	1.0%

As shown in Table 18, 97.9% of first-year students, 96.5% of second-year students, 93.1% of third-year students, and 90% of fourth-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses) indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 94.5%.

3.5.3 Findings Related to the Statement, “Knowing the Arabic Equivalents of False Friends That Are Similar in Spelling but Different in Meaning Makes Them Easier for Me to Learn”

Knowing the Arabic equivalents of false friends that are similar in form but different in meaning can facilitate the learning of such words. Providing their Arabic equivalents may help students both understand the correct meanings of these words and avoid possible semantic confusion and language errors. For example, while the Turkish word *nar* refers to a fruit, it means “fire” in Arabic. Explaining such examples helps ensure that words are used correctly within their appropriate contexts.

Table 19. Rates of Agreement Regarding the Effect of Knowing the Arabic Equivalents of False Friends on Learning

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	35.0%	57.5%	7.5%	0.0%
Second Year	37.0%	47.8%	15.2%	0.0%
Third Year	39.3%	39.3%	21.4%	0.0%
Fourth Year	36.2%	39.7%	22.4%	1.7%
Total	37.0%	45.0%	17.5%	0.5%

As shown in Table 19, 92.5% of first-year students, 84.8% of second-year students, 78.6% of third-year students, and 75.9% of fourth-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree*

responses) indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 82%.

3.5.4 Findings Related to the Statement, “Knowing the Arabic Meanings of Words Helps Me Understand Them More Easily and Reduces Errors Caused by Guessing”

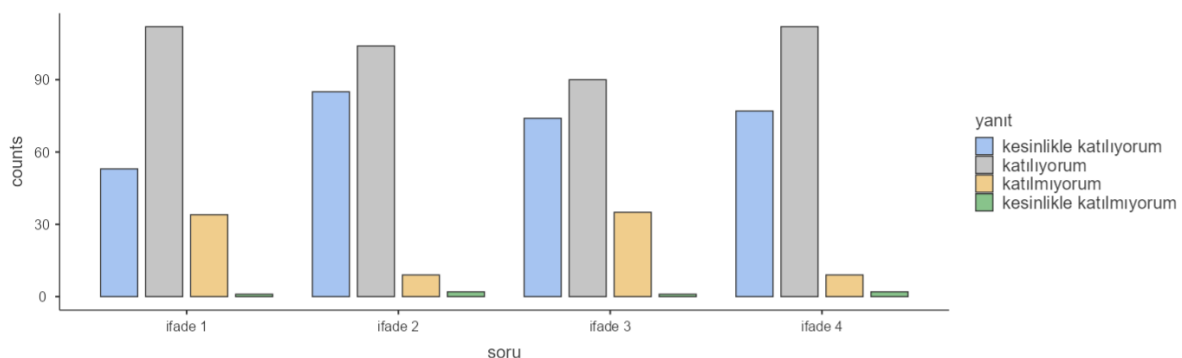
Knowing the Arabic meanings of words helps students understand them more easily and reduces errors resulting from guesswork. Explaining the Arabic equivalents of words in the classroom largely prevents students from developing misconceptions about their meanings.

Table 20. Rates of Agreement Regarding the Effect of Knowing the Arabic Meanings of Words on Facilitating Comprehension and Reducing Errors Caused by Guessing

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	39.3%	60.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Second Year	45.7%	45.7%	8.7%	0.0%
Third Year	37.9%	56.9%	3.4%	1.7%
Fourth Year	30.0%	60.0%	7.5%	2.5%
Total	38.5%	56.0%	4.5%	4.5%

As shown in Table 20, 100% of first-year students, 91.4% of second-year students, 94.8% of third-year students, and 90.0% of fourth-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses) indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 94.5%.

Figure 5. The graph illustrates the distribution of students’ responses to four statements regarding the use of Arabic as a mediating language in vocabulary instruction.



3.6 Findings on Whether the Advantages of Pedagogical Translation Methods Reported in the Literature Regarding the Use of Arabic as a Mediating Language in Turkish Language Teaching Positively Affect Students’ Language Learning Processes

This section of the questionnaire examines the effects of pedagogical translation methods used in foreign language departments at universities on the process of learning Turkish, within the context of

“translation,” which is one of the most important functions of a mediating language. Within this framework, the advantages of four types of pedagogical translation methods—word-for-word, semantic, communicative, and simultaneous translation—will be evaluated. The study will examine whether these four pedagogical translation methods have a positive effect on the process of learning Turkish.

