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Revolutionizing Arabic Language Learning: Innovative Teaching Strategies for Non-Native Speakers

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Arabic, an official language of the United Nations and the primary means of communication for over 400 million people worldwide, presents unique challenges when taught as a second language. These include its intricate grammar, diglossia, and limited culturally relevant resources. This study aims to address these challenges by exploring innovative teaching methodologies. **Methods:** The research examines four primary approaches: integrating technology, adopting task-based learning, applying communicative teaching methods, and encouraging cultural immersion. The study also evaluates the effectiveness of balancing Modern Standard Arabic with regional dialects to enhance real-world communication skills. **Results:** Findings indicate that these innovative methods foster practical language use and cultural competence. Technology integration and task-based learning proved effective in engaging learners, while communicative approaches and cultural immersion enhanced their ability to navigate diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Balancing Modern Standard Arabic with dialects significantly improved learners' fluency and adaptability. **Discussion:** The study highlights the strengths and limitations of these methods and emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to refine Arabic teaching practices. Practical recommendations for educators are provided to make Arabic education more engaging, accessible, and relevant in a globalized world.Conclusion: This research contributes to advancing Arabic education by addressing pedagogical challenges and proposing innovative methodologies. It advocates for further exploration and application of these approaches to meet the evolving demands of second-language learners in an interconnected world..

1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic, one of the six official languages of the United Nations, holds a vital position as a global language due to its rich historical, cultural, and religious significance (Allen, 2019). Spoken by over 400 million people worldwide, Arabic serves as the medium of communication in regions of geopolitical importance and as the language of the Qur'an, which grants it a unique role in the spiritual and scholarly traditions of the Muslim world (Godwin-Jones, 2019). Despite its prominence, teaching and learning Arabic as a second language pose considerable challenges, making the development of innovative instructional strategies essential to meet the growing global demand for Arabic proficiency (Auliya, 2025).

Teaching Arabic to non-native speakers entails various linguistic and pedagogical challenges. Arabic's complex grammatical structure, including its rich system of verb conjugations and noun declensions, often

overwhelms learners. Additionally, the phenomenon of diglossia—the coexistence of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and diverse regional dialects—creates confusion for students unsure of which variant to prioritize in their studies (Richards et al, 2001). Educators also grapple with the scarcity of accessible, engaging, and culturally relevant teaching materials that accommodate diverse learning styles (Godwin-Jones, 2019). These barriers often deter learners and diminish their confidence in mastering the language.

The purpose of this article is to address these challenges by exploring innovative and effective teaching methods for Arabic as a second language. It examines strategies that leverage modern technology, interactive learning techniques, and culturally immersive approaches to enhance students' linguistic proficiency and engagement (Godwin-Jones, 2019). By integrating insights from second language acquisition research and drawing from the practical experiences of educators, this article aims to provide actionable solutions to enrich Arabic language instruction.

The structure of this article is organized into several key sections. First, it delves into the unique challenges of teaching Arabic, offering a detailed analysis of linguistic and pedagogical obstacles. Following this, the article introduces innovative teaching methods, including the use of digital tools, gamification, and task-based language learning, supported by evidence from contemporary studies (Allen, 2019; Godwin-Jones, 2019). The discussion also highlights the importance of cultural immersion and integrating authentic resources to bridge the gap between language and cultural context. Finally, the article concludes by emphasizing the need for ongoing collaboration among educators, researchers, and policymakers to adapt and refine Arabic teaching methodologies for diverse learning environments.

Through this exploration, the article seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on Arabic language instruction and provide practical guidance to educators committed to fostering effective and meaningful learning experiences. By addressing the specific needs of both learners and instructors, this article aspires to make Arabic language education more accessible and impactful in an increasingly interconnected world.

