

Case Study

Analyzing Obstacles to Poetry Comprehension among Persian Language and Literature Students at Dari Department of Jawzjan University

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ABSTRACT

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This research delves into the intricacies of poetry dictation challenges faced by students, with a specific focus on the Dari Persian Language and Literature Department at Jawzjan University. Notably, existing studies have predominantly addressed issues arising from incorrect poetry reading, yet a gap exists in understanding the unique problems within this academic environment. The primary objective is to identify and remediate factors impeding accurate and fluent poetry dictation among students. Employing a quantitative approach and Cochran's formula, the study involved 108 randomly selected students from the first, fourth, and fifth semesters in the Dari language and literature department at Jawzjan University, Afghanistan. The research, facilitated through a survey questionnaire developed by the author, employs descriptive statistics in SPSS for data analysis. Key findings reveal critical challenges, including subpar teaching quality of the Persian language in schools (mean score of 2.59), elevated stress and anxiety levels during poetry dictation (mean score of 2.54), inadequate mastery of vocabulary (mean score of 2.48), and a dearth of practice among students (mean score of 2.39). The significance of these findings lies in their potential to substantially enhance poetry dictation skills, providing valuable insights for both educators and students, and addressing the unique challenges within the academic context of Jawzjan University

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1. Introduction

Proficiency in reading poetry accurately and fluently stands as a foundational skill expected of students in language and literature departments, holding significant implications for their future careers. Researchers commonly define adept reading as the ability to interpret text correctly with suitable speed, tone, and a connection to the content. A more comprehensive perspective includes rhythmicity and comprehension in this amalgamation (Aminabadi, 2016). The mastery of correct reading is underscored by its pivotal role in academic success, as inadequacies in this skill may contribute to failure (Pierangelo and Giuliani, 2008). Moreover, continuous reading is recognized as a catalyst for language development, and any disturbances in this process can give rise to reading difficulties (Dadsetan, 2007)

In essence, the ability to read poetry adeptly transcends the immediate academic context, holding profound implications for the professional trajectory of individuals within language and literature disciplines. It serves as a multifaceted skill encompassing not only correctness and fluency but also the nuanced elements of rhythm and comprehension, collectively shaping the trajectory of academic and career success.

Reading and inability in it is one of the most important areas that usually causes problems for students with reading learning disorder (dyslexia) (Nosrati, 2020). Sara Sharifi (2013) in

her master's thesis under the title "Effectiveness of using the self-review method in increasing the attention and academic progress of students with learning disabilities in Marivan" considers a dyslexic person to be a person who cannot read correctly with normal intelligence.

Individuals within this group often exhibit a slow reading pace, despite their concerted efforts. When confronted with unfamiliar words, they tend to halt their reading and may even steer clear of challenging vocabulary (Aminabadi, 2016). Reading performance, as one of the most intricate facets of academic achievement, plays a pivotal role in shaping overall success. Reading training interventions are instrumental in fortifying foundational skills, encompassing the enrichment of vocabulary, emotional and cognitive engagement, development of reading techniques, meaningful comprehension of written texts, text interpretation, reading speed, cultivation of reading habits, and fostering a love for reading (Mesut, 2015)

Notably, Hojjat Pirzadi (2013) advocates for direct and teacher-centered teaching methods, deeming them suitable for individuals facing challenges in reading and correct reading. This approach aligns with the views of experts such as Shippen, et al., (2005), who affirm the efficacy of direct teaching in enhancing students' reading abilities. The acknowledgment of these pedagogical methods underscores the importance of targeted and

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structured approaches in addressing the unique challenges faced by this group in the realm of reading.

Therefore, the teacher's teaching method is extremely important and decisive in strengthening students' reading accuracy, speed and understanding (Sadeghi Sayah, 2017). Also, according to Alizadeh et al., (2018), the vocabulary library can prevent many students from reading problems.

The current research aims to remove the obstacles and problems that have led to the lack of correct reading and fluency of poetry in the students of the Department of Dari, Jawzjan University. In this regard, the writer of this article, as a result of interacting with these students and also the opinions he received from other experienced professors, has proposed the following hypotheses as effective factors regarding this phenomenon:

The challenges in students' poetry reading proficiency can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, a lack of regular practice in reading poetry has left students with weakened psychic reading skills. Additionally, inadequate vocabulary reserves pose significant obstacles, hindering their overall reading capabilities. For non-Persian speaking students, reliance on their mother tongue becomes a stumbling block, leading to misinterpretations of poems. Moreover, heightened stress and anxiety during poetry reading contribute to errors and misreadings among students. Finally, the suboptimal educational provision in schools further exacerbates students' weaknesses in reading poetry, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and improvements in the learning environment.