3.6.1 Findings Related to the Statement, “Using the Word-for-Word Translation Method in a Text Helps Me Understand the Meanings of Words and How They Are Used in a Sentence”

The purpose of the word-for-word pedagogical translation method is to focus on each component of the language. In this way, students can develop a better understanding of how the language functions and of the basic meaning of each word within its context.

Table 21. Rates of Agreement Regarding the Effect of the Word-for-Word Translation Method on Understanding Word Meanings and Usage

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	30.4%	52.2%	17.4%	0.0%
Second Year	32.1%	42.9%	21.4%	3.6%
Third Year	19.0%	51.7%	24.1%	5.2%
Fourth Year	17.5%	50.0%	30.0%	2.5%
Total	25.0%	49.0%	23.0%	3.0%

As shown in Table 21, 82.6% of first-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses), 75.0% of second-year students, 70.7% of third-year students, and 67.5% of fourth-year students indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 74%.

3.6.2 Findings Related to the Statement, “According to the Semantic Translation Method, Translating Sentences in a Way That Resembles the Grammatical Structure of the Original Text Improves My Knowledge of Grammar”

Semantic pedagogical translation is carried out with reference to the deep structure of language, and its purpose is to achieve semantic equivalence. During this process, students become aware of the structural differences between their native language and the target language and have an opportunity to reflect on these differences. For example, the Arabic expression “هو ابن أبيه” (“He is his father’s son”) can be translated into Turkish as “O, babasının oğludur” (“He is his father’s son”) according to the semantic translation method. In this example, both the grammatical structure and the meaning are preserved as closely as possible.

Table 22. Rates of Agreement Regarding the Effect of Structurally Translating Sentences Through the Semantic Translation Method on Grammar Development

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	35.7%	55.4%	8.9%	8.9%
Second Year	37.0%	54.3%	6.5%	2.2%
Third Year	27.6%	58.6%	13.8%	0.0%
Fourth Year	27.5%	60.0%	7.5%	5.0%
Total	32.0%	57.0%	9.5%	1.5%

As shown in Table 22, 91.1% of first-year students, 91.3% of second-year students, 86.2% of third-year students, and 87.5% of fourth-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses) indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 89%.

3.6.3 Findings Related to the Statement, “According to the Communicative Translation Method, Reshaping and Translating a Text Using Everyday Language Expressions Helps Me Express Sentences More Effectively in Daily Language”

Rather than focusing on word-for-word translation activities, the communicative translation method aims to teach students how to reformulate the source text in a manner appropriate to everyday language. In this way, students develop an awareness of the functional use of language. For example, the expression “هو ابن أبيه” (“He is his father’s son”) can be translated according to the communicative translation method as “He takes after his father” or “He is a chip off the old block.” In this case, the grammatical structure of the original sentence is not preserved; however, its meaning is conveyed through expressions that are more natural and closer to everyday language.

Table 23. Rates of Agreement Regarding the Effect of the Communicative Translation Method on Constructing Effective Sentences in Everyday Language

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	25.0%	67.5%	7.5%	0.0%
Second Year	22.4%	67.2%	8.6%	1.7%
Third Year	30.4%	52.2%	15.2%	2.2%
Fourth Year	19.6%	60.7%	17.9%	1.8%
Total	24.0%	62.0%	12.5%	1.5%

As shown in Table 23, 92.5% of first-year students, 89.6% of second-year students, 82.6% of third-year students, and 80.3% of fourth-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses) indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 86%.

3.6.4 Findings Related to the Statement, “According to the Simultaneous Translation Method, Watching or Listening to a Film Clip and Immediately Translating It into Arabic Enhances My Ability to Express Myself Between the Two Languages and Improves My Listening and Speaking Skills”