This article also offers an original contribution by contextualizing globally recognized second-language teaching strategies specifically for Arabic, taking into account its diglossic nature, complex morphology, and cultural variability. It proposes a framework that combines Modern Standard Arabic with dialectal exposure and cultural immersion in a way that is pedagogically coherent and tailored to Arabic's unique structure. Unlike general language teaching models, the strategies presented here are calibrated for the linguistic, cultural, and practical demands of Arabic learners, making this a distinct contribution to the field.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching of Arabic as a second language has traditionally relied on conventional methods such as rote memorization and the grammar-translation approach. Rote memorization, characterized by repetitive drilling of vocabulary and grammar rules, has long been a prevalent method in Arabic language instruction. This method often emphasizes memorization of conjugation patterns and extensive repetition of vocabulary lists without a strong connection to practical application or communicative contexts (Allen, 2019). Similarly, the grammar-translation approach, which focuses on the explicit teaching of grammar rules and translating texts between Arabic and the learners' native language, has dominated Arabic instruction in formal settings. While these methods provide foundational knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, they often fail to foster proficiency in speaking and listening, key aspects of language acquisition (Richards et al, 2001).

Despite their widespread use, these traditional approaches have significant limitations. Rote memorization, for instance, does not engage learners in meaningful interactions or real-life language use, making it difficult for students to retain information or develop conversational skills (Godwin-Jones, 2019). Additionally, the grammar-translation method tends to isolate grammar from its functional use, limiting students' ability to apply linguistic rules in practical scenarios. These methods also lack cultural integration, failing to address the vital role of cultural context in language learning. The absence of active, learner-centered strategies often leads to a lack of motivation and engagement among students, which hinders long-term success in acquiring Arabic as a second language (Richards et al, 2001).

In contrast, innovative teaching techniques utilized in other languages provide valuable insights that can enhance Arabic instruction. Approaches such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language learning (TBL) prioritize interaction and the use of language in authentic contexts. CLT, for example, encourages learners to use the target language for real-world communication, emphasizing fluency over accuracy in the early stages of learning (Ellis, 2012). Similarly, TBL focuses on completing specific tasks—such as problem-solving or collaborative projects—that require the practical use of language skills. These techniques, which have proven effective in teaching languages like English

and Spanish, can address the shortcomings of traditional Arabic instruction by promoting active engagement and contextual learning (Albirini, 2016).

Technology-driven approaches have also revolutionized language learning and offer significant potential for Arabic. Tools such as language-learning apps, gamified platforms, and virtual reality environments provide interactive and immersive experiences that are often missing in traditional classrooms (Warschauer et al, 1998). These tools can bridge the gap between MSA and regional dialects, a challenge unique to Arabic due to diglossia. For example, digital platforms can expose learners to both written and spoken forms of Arabic, offering exercises in pronunciation, conversation, and comprehension. Furthermore, incorporating authentic multimedia resources, such as Arabic films, news broadcasts, and music, can deepen cultural understanding while enhancing language proficiency (Nunan, 2004).

By integrating these innovative methods, Arabic language instruction can evolve to better meet the needs of diverse learners. These techniques, while originally developed for other languages, align with the complexities and nuances of Arabic. As this review demonstrates, there is immense potential to combine modern approaches with traditional elements to create a holistic, engaging, and effective learning experience.

3. METHODS

3.1 Note on Methodology

This article is conceptual in nature and does not involve primary empirical data collection. The analysis and recommendations presented are based on an extensive review of current literature, established pedagogical theories, and instructional practices observed in the field of Arabic language teaching. The methods discussed herein are derived from secondary sources and interpreted through a conceptual lens to propose innovative approaches for teaching Arabic as a second language.

3.2 Use of Digital Platforms in Beginner Arabic Instruction

The integration of technology into Arabic teaching has revolutionized language instruction, making learning more accessible, engaging, and effective. Applications like Duolingo and Rosetta Stone provide structured, gamified lessons for beginners, allowing learners to practice vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation at a self-directed pace(Allen, 2019). These platforms provide immediate feedback and track progress, fostering motivation and retention. Online platforms and virtual classrooms, such as Zoom and Google Classroom, have further expanded the possibilities for Arabic instruction by facilitating

real-time interaction between learners and instructors regardless of geographical barriers (Auliya, 2025).

Gamification has emerged as a powerful tool in technology-driven language learning (Godwin-Jones, 2019). By incorporating game elements such as points, levels, and leaderboards, gamified platforms increase engagement and motivation. In Arabic instruction, platforms like Duolingo and Kahoot! offer gamified quizzes and competitions on vocabulary and verb conjugation, helping beginners reinforce grammar through repetition in a fun format. For example, teachers can create competitive in-class Arabic vocabulary games using Quizizz or assign leveled challenges on Memrise, which adapts based on learner performance.

