

THE IMPORTANCE OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY FOR LANGUAGE EXPLORATION, EXPERIMENTATION, AND DEVELOPMENT AMONG STUDENTS IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY DIPLOMA FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS AT KSU

Djemai Mahmoud Boulaares¹ 

¹ Professor of Applied Linguistics Department of Language Preparation for Non-Native Speakers of Arabic. College of Languages, King Saud University. KSA
dboulaares@ksu.edu.sa

Abstract: This study explores the impact of outdoor education as an innovative approach to enhancing Arabic language skills among non-native speakers enrolled in the Arabic Language Proficiency Diploma program at King Saud University. By extending learning beyond the traditional classroom, outdoor education immerses students in real-world contexts, fostering cultural engagement and facilitating practical language use. This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the benefits of outdoor education, its practical applications, and the challenges it may present. The effectiveness of this approach was assessed using a structured methodology. The findings reveal that outdoor education significantly improves linguistic fluency, cultural competence, and vocabulary acquisition, providing a valuable alternative to conventional language instruction.

Keywords: *Arabic language learning; cultural competency; experiential learning; language fluency; outdoor education; non-native speakers*

How to cite the article :

Boulaares , D.M. (2025). The Importance Of Outdoor Education As A Strategy For Language Exploration, Experimentation, And Development Among Students In The Arabic Language Proficiency Diploma For Non-Native Speakers At KSU. *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS)*8(2), 209-233.

¹ Corresponding author : Djemai Mahmoud Boulaares ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4292-517X>

1. Introduction

Outdoor education enhances traditional learning by fostering experiential engagement in natural and community settings. It promotes language acquisition and cultural understanding, particularly for non-native Arabic speakers in higher education (Prince, 2021).

1.1 The Importance of Outdoor Education

Outdoor education combines cognitive, physical, and emotional engagement, offering students benefits such as enhanced social skills, problem-solving abilities, environmental awareness, and motivation (Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 4). For non-native Arabic learners, it fosters linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding through real-world language practice and exposure to cultural nuances (Beames et al., 2012, p. 89). These immersive experiences bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and practical application.

1.2 A Historical Overview of Outdoor Education

Outdoor education has roots in early societies where survival depended on hands-on skills like hunting and navigating the environment. The modern concept emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, shaped by reformers like John Dewey, who stressed active, experiential learning through real-world contexts (Dewey, 1986, p. 46). Kurt Hahn expanded this vision with programs like Outward Bound, promoting resilience, teamwork, and leadership through engagement with nature (Hahn, 1957, p. 12). These ideas underpin contemporary outdoor education, fostering confidence, self-discipline, and empathy while supporting personal and social growth (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000, p. 85).

1.3 The Modern Evolution of Outdoor Education:

Outdoor education gained recognition in the late 20th century for its cognitive, emotional, and social benefits (Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 23; Ernst & Tornabene, 2012, p. 45). Research shows that it fosters environmental responsibility and pro-environmental behaviours, promoting sustainability (Pickering, 2018, p. 134). Recent approaches integrate place-based education, which connects learning to local culture and geography, making it practical for language acquisition and cultural understanding, particularly for non-native Arabic speakers (Gruenewald & Smith, 2014, p. 78). Additionally, it enhances resilience, critical thinking, and adaptability, aiding learners in navigating linguistic and cultural challenges (Nicol et al., 2013, p. 92).

1.4 Contemporary Relevance of Outdoor Education:

Outdoor education is a progressive teaching approach that is efficient in language and cultural studies. It enhances linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding through authentic experiences. Arabic language programs employing outdoor activities significantly improve language skills and cultural awareness by exposing learners to real-life contexts and native speakers, fostering a deeper understanding of societal norms (Maristany, n.d).

Research highlights its role in promoting cultural immersion and authentic communication, making it a valuable addition to university language programs. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, equipping non-native Arabic learners with cultural competence and adaptability to diverse social settings (Maristany, n.d). This experiential approach nurtures global citizenship and prepares learners for complex real-world environments.

Research Objectives

This study explores the effectiveness of outdoor education in enhancing language acquisition and cultural understanding among non-native Arabic speakers. By promoting

experiential, real-world learning, outdoor education enables students to actively practice Arabic in authentic social and cultural settings, encouraging interactions with native speakers and fostering practical language engagement. Additionally, the study evaluates its broader impact, including the development of soft skills such as adaptability, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication, which are vital for navigating Arabic-speaking societies.

The research objectives focus on the following key areas:

2. **Assessing Language Proficiency:** Using outdoor educational activities to measure fluency, vocabulary usage, and listening comprehension.
3. **Evaluating Cultural Competence:** Exploring how outdoor education enhances understanding cultural norms and situational language use in Arabic-speaking environments.
4. **Identifying Pedagogical Benefits:** Investigating how outdoor education supports student engagement, language practice independence, and communication confidence.
5. **Examining Challenges and Solutions:** Identifying barriers non-native learners face in outdoor contexts and developing strategies to enhance Arabic language acquisition.

Research Questions

The text outlines five research questions aimed at studying outdoor education's impact on the language development of non-native Arabic speakers.

1. It explores how outdoor learning environments enhance language skills, such as vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation, through spontaneous interactions.
2. It identifies challenges in implementing outdoor education, including language barriers, cultural differences, and logistical issues, aiming to propose solutions.
3. It examines the benefits of outdoor education for improving linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness among non-native Arabic speakers.
4. It evaluates how outdoor education helps develop essential soft skills like empathy and adaptability, which are crucial for effective communication and cultural adaptation.
5. It assesses how outdoor experiences boost students' confidence and independence in using Arabic in real-world situations.

The study focuses on how outdoor education can aid non-native Arabic speakers in achieving linguistic and cultural proficiency. It emphasises integrating outdoor learning within language programs to cultivate competent communicators who engage meaningfully with Arabic-speaking communities. Key research questions include:

1. The impact of outdoor learning environments on vocabulary, conversational fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation through spontaneous interactions.
2. The challenges non-native learners face in outdoor settings, such as language barriers and cultural differences, and the identification of practical solutions.
3. The advantages of outdoor education are that it enhances linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding.
4. The development of critical interpersonal skills like empathy and adaptability in non-native speakers through outdoor experiences.
5. The promotion of self-confidence and autonomy in language use, enabling real-world communication without classroom reliance.