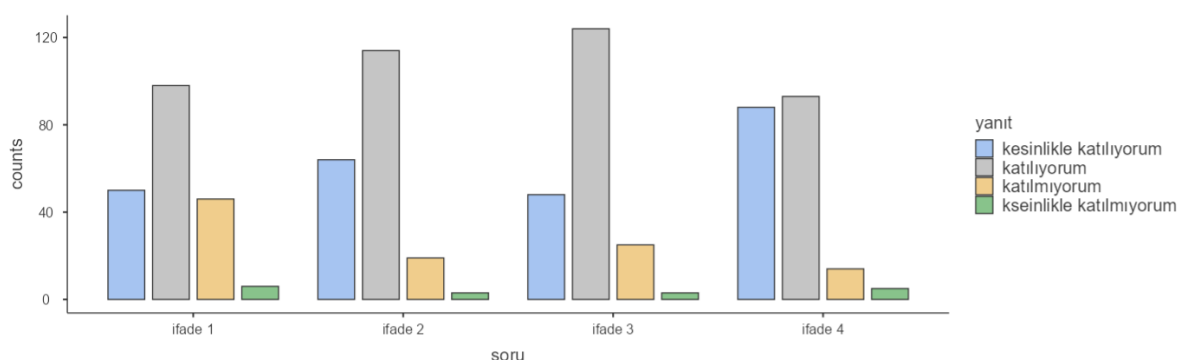
Simultaneous translation is considered a form of communicative translation and can be implemented in classroom settings. Simultaneous translation activities may be carried out through practices such as film subtitling, dubbing, or oral interpretation. Such activities contribute to the development of students’ ability to interpret messages across different languages, improve their listening skills, and enhance their capacity to think in both the target language and their native language.

Table 24. Rates of Agreement Regarding the Effect of the Simultaneous Translation Method on Expressive Ability and Listening and Speaking Skills

Grade Level	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First Year	37.5%	52.5%	5.0%	5.0%
Second Year	43.5%	45.7%	10.9%	0.0%
Third Year	46.6%	41.4%	8.6%	3.4%
Fourth Year	46.4%	48.2%	3.6%	1.8%
Total	44.0%	46.5%	7.0%	2.5%

As shown in Table 24, 90.0% of first-year students, 89.2% of second-year students, 88.0% of third-year students, and 94.6% of fourth-year students (the combined total of the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses) indicated that they agreed with the statement. When the overall data were evaluated, the total rate of agreement among students across all grade levels was found to be 90.5%.

Figure 6. The graph illustrates the distribution of students’ views regarding the effects of pedagogical translation methods on the language learning process.



4. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that the use of Arabic as a mediating language affects students' development of the four fundamental language skills—speaking, listening, writing, and reading—as well as their vocabulary learning processes in various ways.

The data obtained indicate that students studying in Turkish language departments at universities in Egypt experience both positive contributions and certain limitations related to the use of Arabic in the classroom.

In addition, students' views regarding the role of pedagogical translation methods in the process of learning Turkish were analyzed, and the role of Arabic as a mediating language in this process was identified.

In this context, the main conclusions reached in the study are presented below.

Speaking Skills

(Disadvantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language causes students to process their thoughts according to the logic of Arabic when speaking Turkish, which prolongs the process of constructing sentences and expressing themselves. Eighty percent of the participants reported experiencing this situation as a problem during speaking.

(Disadvantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language increases students' tendency to mentally translate from Arabic into Turkish while speaking. This situation negatively affects fluency during oral communication. Eighty-four percent of the participants reported experiencing this as a problem.

(Advantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language in the classroom facilitates the recall of cognates, particularly words with overlapping meanings in both languages. This helps students remember Turkish words they have forgotten during speaking by drawing on their Arabic equivalents. For example, a student who cannot recall the Turkish verb *dayanmak* (“to endure”) may use the Turkish expression *tahammül etmek* correctly by drawing on the Arabic word *تحمل* (*al-tahammul*). A total of 82.5% of the participants considered this situation an advantage in terms of speaking skills.

(Disadvantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language in the classroom may lead to misunderstandings, particularly regarding cognates that have different meanings in the two languages. For example, while the Turkish word *cinsiyet* refers to an individual's sex or gender, it is generally used to mean “nationality” in Arabic. Similarly, while the Turkish word *memleket* means “the place where a person was born and raised,” it means “kingdom” in Arabic. A total of 84.5% of the participants identified this situation as a problem they encountered during the speaking process.

Reading Skills

(Disadvantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language in the classroom increases students' tendency to transfer the phonetic characteristics of Arabic letters to Turkish words while reading Turkish texts. For example, some students reported pronouncing the Turkish letter *Ğ* with the sound of the Arabic letter *ġ* (*ghayn*) and the Turkish letter *P* with the sound of the Arabic letter *ب* (*b*). However, 46% of the participants did not consider this situation a problem during reading. Therefore,

this issue is not regarded as a widespread disadvantage associated with the use of Arabic as a mediating language.

(Advantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language in the classroom helps students grasp the overall meaning of Turkish reading texts more easily through sentence-by-sentence and word-by-word explanations in Arabic. Eighty-four percent of the participants considered this situation a significant advantage in terms of reading skills.