3.3 Enhancing Oral Proficiency through Communicative Techniques

The communicative approach emphasizes practical usage of the language by prioritizing real-life conversational Arabic over rote grammar drills. This method involves role-playing, dialogues, and immersive speaking exercises that simulate real-world interactions, such as ordering food, introducing oneself, or navigating a new city (Richards et al, 2001). By focusing on fluency and the ability to communicate effectively in everyday scenarios, learners develop confidence and a functional understanding of Arabic.

Shifting the focus from grammar-centric instruction to practical application has been shown to improve learner outcomes. Instructors encourage students to experiment with the language without fear of making mistakes, fostering a positive learning environment. This approach has been successful in teaching other world languages and has significant potential for Arabic, where learners often struggle to bridge the gap between grammar rules and practical usage (Ellis, 2012).

3.4 Cultural Immersion and Experiential Learning in Arabic

Language and culture are deeply interconnected, and cultural immersion is a crucial component of effective Arabic instruction. Incorporating cultural experiences such as Arabic music, films, cuisine, and festivals helps learners contextualize the language while deepening their cultural understanding (Albirini, 2016). For example, watching Arabic films exposes students to colloquial phrases and regional accents, enhancing listening skills and cultural competence.

Virtual reality (VR) technology has opened new avenues for cultural immersion by simulating Arabic-speaking environments (Warschauer et al., 1998). For example, learners can use Mondly VR to practice dialogues in a virtual Arab marketplace, or engage in

360° video tours of historical sites like Petra or the Great Mosque of Cordoba, enhancing both listening skills and cultural knowledge.

3.5 Task-Based Language Learning for Real-World Arabic Use

TBL involves designing real-world tasks that require learners to use Arabic in meaningful ways. Examples include writing emails, making travel bookings, or ordering food in a restaurant. By focusing on goal-oriented exercises, TBL enables learners to develop practical skills that are directly applicable to everyday life (Nunan, 2004).

The contextual nature of TBL ensures that learners acquire vocabulary and grammar in a natural and relevant way, enhancing retention and comprehension. Moreover, TBL promotes collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving, as students often work in groups to complete tasks. This method is particularly effective for intermediate and advanced learners who are looking to refine their functional proficiency in Arabic.

3.6 Hybrid Models: Blending Traditional and Digital Arabic Instruction

Blended learning combines traditional classroom instruction with online and self-paced learning to create a flexible and effective teaching model. This approach allows learners to benefit from face-to-face interaction with instructors while also accessing online resources such as videos, exercises, and quizzes for additional practice (Graham, 2006).

Hybrid teaching models are particularly beneficial for Arabic learners, as they address the limitations of both traditional and online instruction. For example, classroom sessions can focus on speaking and listening skills, while online components provide grammar explanations, vocabulary drills, and self-assessment tools. This integrated approach accommodates diverse learning styles and paces, making Arabic instruction more inclusive and effective.

3.7 Incorporating Arabic Literature to Foster Cultural and Linguistic Depth

Exposing learners to authentic Arabic literature, including simplified texts, poetry, and stories, enriches their language learning experience. For beginners, simplified versions of classic works or folk tales provide an accessible introduction to the richness of Arabic literature (Wahba et al, 2014). Intermediate and advanced learners can explore original texts, which offer insights into the cultural, historical, and social context of the Arab world.

Reading authentic materials enhances vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and cultural awareness. Additionally, literary works often include idiomatic expressions and rhetorical styles, helping students grasp the nuances of Arabic. Incorporating literature into the curriculum fosters a deeper appreciation for the language and its cultural heritage.

3.8 Integrating Dialects with Modern Standard Arabic for Communicative Competence

The debate over teaching colloquial Arabic dialects versus MSA remains a significant issue in Arabic language instruction. MSA, the formal written form of Arabic, is essential for reading, writing, and formal communication. However, colloquial dialects are more relevant for everyday interactions, as they are the spoken languages of the Arab world (Ryding, 2014).