Overall, the research highlights the multifaceted benefits of outdoor learning for language acquisition and provides evidence-based recommendations for optimising this educational approach.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Background

This paper emphasises the need for practical, hands-on learning in language acquisition using constructivist theories of Piaget and Inhelder and Vygotsky's theory of social interaction. Constructivism holds that students build knowledge by interacting with their environment, improving language acquisition by tying fresh ideas to real-world events (Piaget & Inhelder, 2008). Outdoor learning offers immersive events meant to inspire this active participation. With an eye on the social elements of learning—particularly the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where students advance by interactions with peers or native speakers—Vygotsky's theory emphasises that Outdoor education helps to develop advanced language and cultural abilities, therefore facilitating this social learning process. These ideas, taken together, support outdoor education as a practical way to promote language acquisition through real-world encounters.

2.2 Literature Review

Recent studies suggest that immersive, experiencing settings may greatly enhance linguistic abilities and cultural knowledge, highlighting outdoor education's great impact on language learning. Outdoor environments, for instance, improve language retention and adaptation, confirming Piaget, Inhelder, and Vygotsky's beliefs on the need for real-world settings for cognitive engagement. Ross et al. (2014) also discovered that outdoor learning settings support improved vocabulary development, fluency, and cultural competency, supporting the idea that place-based learning reinforces emotional and cognitive links to the surroundings. Through distinctive, non-traditional settings, Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) have observed that outdoor education increases drive, confidence, and communication abilities. For understanding pragmatic language skills and cultural norms, Maristany (n.d.) also underlined the need for cultural immersion—where pupils interact with language within its social and cultural settings.

Moreover, lately, studies have looked at integrating virtual reality (VR) in language instruction to provide immersive experiences reflecting the advantages of outdoor learning. Hussein's (2024) research on VR's impact on non-native speakers' Arabic language learning found that by providing interactive, context-rich experiences, VR environments may improve linguistic performance and academic motivation, thereby boosting. This suggests that modern technology may complement conventional outdoor education programs by offering other means of experiential learning.

Furthermore, interactive teaching of foreign languages is acknowledged as an effective strategy in line with experiential learning ideas. Research indicates that emphasising real-life communication scenarios and active engagement might result in favourable language development. This supports the view that enhancing language learning outcomes depends on physical and virtual immersion settings.

These studies underline the many benefits of immersive learning approaches in language acquisition. Establishing actual, context-rich situations through outdoor education, virtual reality, or interactive teaching strategies enables students to reach higher degrees of linguistic competency and cultural awareness, improving the complete language learning process.

2.3 Application of Theoretical Framework in Outdoor Education:

Combining Vygotsky's social interaction theory with Piaget and Inhelder's constructivist ideas provides a strong basis for comprehending how outdoor education supports language development. Outdoor settings provide engaging, real-world situations where students actively use new language skills, therefore enhancing learning and retention in line with constructivism. According to Vygotsky's theory, cooperative learning is emphasised; outdoor environments provide rich social interactions, especially within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), therefore promoting language development. This theoretical integration emphasises the special possibilities of outdoor education to supplement conventional approaches and increase proficiency, cultural competency, and communication skills by means of enhancement of language acquisition.

2.3.1 Previous Studies

Research on outdoor education has greatly broadened over recent years, including many disciplines and highlighting its many social, cognitive, and instructional advantages. Studies underline more and more how immersive, context-rich events could improve foreign language learning. This study investigates the general influence of outdoor education and specifically its part in foreign language teaching, stressing effective applications and necessary field-based insights.

A- Broad Benefits and Cognitive Impacts of Outdoor Education:

Studies on outdoor education find notable intellectual advantages like more involvement and information retention. The meta-analysis by Down et al. (2024, p. 23) validates that outdoor settings improve intellectual and emotional ties to objects. This aligns with Piaget and Inhelder's constructivist theory (2008, p. 17), which holds that contextual, active learning helps to build knowledge. Mostly helping language learners to maintain concentration, Berman and Davis-Berman (2009, p. 56) discovered that outdoor education enhances attention, lowers stress, and helps cognitive function. Kaplan & Kaplan (1989, p. 102) underlined how natural environments help to create sensory and experienced links, therefore improving memory and language retention.

B- Outdoor Education and Foreign Language Acquisition:

Recent studies highlight for non-native speakers in foreign language acquisition the value of outdoor education. Linking these gains to the dynamic, real-life interactions characteristic of outdoor environments, Myhre and Fiskum (2020, p. 45) showed that outdoor activities greatly enhanced conversational fluency and vocabulary retention among English language learners in Israel. This underlines learning via social contact in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978). Sol (2004, p. 71) showed that by integrating classroom learning with real-world cultural settings, place-based education promotes language acquisition and cultural knowledge, therefore supporting this. By exposing students to natural language obstacles in varied settings, Natalini (2024, p. 103) also showed that outdoor education improved Italian language skills, especially vocabulary, listening, and conversational ability. These studies show how outdoor learning could help foster active, flexible language usage outside the classroom.

C - Evaluating the Successes and Challenges of Outdoor Language Learning:

Outdoor education helps with language acquisition, yet problems still exist. While outdoor environments increased enthusiasm and confidence among Korean students studying English, Norling and Sandrg (2015, p. 103) found that practical concerns like weather, limited resources, and public speaking fear created challenges. For individuals who are reluctant to

speak in front of others, gradual exposure was especially advised to boost pupil confidence. Reviewing the research, Ross et al. (2014, p. 150) underlined that good outdoor language programs rely on teacher experience in controlling activities and fostering reflection. They underlined that in unstructured outdoor environments, good teacher training guarantees the best learning results.

D - Essential Lessons and Directions for Future Research:

Studies repeatedly show that outdoor education is a useful method for learning languages as it provides immersive, real-world settings that enable more profound cultural and linguistic knowledge than conventional classrooms. By involving students in real-world situations and hence increasing language use's relevance and holistic nature, such environments improve language learning. This immersion especially helps adult and advanced students. To manage the process, nonetheless, effective implementation calls for organised preparation, overcoming logistical difficulties, and qualified teachers (Norling & Sandrg, 2015, p. 102; Ross et al., 2014, p. 148). Long-term consequences of outdoor education on intercultural competency and fluency should be investigated in further studies.

3. Benefits of Outdoor Education for Arabic Language Learners

Outdoor education enhances Arabic language learning by offering a vibrant environment that supports vocabulary expansion, fluency improvement, and cultural understanding. It promotes active participation in real-world contexts, which is crucial for language proficiency. The key benefits highlighted include vocabulary acquisition, fluency development, and cultural competency.