(Advantage) The use of Arabic as a mediating language contributes to the development of students' knowledge of Turkish syntax through explanations of reading texts in Arabic. A total of 77.5% of the participants stated that this method improved their understanding of Turkish sentence structure and enhanced their ability to read accurately.

(Advantage) Providing detailed explanations of reading texts in Arabic helps students understand the meanings of words used in different contexts more easily. For example, while the Turkish word *baş* means a physical body part in the sentence "*Başım ağrıyor*" ("My head hurts"), it means "leader" or "manager" in the sentence "*O, bu şirketin başıdır*" ("He/She is the head of this company"). Presenting such contextual differences through Arabic explanations improves students' ability to infer meaning from context. Ninety-one percent of the participants considered this situation a significant advantage in terms of reading skills.

Listening Skills

(Disadvantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language prevents the creation of a Turkish-language environment around students and limits their exposure to the sounds of Turkish. Eighty-one percent of the participants reported experiencing this situation as a problem.

(Disadvantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language causes students to have difficulty recognizing words they have previously studied while listening. Fifty-nine percent of the participants reported experiencing this difficulty, whereas 41% stated that they did not experience such a problem. Therefore, the prevalence of this problem varies according to grade level, and the problem decreases as students progress to higher grade levels.

(Disadvantage) The intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language causes students to focus on understanding each word individually while listening to a Turkish text. When they encounter a word they do not understand, they may stop listening to the remainder of the text. Sixty-six percent of the participants reported experiencing this situation.

Writing Skills

(Disadvantage) The use of Arabic as a mediating language causes students to think in Arabic while writing and increases their tendency to translate from Arabic into Turkish before writing sentences. A total of 84.5% of the participants reported experiencing this situation.

(Disadvantage) The use of Arabic as a mediating language increases students' tendency to mentally translate from Arabic into Turkish, which slows down the writing process. A total of 85.5% of the participants reported experiencing this difficulty.

(Disadvantage) Because the use of Arabic as a mediating language increases students' tendency to engage in constant mental translation, it may cause difficulties in writing clear and well-formed sentences. Sixty-four percent of the participants reported experiencing this situation as a problem.

Vocabulary Instruction

(Advantage) Explaining the meanings of Turkish words in Arabic within texts facilitates students' ability to retain these words in their long-term memory. A total of 82.5% of the participants considered this method advantageous in terms of vocabulary instruction. The use of Arabic as a mediating language allows students to associate newly learned words with their equivalents in their native language. However, unless students use these words in their daily lives, the words do not become part of their active vocabulary and remain in their passive vocabulary.

(Advantage) Knowing the Arabic equivalents of idioms and proverbs facilitates students' memorization of such expressions and helps them remember them more effectively. For example, the Turkish proverb "*Ne ekersen, onu biçersin*" ("You reap what you sow") corresponds to the Arabic expression "*من زرع حصد*". A total of 94.5% of the participants considered this method advantageous.

(Advantage) Explaining the Arabic equivalents of false friends that are similar in spelling but different in meaning helps students both understand their correct meanings and avoid possible semantic confusion and language errors. For example, while the Turkish word *nar* refers to a fruit, it means "fire" in Arabic. Explaining such examples helps ensure that words are used correctly within their appropriate contexts. A total of 82% of the participants considered this situation an advantage.

(Advantage) Explaining the Arabic equivalents of words in the classroom largely prevents students from developing misconceptions about their meanings. A total of 94.5% of the participants considered this situation a significant advantage in terms of vocabulary instruction.

Pedagogical Translation Methods

Word-for-Word Translation Method: Using the word-for-word translation method in a text helps students better understand both the meanings of words and how these words are used within sentences. Seventy-four percent of the participants stated that this method facilitates their understanding of the structure of the language and the basic meaning of each word within its context.

Semantic Translation Method: According to the semantic translation method, translating sentences in a way that resembles the grammatical structure of the original text increases students' grammatical awareness. Eighty-nine percent of the participants stated that this method helps them recognize the structural differences between their native language and the target language and provides them with an opportunity to reflect on these differences. For example, the expression "*هو ابن أبيه*" ("He is his father's son") is translated as "*O, babasının oğludur*" ("He is his father's son") according to the semantic translation method.