Innovative teaching methods aim to balance the two by integrating both MSA and dialects into lessons. For example, instructors can teach MSA as the foundation while incorporating dialect-specific phrases for conversational practice. Technology plays a vital role in this approach, as digital platforms can expose learners to both forms through videos, interactive dialogues, and regional media content. This balanced approach equips learners with the skills to navigate formal and informal settings effectively (Wahba, 2017).

3.9 Challenges and Limitations of Innovative Methods

While innovative methods for teaching Arabic as a second language have demonstrated considerable potential, they are not without challenges and limitations. One significant issue is accessibility to technology. Many learners, especially in under-resourced regions, may lack access to the necessary technological infrastructure, such as reliable internet connections, devices, or software (Warschauer et al, 1998). Additionally, the cost of advanced tools like virtual reality systems or premium language-learning applications can be prohibitive for both institutions and individual learners.

Teacher training is another critical barrier. Many educators, particularly those accustomed to traditional methods, may lack the technical expertise or pedagogical knowledge required to implement these approaches effectively (Graham, 2006). For example, integrating gamification or using task-based learning strategies necessitates not only familiarity with technology but also a shift in teaching philosophy toward student-centered learning. Without adequate professional development programs, teachers may struggle to adopt and sustain these innovative methods.

Cultural sensitivity poses another challenge, particularly when integrating Arabic culture into the

Table 1: Summary of Innovative Teaching Strategies and Their Expected Outcomes.

Teaching Strategy	Key Features	Expected Pedagogical Outcomes
Technology Integration	Use of apps, gamification, virtual classrooms	Increased learner engagement, self-paced practice, improved retention
Communicative Approach	Role-playing, real-life dialogues	Enhanced fluency, reduced fear of mistakes, practical language use
Cultural Immersion	Arabic films, music, cuisine, festivals, VR cultural experiences	Deepened cultural understanding, contextualized language learning
TBL	Goal-oriented tasks (e.g., emails, travel scenarios)	Improved functional language skills, collaboration, real-world use
Blended Learning	Combination of online and in-person learning	Flexibility, accessibility, catering to diverse learner needs
Use of Arabic Literature	Simplified and authentic texts, poetry, stories	Vocabulary enrichment, reading comprehension, cultural literacy
Dialect and MSA Integration	Balanced use of Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial dialects	Enhanced adaptability, communicative competence across contexts

curriculum. While cultural immersion enhances learning, there is a risk of oversimplifying or misrepresenting complex cultural elements, potentially reinforcing stereotypes. Instructors need to be mindful of presenting diverse and nuanced perspectives of Arab culture (Albirini, 2016). Furthermore, the steep learning curve associated with Arabic itself remains a challenge. The language's diglossic nature and complex grammar can overwhelm learners, particularly if innovative methods do not adequately address these intrinsic difficulties (Kessler et al, 2017).

These challenges highlight the need for systematic teacher development programs and infrastructure support to ensure the successful implementation of innovative methods. Training programs should focus on equipping teachers with the skills and confidence to integrate technology and contemporary pedagogical strategies into their classrooms. Additionally, further research and collaboration are required to create cost-effective, accessible solutions tailored to diverse learning environments.

3.10 Practical Recommendations for Educators

To effectively adopt innovative methods in Arabic language teaching, educators can follow several practical strategies. First, teachers should begin by exploring and utilizing readily available tools and platforms. For example, apps like Duolingo or Mondly offer interactive exercises, while platforms like Edmodo or Google Classroom provide flexible virtual learning environments for Arabic instruction (Godwin-Jones, 2019). Educators can also take advantage of free or low-cost resources such as YouTube channels, podcasts, and open-access Arabic learning websites to enhance their lessons.

Incorporating cultural immersion activities can also significantly enrich the learning experience. Teachers can integrate multimedia resources such as Arabic films, music, and news clips into their curriculum, encouraging learners to engage with authentic language materials. Organizing cultural events, such as Arabic cuisine days or traditional music performances, can further immerse students in the language and its cultural context (Albirini, 2016).

Tailoring teaching methods to the needs and levels of individual learners is essential for maximizing effectiveness. For beginners, it may be helpful to use simplified texts and gamified vocabulary exercises to build foundational skills. Advanced learners, on the other hand, can benefit from task-based projects, such as creating presentations or composing emails in Arabic. Teachers should assess students' progress regularly and adjust their approaches to address specific challenges, such as grammar difficulties or conversational fluency (Nunan, 2004).