3.1 Vocabulary and Contextual Learning

Outdoor education enhances vocabulary acquisition by immersing learners in real-life contexts, unlike traditional classrooms where vocabulary is often isolated. This approach helps Arabic learners grasp vocabulary nuances and apply words effectively in social settings. Nation's (2001, p. 64) research emphasises that vocabulary acquisition is more effective when connected to real-life experiences. Activities like market visits or cultural festivals enable learners to practice relevant vocabulary, reinforcing its use in context (Schmitt, 2000, p. 27). Additionally, outdoor education promotes active language use through discussions, role-playing, and public speaking, aiding in retention and the ability to navigate the diglossic nature of Arabic (Bassiouney, 2020, p. 112).

3.2 Fluency Development

Outdoor education enhances fluency among Arabic learners by offering real-world opportunities for spontaneous language use. Unlike controlled classroom settings, outdoor activities like guided tours, language games, and conversations with native speakers help students practice quick and appropriate responses, reducing anxiety and boosting confidence. Schneiderman and Desmarais (1988) suggest that learners who are more confident and less afraid of making mistakes develop greater fluency. Additionally, outdoor education encourages adaptability in speech, helping learners switch between formal and colloquial Arabic, which is essential for proficiency (Krashen, 1982). These real-world experiences support language acquisition through comprehensible input.

3.4 Cultural Competency

Outdoor education enhances language skills and significantly contributes to cultural competency, which is essential for mastering Arabic or any foreign language. Immersion in cultural environments—such as festivals, community events, and historical sites—provides insights into local customs, traditions, and social practices, enriching learners' understanding

of Arabic and its cultural context (Lahlali, 2020). Outdoor activities expose learners to Arabic's diglossic nature, allowing them to engage with various dialects and boosting communication skills and cultural awareness. Cultural immersion also increases motivation, as students interacting with native speakers tend to be more motivated to improve their language skills (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2019). Ultimately, outdoor education facilitates vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and cultural competence through real-world learning.

4. Practical Applications of Outdoor Education

Outdoor education enhances language acquisition for Arabic learners by emphasising real-world interaction and contextual learning. It promotes experiential learning through activities that reinforce language skills, foster cultural understanding, and build confidence in communication. Key applications include community engagement, language games, and public speaking workshops, contributing significantly to language development.

4.1. Types of Activities

The effectiveness of outdoor education comes from its ability to provide dynamic, real-life situations for language practice. Through thoughtfully designed activities, students can engage with their surroundings and apply their language skills in authentic contexts. These activities extend within the traditional classroom environment and allow learners to experience language use in ways that engage cognitive and social learning processes.

4.2. Community Engagement

Community engagement effectively integrates outdoor education into language learning through visits to local markets, cultural landmarks, museums, and festivals, immersing students in Arabic within its natural context. These interactions with native speakers bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical language use, enhancing vocabulary and cultural understanding. For example, engaging in transactional language at a traditional Arabic market helps students learn commerce-related vocabulary while observing culturally rich conversations. Research by Baker (2011) supports this, emphasising how such activities provide practical language application, deepening students' cultural and linguistic competence.

4.3. Language Games

Language games, such as "Arabic Treasure Hunts" and role-playing, are highly effective in outdoor education, engaging students in fun, interactive learning. These activities reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure in context. For instance, "Arabic Treasure Hunts" involve students solving riddles in Arabic to locate items, enhancing their vocabulary and comprehension skills. At the same time, role-playing simulates real-world situations like ordering food or asking for directions, improving conversational skills and cultural understanding. Such games create a low-pressure environment, encouraging active participation and language experimentation, which research shows boosts engagement and motivation (Nunan, 1999), thereby supporting language acquisition.

4.4. Workshops and Public Speaking

Public speaking and workshop-based activities significantly enhance Arabic learners' fluency and confidence. These interactive outdoor experiences, such as group debates and presentations, offer students opportunities to practice speaking in real-world contexts. Public speaking workshops, in particular, address the common fear of speaking in a foreign language by helping students improve pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. They also foster a more authentic speaking style, focusing on the appropriate use of formal and informal language, tone, and body language. According to Cook (2016), such workshops enhance learners'

understanding of linguistic structures and socio-cultural aspects of language. Integrating these activities, community engagement, and language games support vocabulary acquisition, cultural competence, and overall language proficiency.

5. Challenges and Limitations

Outdoor education offers various benefits for Arabic language learners but challenges logistical issues, varying language proficiency levels among students, and environmental factors. Addressing these challenges is important to integrate outdoor education as a teaching strategy effectively. This section highlights the key difficulties and potential solutions to overcome them.

5.1. Logistical Constraints

The text discusses the logistical challenges of implementing outdoor education, highlighting key concerns such as:

- a. **Transportation:** Arranging transport for students can be time-consuming and costly, with risks of delays affecting the learning experience.
- b. **Scheduling:** Coordinating outdoor activities with academic schedules and environmental conditions can be difficult, as teachers must balance outdoor learning with other commitments.
- c. **Location Selection:** It is critical to choose suitable venues. They must have the necessary resources and support learning objectives. Public spaces may present distractions or inadequate facilities.
- d. **Student Safety:** Ensuring the safety of students in outdoor environments requires careful planning, supervision, emergency protocols, and accessible first-aid resources.

Effective management of these logistical aspects is essential for a successful outdoor education experience.

5.2. Diverse Language Proficiency Levels

Outdoor education faces challenges due to varying language proficiency levels among students, which can hinder communication and effectiveness. Students with lower proficiency may struggle with real-world language, particularly when encountering dialects different from classroom language. This gap can undermine confidence and participation in outdoor activities. Educators should implement strategies such as differentiated activities, scaffolding, and peer support to address these issues. Additional support, including pre-teaching vocabulary and clarifying interactions, is essential to tailor the learning experience and ensure all students benefit from outdoor education.

5.3. Environmental Factors

The text highlights the challenges of outdoor education, focusing on environmental factors such as weather conditions, noise pollution, and overcrowding. It emphasises the need for teachers to have contingency plans and alternative activities for inclement weather while ensuring students are comfortable with appropriate clothing. The impact of high noise levels on learning necessitates choosing quieter locations. Despite these challenges, outdoor education is valuable for Arabic language learners when careful planning and adaptability are applied to enhance language acquisition and intercultural understanding.

6. Methodology

The text outlines a research methodology to investigate outdoor education's impact on Arabic language acquisition for non-native speakers. An experimental design compares an

experimental group involved in outdoor education with a control group receiving traditional classroom instruction. The study evaluates how effective outdoor education improves language proficiency, cultural awareness, and practical language use.