Communicative Translation Method: In the communicative translation method, the text is restructured and translated using expressions appropriate to everyday language. This approach helps students express sentences more effectively and naturally in everyday communication. Eighty-six percent of the participants stated that this method improves their ability to reformulate the source text in a manner appropriate to everyday language. For example, the expression "*هو ابن أبيه*" ("He is his father's son") can be translated according to the communicative translation method as "*O tıpkı*

babasına çekmiş” or “*Hık demiş, babasının burnundan düşmüş,*” both of which convey the meaning “He takes after his father” or “He is a chip off the old block.”

Simultaneous Translation Method: According to the simultaneous translation method, students watch a film clip or listen to an audio text and translate it immediately into Arabic. This method enhances students’ ability to express themselves between the two languages and improves their listening and speaking skills. Simultaneous translation can be implemented through activities such as film subtitling, dubbing, or oral interpretation. A total of 90.5% of the participants stated that such activities make significant contributions to their ability to interpret messages across different languages, their listening abilities, and their capacity to think in both the target language and their native language.

Based on the findings presented above, the intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language generally has a negative effect on speaking skills. Students’ tendency to think according to the logic of Arabic leads them to engage in constant mental translation from Arabic into Turkish and to use words with different meanings incorrectly. However, this situation also has an exceptional advantage. During speaking, students may recall cognates with similar meanings and reproduce a Turkish verb they have forgotten by drawing on its Arabic equivalent. For example, a student who cannot recall the Turkish verb *dayanmak* (“to endure”) may produce the correct Turkish expression *tahammül etmek* by drawing on the Arabic word *تحمل* (*tahammul*).

In terms of reading, the intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language generally has a positive effect on reading skills. Providing detailed explanations of texts in Arabic during reading helps students understand the text as a whole, develop their knowledge of syntax, and more easily comprehend words used in different contexts. However, this practice also has a disadvantage. Frequent exposure to Arabic in the classroom makes students more likely to transfer the phonetic characteristics of Arabic letters to Turkish while reading.

In terms of listening, the intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language negatively affects listening skills. This situation prevents students from creating a Turkish-language environment around themselves, makes it difficult for them to recognize words they have previously learned while listening, and causes them to focus on analyzing the meaning of each individual word rather than concentrating on the overall meaning of the text.

In terms of writing, the intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language negatively affects writing skills. This situation increases students’ tendency to mentally translate from Arabic into Turkish before writing. As the process of mental translation increases, students experience greater difficulty constructing clear sentences, and the writing process becomes more time-consuming.

In terms of vocabulary instruction, the intensive use of Arabic as a mediating language positively affects students’ vocabulary learning processes. Learning Turkish words and idiomatic expressions together with their Arabic equivalents within a text enables students to retain these expressions more effectively and helps prevent semantic confusion.

Pedagogical methods used in translation courses, such as word-for-word translation, communicative translation, semantic translation, and simultaneous translation, contribute positively to students’ Turkish language learning processes.

4.2 Discussion

This study is one of the few studies to examine, in a holistic manner, the effects of using Arabic as a mediating language on the four fundamental language skills and vocabulary instruction in Turkish language teaching. It also investigates the effects of pedagogical translation methods used in university foreign language departments on the process of learning Turkish. The absence of a comprehensive study in the existing literature that evaluates the use of any language as a mediating language across all these dimensions demonstrates that the present study makes a significant contribution to the field. Accordingly, the findings obtained were discussed in light of similar studies in the literature.

Different perspectives exist in the literature regarding the use of a mediating language in foreign language teaching. In this context, one study examining the influence of the native language on students' foreign language learning process, titled *Overusing Mother Tongue in English Language Teaching* (Ahmed, 2017), suggests that the native language can play both supportive and inhibiting roles. According to the study, excessive use of a mediating language gradually becomes a habit, thereby preventing learners from orienting themselves toward the target language. This finding is consistent with the results of the present study, which showed that students frequently resorted to Arabic during speaking and writing and, consequently, experienced difficulties producing language in the target language.

Another inhibiting factor is that the intensive use of the native language may lead to transfer errors. This situation causes students to construct sentences incorrectly and produce semantically inappropriate expressions because they tend to write by mentally translating from Arabic into Turkish. This finding was also emphasized in Özçakmak's (2019) study. According to Özçakmak, semantic shifts in cognates negatively affect students' language learning processes.

Furthermore, excessive use of the native language may prevent learners from receiving sufficient exposure to the target language. In this context, monolingual approaches advocate the exclusive use of the target language and, based on the principle of comprehensible input, argue that the use of the native language disrupts the learning process (Krashen, 1985; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). Similarly, the findings of the present study revealed that, due to insufficient exposure to the target language, students attempted to construct meaning through direct Arabic equivalents while listening and tended to stop listening to the rest of a text when they encountered a word they did not understand.