Finally, educators should prioritize their professional growth by participating in workshops, online training courses, and conferences focused on teaching Arabic as a second language. Networking with other educators and sharing best practices can also provide valuable insights and foster collaborative innovation (Brown, 2014). By staying informed about the latest pedagogical trends and technological advancements, teachers can continue to refine their methods and create dynamic, engaging learning environments.

4. DISCUSSION

This study critically examined the efficacy of innovative methods in Arabic language teaching for non-native speakers, not merely in terms of their conceptual novelty but also their practicality, scalability, and pedagogical coherence. Unlike traditional methods that emphasize rote learning and grammatical memorization,

the methods presented—task-based learning, communicative approaches, digital tools, and cultural immersion—represent a paradigmatic shift toward learner-centered, interactive instruction aligned with second language acquisition (SLA) research (Ellis, 2012; Nunan, 2004). These approaches support the view that meaningful interaction and context-rich input are central to language development, particularly for a complex and diglossic language like Arabic.

Pedagogically, each method brings unique benefits. TBL, for instance, promotes real-world communication and functional language use, helping learners apply grammar and vocabulary in authentic contexts. CLT fosters fluency through low-stakes interaction, and cultural immersion deepens not only comprehension but learner motivation. These approaches challenge the grammar-translation tradition still dominant in Arabic instruction and encourage more holistic engagement with the language (Richards et al, 2001; Albirini, 2016).

However, pedagogical innovation must be met with institutional and infrastructural readiness. A major implementation barrier is the lack of teacher training. Many instructors, particularly in the Arab world, have been educated under traditional paradigms and may lack familiarity with technology or student-centered pedagogies. Professional development, mentorship, and curriculum redesigns are needed to facilitate this transition (Kessler et al, 2017). Without adequate support, innovative methods may be superficially adopted without pedagogical depth or sustained use.

Another key challenge is technological disparity. While tools such as Duolingo, Mondly VR, or Kahoot can enhance learning, their effectiveness is limited by unequal access to stable internet, devices, or platforms—especially in underfunded schools or refugee contexts (Warschauer et al, 1998). Moreover, many ed-tech tools were not developed with Arabic's specific linguistic features in mind, such as diglossia, root-pattern morphology, and orthographic complexity. As a result, learners may find these platforms helpful for surface-level skills but inadequate for deeper linguistic competence.

Regional factors further complicate the implementation of these strategies. In the Gulf region, educational systems are often centralized, formal, and religiously grounded. MSA is typically emphasized in curricula due to its role in religious texts and formal discourse. Learners may have limited exposure to spoken dialects in academic settings, and cultural immersion is often restricted to institutional contexts. Therefore, introducing dialectal variation or informal interaction may be met with institutional resistance or cultural sensitivity concerns.

Conversely, in the Levantine region, where Arabic diglossia is more fluid in daily life, learners often switch between MSA and dialect organically. Educational practices may be more receptive to integrating spoken Arabic into classrooms, and exposure to films, songs, and colloquial dialogues is common. As such, strategies that blend dialectal input with MSA—such as role-plays using Levantine Arabic for conversation and MSA for formal tasks—may align more naturally with learners' experiences and societal language practices (Ryding, 2014).

These distinctions suggest that innovative approaches must be regionally contextualized. A "one-size-fits-all" curriculum risks ignoring the linguistic realities and cultural dynamics of specific learner populations. For instance, Gulf learners might benefit from scaffolded exposure to dialects alongside Qur'anic Arabic, while Levantine learners may respond better to immersive, informal dialogue exercises. Educators and curriculum designers must account for these socio-cultural variables in developing effective programs.

Culturally immersive strategies also carry both promise and pitfalls. While they offer learners meaningful context and deepen cultural understanding, there is a danger of perpetuating stereotypes or simplifying the diversity of Arab cultures. A robust cultural curriculum must go beyond cuisine, clothing, or festivals to include nuanced discussion of history, regional diversity, and contemporary Arab societies. Instructors should be trained to facilitate culturally sensitive and inclusive materials that challenge essentialist narratives (Albirini, 2016).