6.1 Study Design

The research uses a quasi-experimental design, a commonly used method for evaluating educational interventions when the random assignment of participants is impossible (Cohen et al., 2007). Specifically, a pre-test/post-test control group design was implemented, where both groups were assessed before and after the intervention. This design allows measuring changes in students' language skills resulting from outdoor education while accounting for any pre-existing differences between the groups.

The study involves two groups

- a) **Experimental Group:** This group engages in outdoor education activities to improve Arabic language skills through field trips, community engagement, language games, role-playing, and public speaking workshops. Assessments are conducted before and after the activities to measure language proficiency changes.
- b) **Control Group:** This group participates in traditional classroom instruction focused on lessons, grammar exercises, and vocabulary without outdoor activities. Similar pre- and post-assessments are conducted to track language changes over time.

6.2 Target Sample

The study involves 40 non-native Arabic speakers enrolled in the Arabic Proficiency Diploma program at King Saud University. Participants were divided into two comparable groups of 20 students, selected through convenience sampling. To qualify, students must have a minimum proficiency level of A2 or B1 on the CEFR scale. Those with special needs or who did not meet the proficiency criteria were excluded to maintain a homogeneous sample concerning language ability and academic commitment.

6.3 Duration of the Study and Activity Distribution

The study lasted 12 weeks and aimed to observe the effects of outdoor education on language proficiency and cultural understanding. It integrates outdoor learning into students' routines to promote long-term language improvements. Weekly sessions focus on different aspects of language acquisition, ensuring exposure to real-world language use. Activities are progressively structured to help develop vocabulary, fluency, and cultural competence.

Weekly Breakdown of Activities

Week 1: Introduction to Outdoor Education and Baseline Assessments

The first week focused on introducing students to the study's goals and expectations for outdoor education. An introductory session explained how outdoor learning improves Arabic proficiency. Students completed baseline assessments in vocabulary, fluency, and cultural knowledge, which will serve as reference points for their progress in the upcoming weeks.

- **Activity:** Orientation and introduction to the program.
- **Assessment:** Pre-tests covering vocabulary, fluency, and cultural knowledge.

Week 2: Market Visit for Vocabulary Expansion

In the second week, students visit a local market to interact with native speakers and practice the language in real-world situations. This trip focuses on situational vocabulary, such as negotiating prices, asking for directions, and casual conversations, allowing students to experience the dynamic use of language in everyday contexts.

- **Activity:** Visit a local market for immersive language practice.
- **Focus:** Vocabulary acquisition and social interaction in a contextual environment.

Week 3: Cultural Workshop and Immersion

The third week features a workshop on enhancing students' understanding of local cultural practices and traditions. It covers aspects of the Arabic-speaking world, including customs and the relationship between language and cultural identity. Students interact with cultural artefacts and engage in discussions to expand their cultural vocabulary and improve language use in artistic contexts.

- **Activity:** Workshop on local culture, including traditional crafts and practices.
- **Focus:** Cultural immersion and understanding the link between language and culture.

Week 4: Language Games and Role-Playing Exercises

In week four, students engage in interactive language games and role-playing exercises to apply vocabulary and grammar in a collaborative setting. Activities like "Arabic Treasure Hunts" and scenario-based role plays facilitate practical language practice, promoting fluency through real-life simulations and encouraging spontaneous language use and problem-solving.

- **Activity:** Language games and role-playing to reinforce vocabulary and structure.
- **Focus:** Vocabulary reinforcement, fluency development, and teamwork.

Week 5: Public Speaking Practice in Outdoor Settings

Week five emphasised improving students' fluency and confidence in speaking Arabic through outdoor public speaking exercises. Students prepared and delivered speeches on cultural topics, helping them practice language skills in a public context. This method aimed to reduce anxiety and enhance communication skills in front of an audience.

- **Activity:** Public speaking exercises in an outdoor setting.
- **Focus:** Fluency, confidence, and effective communication.

Week 6: Field Trip to Cultural Sites for Language Use

In week six, students visit a historical or cultural site to engage with the local culture and practice language skills. They interact with tour guides and discuss cultural significance, expanding their vocabulary related to history and architecture. This field trip provides a valuable opportunity for language learning in an enriching context.

- **Activity:** Field trip to a historical or cultural site.
- **Focus:** Historical vocabulary, conversational practice, and cultural exposure.

Week 7: Group Discussions and Reflection

During week seven, students engage in group discussions to reflect on their experiences with outdoor activities and their effects on learning and language development. They share insights and challenges to promote peer learning and self-assessment. Additionally, students participate in journaling to document their thoughts and reflections on the program.

- **Activity:** Group discussions and journaling.
- **Focus:** Reflection, self-assessment, and peer feedback.

Week 8: Collaborative Outdoor Cooking Project

In week eight, students engage in an outdoor cooking activity, preparing a traditional Arabic dish as a group. This session focuses on specific food-related vocabulary and promotes collaborative language practice, allowing students to enhance their conversational Arabic skills while reinforcing cooking terminology and food-related expressions.

- **Activity:** Collaborative cooking session with a focus on food-related vocabulary.
- **Focus:** Vocabulary acquisition in a social setting, teamwork, and informal language use.

Week 9: Physical Activities and Sports

In week nine, students participate in physical outdoor activities, including hiking, soccer, and traditional Arabic games. These activities allow students to practice language skills in a dynamic setting, using vocabulary related to movement, sports, and teamwork. Moreover, engaging in physical activities can help reduce language anxiety and promote spontaneous student interactions.

- **Activity:** Outdoor sports and physical activities.
- **Focus:** Sports-related vocabulary, team communication, and physical language practice.

Week 10: Cultural Exchange with Native Speakers

In week ten, students engage in a cultural exchange program with native Arabic speakers in informal settings. Activities may include attending local events, participating in traditional music sessions, and discussing cultural topics. The goal is to expose students to dialectal differences and informal language, improving their understanding of everyday language use.

- **Activity:** Cultural exchange with native speakers.
- **Focus:** Dialect exposure, informal language use, and cultural understanding.

Week 11: Review and Application of Language Skills

In week eleven, students review the language skills they have acquired throughout the program. This interactive session revisits essential vocabulary, grammatical structures, and cultural topics covered in the previous weeks. The review aims to reinforce learning and allow students to apply their knowledge in various contexts.

- **Activity:** Interactive review and language application session.
- **Focus:** Reinforcement of vocabulary, fluency, and cultural knowledge.

Week 12: Final Assessment and Reflection

During the final week, post-assessments are conducted to evaluate students' vocabulary, fluency, and cultural competence, comparing the results with pre-tests to assess the effectiveness of the outdoor education approach. Students also participate in a final reflection session to share their experiences and discuss the impact of outdoor education on their language development.