Nevertheless, the balanced and conscious use of the native language also provides several advantages. As noted in Ahmed's (2017) study, providing examples in the native language while explaining grammatical structures may help students overcome conceptual difficulties. In addition, explaining word meanings through direct translation can facilitate the learning process and eliminate ambiguity, particularly for beginning-level learners. Similarly, the present study found that students understood abstract concepts better through Arabic explanations and reinforced these concepts mentally.

Another study addressing the use of a mediating language in the foreign language learning process is El-Khuli's (2020) study, titled *The Effect of the Native Language in Foreign Language Teaching: The Case of Arabic*. This study examined the extent and frequency with which the native language should be used in classes where Arabic is taught as a foreign language. The negative aspects identified included reduced mastery of the target language, difficulty thinking according to the logic of the target language, students' continued reliance on translation, and their inability to use the target language actively. These findings are consistent with the data obtained in the present study, which indicated that

students' command of the target language decreased because of their tendency to engage in mental translation during speaking and writing.

El-Khuli's (2020) study also identified several positive aspects of using the native language. These advantages included facilitating the understanding of complex topics, saving time, allowing students to make comparisons with their own language, facilitating translation, and providing particular benefits in grammar instruction. These findings are also consistent with the results of the present study, in which students stated that they learned structures and concepts explained through Arabic more easily.

Similarly, the study titled *The Use of the Mother Tongue in Teaching French as a Foreign Language* (Lado, 2015) suggests that the native language functions as a type of mediator in the learning process. According to the study, the native language facilitates learning, makes complex concepts more comprehensible, and increases motivation, particularly for learners with lower levels of language proficiency. Similarly, the present study found that first- and second-year students reported needing Arabic explanations when working with reading texts.

On the other hand, Lado's (2015) study also emphasized that the continuous and dominant use of the native language may hinder the acquisition of lexical and syntactic structures of the target language and lead to the fossilization of errors. However, this finding does not fully correspond with the results of the present study. In the current research, students stated that explaining lexical and structural knowledge through their Arabic equivalents contributed to more effective learning of these structures.

In the study conducted by Dursun et al. (2020), titled *Developing and Implementing Activities Through Arabic-Turkish Cognates in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners: The Case of Egypt*, an activity-based approach to teaching cognates was found to have a positive effect on student achievement. In this study, the experimental groups demonstrated significantly greater success, particularly in terms of writing skills. Similarly, the present study revealed findings indicating that Arabic plays a supportive role in helping students recall cognates during the writing process.

In conclusion, the findings of the study demonstrate that the use of a mediating language—in this case, Arabic—has both advantages and limitations. In light of these findings, the following recommendations can be made:

The use of a mediating language may be balanced and implemented consciously. Rather than completely prohibiting Arabic, its limited and purposeful use may be recommended, particularly for beginning-level students, in ways that reduce cognitive load and clarify meaning.

The use of a mediating language in speaking classes may be minimized, while students' ability to think in Turkish may be supported. To prevent students from relying on mental translation, speaking activities may emphasize frequent repetition, formulaic expressions, role-playing, and exercises based on everyday conversational dialogues. Students' tendency to transfer words directly from Arabic may thus be reduced.

In reading comprehension classes, particularly when dealing with abstract and complex content, explaining texts in Arabic facilitates comprehension and is considered advantageous by students. However, following such explanations, productive activities may be incorporated to encourage students to think in Turkish and reinforce what they have learned. Within this framework, greater emphasis may be placed on activities such as summarizing texts.

Grammar instruction may be integrated with reading passages. By focusing on grammatical structures encountered in the texts students read, learning can take place within context while also reinforcing students' understanding and use of these structures.

To improve listening skills, the use of Turkish audio materials may be increased, while Arabic explanations may be kept to a minimum. The listening process may be supported through activities such as vocabulary preparation, note-taking, and discussions of the content.

In writing classes, creative and structured activities that reduce reliance on direct translation may be incorporated. The writing process may be supported through techniques such as visual materials, brainstorming, planning guides, and sentence-completion activities that encourage students to think in Turkish.

Pedagogical translation methods should be used primarily in translation-focused courses. In courses designed primarily for communicative purposes, translation techniques based on the use of a mediating language should be avoided.

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