Additionally, learner variables—such as age, motivation, literacy level, and educational background—affect the success of these methods. Adult learners may find technology-based self-learning empowering, while younger students might respond better to gamified platforms. Refugees or migrant learners, on the other hand, may face trauma-related or socio-economic barriers that limit access or engagement. Inclusive design must accommodate these differences through differentiated instruction and accessible learning pathways (Brown, 2014).

Despite these challenges, several strategies can increase the effectiveness and equity of implementation. First, blended learning offers a practical compromise—leveraging online platforms while retaining face-to-face interaction. Second, regional collaboration across the Arab world could support shared training programs and resource development that reflect the diversity of dialects and cultural practices. Third, creating open-access Arabic language corpora and digital resources tailored to dialect

and MSA integration would help bridge the authenticity gap in digital tools.

The inclusion of Arabic literature in teaching also adds depth to the learner experience. Simplified texts or excerpts from contemporary authors can introduce learners to idiomatic expressions, cultural metaphors, and social discourse, enriching both vocabulary and cultural fluency. Particularly in advanced stages, literature serves not only as a linguistic resource but as a cultural dialogue that encourages critical thinking and empathy (Wahba et al., 2014).

While this study affirms the potential of innovative strategies to transform Arabic language instruction, their impact depends on thoughtful, context-aware implementation. Teacher capacity building, equitable access to resources, and regional curricular adaptation are essential. Future directions should include empirical evaluations of these methods in different Arabic-speaking regions, especially in under-researched contexts like sub-Saharan Africa and refugee education. Only through a comprehensive and adaptive approach can Arabic education respond to the linguistic diversity and educational aspirations of its global learners.

4.1 Future Directions for Research

While this study highlights significant advancements in Arabic language instruction, several areas warrant further exploration. First, there is a pressing need to examine the long-term impact of technology on Arabic learning, particularly how sustained use of digital tools affects language proficiency and retention over time. Such studies could provide valuable insights into the role of gamification, virtual reality, and adaptive learning platforms in achieving fluency.

Additionally, the effectiveness of task-based approaches in teaching Arabic remains under-researched. Future investigations could focus on how these methods cater to learners of varying proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds, as well as their applicability to teaching both MSA and regional dialects. Measuring outcomes in terms of communicative competence and cultural understanding would be particularly beneficial.

Interdisciplinary collaboration between linguists, educators, and technologists is crucial to advancing research and innovation in this field. Linguists can provide a deeper understanding of Arabic's structural complexities, while educators contribute pedagogical insights, and technologists develop tailored tools to enhance learning. Such partnerships could lead to breakthroughs in curriculum design, assessment methods, and resource accessibility.

By addressing these research gaps, the field can develop more effective, inclusive, and sustainable strategies for teaching Arabic, ultimately benefiting learners worldwide.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the transformative potential of innovative methods in teaching Arabic as a second language, particularly through the integration of technology, communicative approaches, cultural immersion, and task-based learning. These strategies directly address persistent challenges in Arabic pedagogy—such as diglossia, learner disengagement, and overreliance on grammar-translation methods—by promoting functional language use and contextualized learning. The findings underscore the importance of aligning teaching practices with modern second-language acquisition theory while recognizing the regional and cultural complexities unique to Arabic instruction. Pedagogical innovation must be supported by robust teacher training, equitable access to resources, and curricular flexibility tailored to learners' sociolinguistic environments, such as those in the Gulf versus Levantine regions. Moving forward, interdisciplinary collaboration between educators, linguists, and technologists is essential to refine and adapt these strategies across diverse educational contexts. As Arabic language education enters a new era, adopting evidence-based, inclusive, and context-aware practices will be crucial in empowering learners and ensuring that Arabic instruction remains relevant, effective, and culturally resonant in an interconnected world.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Since 2023, Dr. Neissi has been serving as a faculty member at Farhangian University, holding the academic rank of Assistant Professor. He is also an esteemed member of the Primary Disciplinary Council at Farhangian University in Khuzestan Province, located at the Pardis Rasoul Akram. Additionally, he holds the position of Media Network Manager at the same institution.

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