- **Activity:** Final assessment and reflective discussion.
- **Focus:** Evaluation of progress, student feedback, and overall program reflection.

The 12-week program helps students improve their Arabic language skills and cultural understanding through various activities. It includes an outdoor education component that offers real-world language practice. This combination of structured lessons and hands-on

experiences enhances vocabulary, develops fluency, and increases cultural awareness, providing a comprehensive and immersive learning experience.

6.4 Data Collection

This study employed a comprehensive approach to data collection using both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse the effectiveness of outdoor education in improving Arabic language skills among non-native learners. It utilised pre-and post-tests, student interviews, and surveys to assess the impact on vocabulary acquisition, fluency development, and cultural competence.

6.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data were gathered through pre- and post-tests to evaluate students' progress in vocabulary, fluency, and cultural knowledge. These tests assessed the impact of outdoor education versus traditional classroom instruction.

Vocabulary Tests. These included multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and sentence construction tasks to measure vocabulary acquisition and retention, supporting the idea that context-based learning improves retention (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Fluency Tests. Oral assessments measured students' ability to speak spontaneously and comfortably, evaluating fluency improvements after outdoor activities.

Cultural Knowledge Tests. These tests assessed understanding of cultural norms, customs, and expressions learned through outdoor experiences, emphasizing the connection between language proficiency and cultural knowledge (Kramsch, 1993).

These tests provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of outdoor education in enhancing language skills and cultural understanding

6.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data, gathered through interviews, surveys, and reflective journals, offer deeper insights into students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges, complementing quantitative findings.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews with students provided detailed feedback on the impact of outdoor education on language acquisition, confidence, and cultural immersion (Patton, 2015).

Surveys. Surveys combining Likert-scale and open-ended questions collected anonymous feedback on outdoor education's influence, especially from activities like cultural site visits and language games (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014).

Reflective Journals. Students' reflective journals documented their learning experiences, helping to explore how outdoor education contributed to personal and language development over time (Moon, 2006).

Together, these qualitative methods offered a holistic view of outdoor education's impact, enriching the quantitative data.

6.5 Data Analysis

The study analyzes the impact of outdoor education on Arabic language learners using both quantitative and qualitative methods. It employs SPSS for quantitative analysis and NVivo for qualitative insights. The research aims to assess how outdoor education affects language proficiency, fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and cultural knowledge.

6.5.1 Quantitative Analysis with SPSS

The study analyzed quantitative pre-and post-test data using SPSS to evaluate changes in students' vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness after outdoor education. The analysis involved several key steps:

- Data Entry and Cleaning: Ensured the dataset was free from errors or inconsistencies.
- Descriptive Statistics: Calculated mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for each group to identify trends.
- Paired Sample t-tests: Compared pre-test and post-test scores within each group to assess improvements.
- Independent Sample t-tests: Compared post-test scores between the experimental group (outdoor education) and the control group (traditional instruction) to evaluate the effectiveness of outdoor education.
- Effect Size: Calculated Cohen's d statistic to measure the practical significance of the observed differences between groups.

6.5.2 Qualitative Analysis with NVivo

The study involved qualitative data gathered from student interviews, surveys, and reflection journals, analyzed using NVivo software. Key points include:

- Data Coding: Transcribed and organized data were coded thematically, identifying patterns in areas like vocabulary acquisition and cultural awareness.
- Thematic Analysis: Common themes emerged, such as increased confidence in speaking Arabic and challenges in authentic environments.
- Cross-Referencing Data: Integration of different data types provided context for interpreting results, linking subjective experiences to quantitative improvements.
- Pattern Recognition: Advanced NVivo queries helped identify recurring patterns that significantly contribute to language learning.
- Triangulation: The study compared quantitative and qualitative findings to enhance validity and provide a comprehensive understanding of outdoor education's impact on language development.

6.6. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

This study assesses the impact of outdoor education on Arabic language learners through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative segment evaluates changes in language proficiency and cultural knowledge, while the qualitative portion examines students' perceptions and experiences. It utilizes SPSS for quantitative analysis and NVivo for qualitative analysis, providing a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of educational interventions by capturing both numerical improvements and subjective experiences.

6.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical standards set by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), obtaining informed consent from participants who understood the study's purpose and their right to withdraw. Confidentiality is maintained via unique identification codes, with secure data storage for the research team. It employs a quasi-experimental design and mixed-methods approach to assess the effectiveness of outdoor education on Arabic language

acquisition among non-native speakers, revealing benefits in language proficiency, cultural competence, and practical language use.

7. Results

The section provides an overview of a study examining the impact of outdoor education on vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and cultural awareness in non-native Arabic learners. Data was analyzed using SPSS for quantitative aspects and NVivo for qualitative aspects. Results indicate that outdoor education effectively enhances these language skills.

7.1 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was collected using pre-and post-tests to measure students' vocabulary, fluency, and cultural knowledge. SPSS was used to analyse this data, specifically focusing on examining the differences between the experimental group (outdoor education) and the control group (traditional classroom instruction). The following statistical tests were conducted:

a. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were first computed to summarise both groups' central tendencies (mean, median) and variability (standard deviation) of the pre-test and post-test scores. The results are presented in table 1 low:

Table 1: Summarise both groups' central tendencies (mean, median) and variability (standard deviation) of the pre-test and post-test scores

Group	Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Pre-Test Std Dev	Post-Test Std Dev
Experimental	Vocabulary	45.2	68.5	8.4	5.2
	Fluency	47.3	71.4	9.1	6.4
	Cultural Awareness	42.1	65.6	7.3	5.7
Control	Vocabulary	44.5	50.3	7.8	6.5
	Fluency	46.8	52.1	8.3	7.0
	Cultural Awareness	41.3	45.4	6.9	6.2

The experimental group exhibited notable increases in vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness, with the most significant improvement observed in fluency.

Conversely, the control group showed only moderate improvements in all areas, suggesting that traditional classroom instruction is less effective than outdoor learning experiences.

- *Paired Sample t-tests*

Paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine whether the observed improvements in the post-test scores were statistically significant within each group. The results are summarised below:

Table 2: Improvements in the post-test scores

Group	Vocabulary t-test	Fluency t-test	Cultural Awareness t-test
Experimental	t(39) = 12.34, p < 0.001	t(39) = 14.76, p < 0.001	t(39) = 13.12, p < 0.001
Control	t(39) = 3.45, p < 0.01	t(39) = 2.56, p < 0.05	t(39) = 3.12, p < 0.01

The experimental group demonstrated highly significant improvements in vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness, with p-values well below the 0.05 threshold, indicating robust evidence for the effectiveness of outdoor education.

The control group also showed significant improvements, but the effects were less pronounced, indicating that the outdoor education intervention was more impactful.

1.3. Independent Sample t-tests:

Independent sample t-tests were then conducted to compare the post-test results between the experimental and control groups. The results are as follows:

Table 3: Compare the post-test results between the experimental and control groups

Group Comparison	Vocabulary t-test	Fluency t-test	Cultural Awareness t-test
Experimental vs Control	t(78) = 5.73, p < 0.001	t(78) = 6.91, p < 0.001	t(78) = 5.54, p < 0.001

The experimental group outperformed the control group in all measured aspects (vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness), with p-values well below the 0.001 threshold. This indicates a substantial effect of outdoor education in improving language skills compared to traditional classroom-based instruction.

Effect Size (Cohen's d):

Cohen's d was calculated for each of the three measurement areas (vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness) to evaluate the practical significance of the observed differences further. The effect sizes are as follows:

Table 4: The three measurement areas (vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness)

Group Comparison	Vocabulary Cohen's d	Fluency Cohen's d	Cultural Awareness Cohen's d
Experimental vs Control	1.28	1.52	1.18

The effect sizes for all three areas were more significant than 1, indicating a significant effect. This suggests that outdoor education had a substantial impact on students' language learning.

7.2 Qualitative Results

Qualitative data were collected through student interviews and surveys, providing deeper insight into the student's experiences and perceptions of outdoor education. NVivo was used to code and analyse the thematic responses from the interviews and surveys.

Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis of student responses identified three major themes:

1. **Increased Confidence in Speaking:** Students reported enhanced confidence in speaking Arabic after engaging in outdoor activities.

2. Real-World Application of Vocabulary: Many expressed the benefit of using new vocabulary in authentic contexts, which improved retention.
 3. Enhanced Cultural Awareness: Outdoor education contributed to a better understanding of Arabic-speaking cultures, particularly the importance of body language and non-verbal communication.
- *Thematic Word Tree for 'Cultural Competency'*

NVivo's Word Tree function visually represents how students discussed cultural competency. This diagram shows connections between "cultural competency" and related expressions, reflecting students' understanding of cultural nuances and social interactions within Arabic-speaking environments.



Figure 1: Word Tree for 'Cultural Competency'

Figure 1 illustrates the thematic depth of "cultural competency." Terms such as "social cues" and "local expressions" are closely linked, indicating that students view immersion experiences as essential for understanding the nuances of Arabic culture. The branching phrases demonstrate how learners associate language use with social understanding, highlighting the broader educational impact of outdoor learning.

- *Emergent Themes from Student Interviews and Surveys*

Using NVivo, we organised student responses into significant themes: cultural competency, contextual vocabulary acquisition, confidence-building, and authentic language exposure. The software allowed us to identify patterns in the students' feedback, emphasising their experiences and the perceived benefits of outdoor education.

Table 5: Key Themes from NVivo Analysis of Student Interviews

- with practical significance in enhancing vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness.

Theme	Frequency (%)	Sample Student Quotes
Cultural Competency	32%	"Interacting with native speakers helped me understand not just words, but expressions and gestures."
Contextual Vocabulary	28%	"Learning words in the market felt easier; I can remember them because I used them in real situations."
Confidence-Building	25%	"Speaking outside the classroom made me less afraid of making mistakes."
Authentic Language Exposure	15%	"I realised the difference between formal and informal Arabic when practising in real-life settings."

This table displays the main themes identified through NVivo and quotes that reflect students' experiences. The frequency percentages highlight the prominence of each theme across interviews, underscoring the significant effects of cultural immersion and contextual vocabulary learning.

- *Word Cloud Analysis*

A word cloud was generated from the student interviews and survey responses to visualise the most frequently mentioned words and phrases. Key terms included "confidence," "vocabulary," "culture," "real-life," and "interaction," which were identified as central aspects of outdoor learning. Experience.

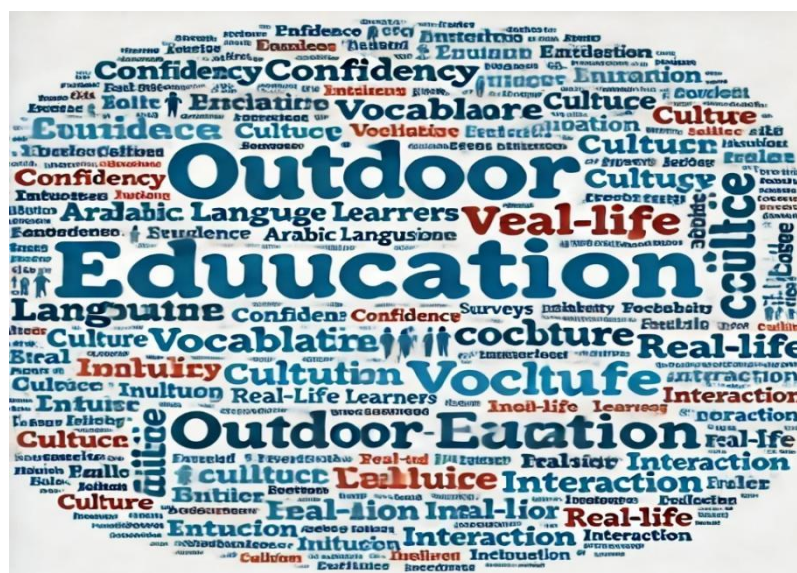


Figure 2: Word Cloud Analysis from Student Interviews and Surveys

Figure 2 presents a word cloud visually representing the most frequently mentioned terms from student interviews and surveys conducted in this study's qualitative analysis. The size of each word reflects its frequency of mention, with the most significant words being the most commonly referenced by students.

The key terms that emerged from the analysis were:

- **Confidence:** Reflecting students' increased self-assurance in speaking Arabic after engaging in outdoor activities.
- **Vocabulary:** Highlighting the importance of real-world applications of newly learned words.
- **Culture:** Indicating students' heightened awareness and understanding of Arabic-speaking cultures.
- **Real-life:** Emphasizing students' practical and immersive experiences outside the classroom.
- **Interaction:** Reflecting the students' direct communication with native speakers and the environment.

This word cloud effectively synthesises the primary insights from students' experiences, showcasing the pivotal elements of the outdoor education approach, notably how it facilitated language acquisition, cultural understanding, and increased confidence in real-world communication.

- *Student Sentiment Analysis: Positive vs. Negative Experiences*

Using NVivo's sentiment analysis, we categorised responses into positive, neutral, and negative experiences, with a notable inclination towards positive sentiments, especially regarding confidence-building and practical vocabulary use.

Table 6: *Sentiment Analysis of Student Responses*

Sentiment Category	Percentage (%)	Description
Positive	70%	Confidence-building, enhanced vocabulary through real scenarios, increased cultural understanding.
Neutral	20%	I had mixed feelings about language challenges; I found particular dialects difficult but valued the experience overall.
Negative	10%	They reported initial discomfort with public interactions and difficulty understanding fast-paced conversations.

Most students expressed positive sentiments, reinforcing the benefits of outdoor learning in language and cultural competency development. Negative sentiments were minimal and often related to initial anxieties or dialect comprehension difficulties, which decreased over time as students adjusted.

- *Hierarchical Coding Structure*

NVivo's hierarchical coding organised responses into subcategories, enhancing each central theme's analysis. For example, under "Confidence-Building," subcategories such as overcoming speaking anxiety, adapting to spontaneous language use, and developing public speaking skills emerged.

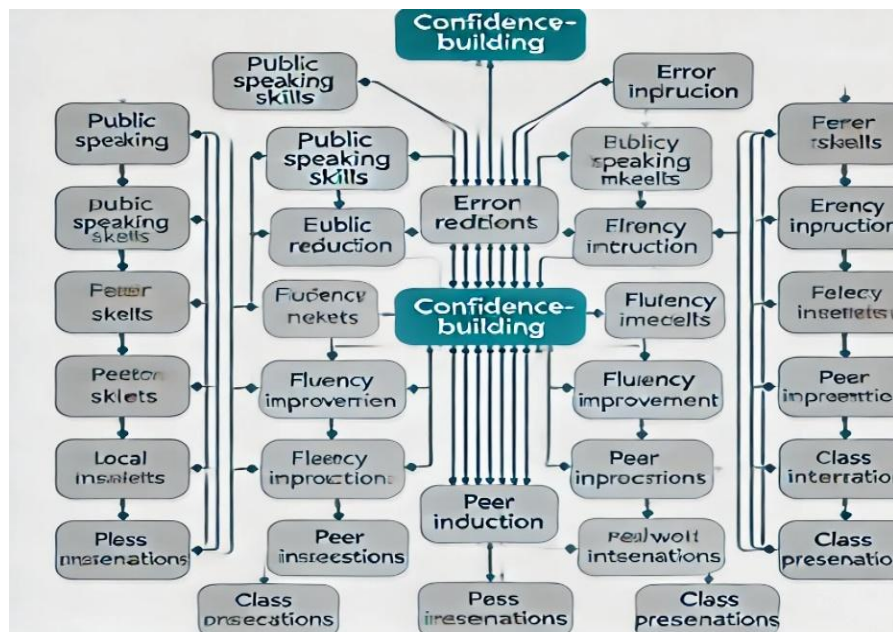


Figure 3: Hierarchical Code Map of 'Confidence-Building' Theme

The hierarchical map illustrates the complexities of "Confidence-Building," focusing on students' journeys to overcome language barriers and speaking anxieties. It highlights various aspects of confidence development crucial for achieving linguistic fluency in real-world situations.

- *Cross-analysis of Themes with Student Backgrounds*

The study analysed how students from different backgrounds experienced outdoor learning, using NVivo to cross-analyse native languages and prior exposure to Arabic. It found that students familiar with Arabic dialects adapted more quickly, whereas those without such exposure concentrated on vocabulary building.

Table 7: Cross-Analysis of Key Themes by Student Background

Native Language	Primary Theme Emphasis	Additional Observations
English	Confidence-Building, Vocabulary Acquisition	I found particular dialects challenging and emphasised formal vocabulary use.
French	Cultural Competency, Confidence-Building	Appreciated social context learning and noted the importance of formal vs. informal variations.
Asian Languages	Vocabulary, Authentic Exposure	Focused on vocabulary growth and emphasised language use in specific situational contexts.

The text discusses how students' linguistic backgrounds influenced their approaches to language learning. French-speaking students prioritised cultural immersion, English-speaking students concentrated on vocabulary acquisition and Asian language speakers highlighted the significance of contextual learning in everyday situations.

- *Visual Representation of Coded Interview Excerpts:*

NVivo allows for the visualisation of coded excerpts, highlighting which themes are most prevalent across various sections of interviews. This method helps evaluate how often students reference specific themes, enriching our understanding of their priorities.

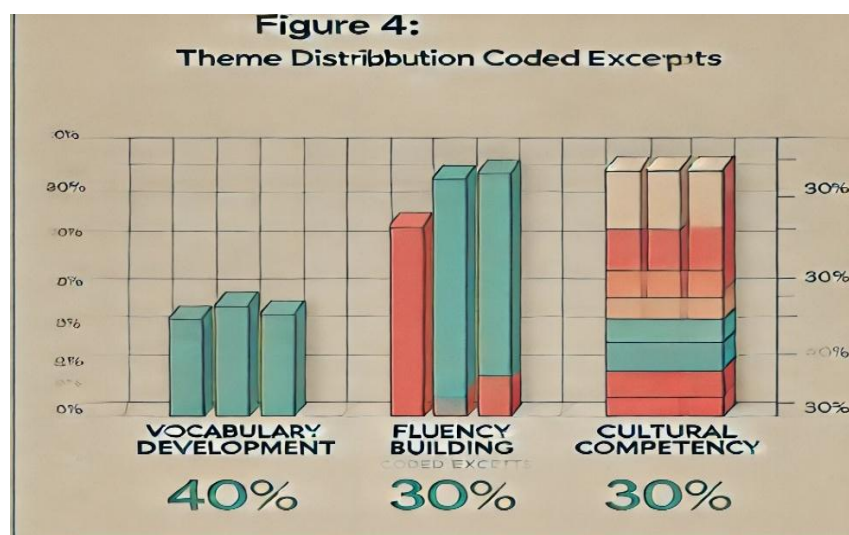


Figure 4: *Theme Distribution in Coded Excerpts*

The bar chart quantifies the prominence of themes such as Cultural Competency and Confidence-Building, which received the highest frequency across coded excerpts. This finding underscores the central role of these themes in students' outdoor learning experiences.

The NVivo analysis indicates that outdoor education enhances linguistic growth and deepens understanding of Arabic-speaking cultures. It allows students to connect classroom learning with real-life experiences. The program effectively builds confidence and cultural awareness, equipping students with practical language skills. Overall, the insights highlight the significant benefits of outdoor education as a key component of the Arabic Proficiency Diploma program.

7.2 Cross-Referencing Data

The qualitative findings align with the quantitative results, showing that students who reported increased confidence in speaking Arabic also improved their fluency scores. This consistency supports the conclusion that outdoor education positively influences students' language development.

7.3 Summary of Findings

Outdoor education positively enhances Arabic learners' vocabulary, fluency, and cultural awareness. The experimental group showed significant improvements in these areas, backed by strong statistical data and qualitative support. The findings suggest that outdoor education is more effective than traditional classroom instruction for fostering language proficiency and cultural immersion.

Key Findings:

- **Vocabulary:** Substantial improvements in vocabulary acquisition in the experimental group, with a large effect size (Cohen's $d > 1$).
- **Fluency:** There were significant increases in fluency, particularly in spontaneous speaking, and qualitative data confirmed students' increased confidence in communication.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Students reported enhanced cultural understanding, with insights into the culture, customs, and language of Arabic-speaking societies.

The text concludes that outdoor education effectively promotes Arabic language skills, supported by quantitative and qualitative data. It highlights that outdoor learning improves

students' language proficiency and cultural awareness, suggesting that incorporating outdoor education into language curricula can enhance linguistic and cultural competence.

8. Discussion

In interpreting the results of this study, it is essential to assess whether outdoor educational activities successfully met the language acquisition and cultural immersion objectives for non-native Arabic speakers. The analysis of quantitative data from pre- and post-assessments, along with qualitative insights from student surveys and interviews, reveals the complex effects of outdoor education on linguistic and cultural competencies. Previous research on outdoor education (James et al., 2012; Waite, 2017) supports the idea that immersive, context-rich learning environments can enhance understanding and facilitate applying skills in real-world contexts. This study, however, presents unique findings specific to Arabic language learners, revealing both the advantages and challenges of incorporating outdoor education in language learning.

Positive Effects on Linguistic Skills

Outdoor education enhances vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and contextual comprehension through authentic language exposure in markets and museums. This aligns with Lave and Wenger's (1991) "situated learning," where knowledge is applied in context. Studies like Rickinson et al. (2004) confirm that real-world application improves vocabulary retention. Research by Carrier (2009) shows vocabulary gains from nature-based programs, with sensory-rich environments helping students use language spontaneously. Qualitative feedback suggests that outdoor activities boost confidence, reduce anxiety, and increase communication willingness, supporting Dewaele and MacIntyre's (2014) findings on performance anxiety reduction.

Enhanced Fluency and Confidence

This study highlights significant improvements in fluency and confidence through unstructured, conversational Arabic in outdoor education. The "safe space" for trial and error allowed students to self-correct, build resilience and promote fluency, which aligns with Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis. Real-world settings reduced the fear of mistakes, supporting Ellis and Shintani's (2013) research on risk-taking in language learning. Interviews indicated that activities like "Arabic Treasure Hunts" and role-playing boosted students' confidence in unscripted speech, aligning with Experiential Learning Through Practicals (2013), which found that experiential learning enhances language fluency.

Cultural Competency: Immersive Understanding of Social Norms

Outdoor education immerses students in Arabic-speaking environments, enhancing cultural competency through exposure to local dialects, idiomatic expressions, and social cues (Bebennett, 2008). This immersion helps students understand the appropriate use of expressions, gestures, and conversational tones, promoting natural interactions. The study aligns with Byram's (1997) view that cultural immersion fosters an understanding of the "social grammar" of a language. Engaging in real-world conversations at markets and cafes helped students adapt to social conventions and contextualise language, addressing challenges that Lazaraton (2002) identified in second-language teaching. This approach deepened students' understanding of cultural identity and social behaviours.

8.1. Potential Challenges and Limitations

Despite the benefits, several challenges affected the achievement of objectives in this study. The diverse proficiency levels among students, for instance, led to difficulties in engaging with colloquial language in everyday situations, consistent with Duff's (2007)

findings. Some students felt overwhelmed, highlighting the need for preparatory sessions before outdoor experiences to equip them with essential language skills. Future research could implement a more gradual introduction to real-world language use to address these challenges. Environmental factors also impact outdoor activities; poor weather sometimes necessitates adjustments, affecting engagement and continuity. Waite (2011) noted similar challenges in outdoor education, emphasising the need for contingency plans to adapt to weather disruptions. These factors underscore the importance of preparing students and having flexible plans.

8.2. Limitations and Considerations for Future Research

This study shows that outdoor education has significant potential for language learning, particularly in vocabulary, fluency, and cultural understanding. However, challenges such as logistical support and the study's short duration limit the long-term assessment of language retention and cultural fluency. Future research could extend the study duration and explore adaptive methodologies, such as pairing lower-proficiency students with higher-proficiency peers, based on Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development theory. While the integration of outdoor education has proven beneficial, addressing these challenges is crucial for maximising its effectiveness in language programs. These findings encourage using real-world contexts in curricula for holistic language acquisition (e.g., Krashen, 1982).

9. Recommendations and Conclusion

9.1. Recommendations for Implementation

The study highlights the benefits of outdoor education for non-native Arabic learners, recommending its inclusion as a core part of Arabic language programs. Activities should be tailored to students' proficiency levels: Novice learners can engage in structured interactions at cultural landmarks. In contrast, intermediate and advanced students can participate in more complex tasks like navigating markets and attending community events. Adapting these activities to the local linguistic and cultural context is important to enhance language familiarity and understanding of dialectical variations. Adequate resources for logistics and safety are essential, and instructor training in outdoor educational methods will support practical guidance through these experiences.

9.2. Future Research Directions

The study highlights the effectiveness of outdoor education for Arabic learners but calls for further research to explore its benefits in various contexts. Future studies should investigate its impact across different age groups and proficiency levels to understand how these factors influence language acquisition. Longitudinal studies could assess the long-term effects on language retention and cultural adaptability. Additionally, examining outdoor education's role in developing soft skills, such as adaptability and problem-solving, is important. Finally, comparative studies could reveal the unique advantages of immersive, experiential learning for non-native Arabic learners versus traditional classroom settings.

10. Conclusion

The study emphasises the transformative role of outdoor education in enhancing Arabic language acquisition for non-native speakers. It bridges formal classroom learning with real-world interactions, improving language fluency, cultural competence, and communicative confidence. By engaging in authentic social environments, students gain practical language skills and a deeper understanding of cultural nuances, including dialects and colloquialisms. This immersive approach fosters natural and adaptable language use, supporting the idea that outdoor education is essential for a comprehensive Arabic language program.

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