2. Research Methodology

In investigating the challenges encountered by a particular group of students, the researcher opted for a quantitative field research approach. The statistical population comprised all students in the first, fourth, and fifth semesters of the Dari Department in the year 2022 AH, totaling 149 students. Following Cochran's formula, questionnaires were distributed to 108 students. The research tool involved a questionnaire developed by the researcher, consisting of "30" closed questions with "yes" and "no" responses.

Post-distribution, students indicated their perspectives on influential factors by selecting from provided options. Subsequently, the collected questionnaires underwent quantitative analysis using the "SPSS" software. This analytical process aimed to identify the most significant problems contributing to students' challenges in achieving correct reading and fluency in poetry. The chosen methodology, combining quantitative research and statistical analysis, provides a systematic approach to discerning and addressing the specific issues faced by the targeted group of students.

3. Findings

Proficiency in correct reading and precise pronunciation of words holds significant importance in the realms of literature and poetry. Individuals within the literary domain who have not fully cultivated this skill often encounter numerous challenges. Consequently, this research endeavors to address this crucial aspect within the literature domain and seeks solutions to the associated difficulties among the participants of this study. Table 1 reveals that out of the total 108 participants sampled for this research, 52 were women, constituting 48.1%, and 56 were men, representing 51.9% of the sample. This balanced gender distribution within the study population provides a comprehensive perspective on the challenges related to correct reading and pronunciation, encompassing both male and female participants.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of respondents' gender

| Gender | | | | | |
|--------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percentage | Cumulative percent |
| valid | Female | 52 | 48.1 | 48.1 | 48.1 |
| | Man | 56 | 51.9 | 51.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 108 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Given that a significant proportion of Jawzjan University's Department of Medicine students are Uzbek speakers, the respondents in this study are predominantly from this linguistic background, constituting 47.2% of the total. This percentage corresponds to 51 individuals. The remaining respondents consist of 33.3% Dari speakers, accounting for 36 participants, 13% Turkmen speakers, with 14 participants, and 6.5% Pashto speakers, totaling 7 individuals. This linguistic diversity among the respondents reflects the varied language backgrounds within the Department of Medicine at Jawzjan University.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the respondents' mother tongue

| Mother tongue | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percentage | Cumulative percent |
| valid | Dari-speakers | 36 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 |
| | Uzbek-speakers | 51 | 47.2 | 47.2 | 80.6 |
| | Turkmen-speakers | 14 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 93.5 |
| | Pashto-speakers | 7 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 108 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Testing hypotheses

1- Students' lack of practice in reading poetry has caused them to be weak in psychic reading.

As can be seen in table number 3, 77.8 percent of the respondents, which is equal to 84 of them, confirmed the effect of this factor on their psychic reading weakness.

Table 3: Lack of practice in reading poetry has caused you to misread the poem.

| Lack of practice in reading poetry has caused you to misread the poem. | | | | | |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percentage | Cumulative percent |
| valid | Yes | 84 | 77.8 | 77.8 | 77.8 |
| | No | 24 | 22.2 | 22.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 108 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The lack of vocabulary reserves of students has caused major problems in their reading. The more vocabulary students have in their minds, the less problems they face when reading poetry. 80.6 percent of the respondents, which is equal to 87 of them, confirmed the effect of this factor and considered the lack

of vocabulary reserves as a reason for their basic problems in reading poetry.

Table 4: The lack of Dari vocabulary reserves, in your mind, has caused problems in reading poetry.

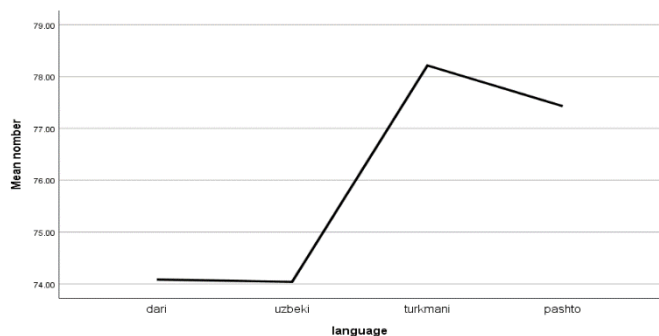
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percentage | Cumulative percent |
|-------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| valid | Yes | 87 | 80.6 | 80.6 | 80.6 |
| | No | 21 | 19.4 | 19.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 108 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

For non-Persian speaking students, their mother tongue has emerged as a significant factor contributing to difficulties in accurately reading poetry. The absence of regular usage of Dari language within family and community settings has been noted to impede students' learning, ultimately influencing their poetry reading abilities (Radfar, 2021, p. 21). However, a notable portion of respondents, comprising 67 individuals and representing 62% of the total participants in the survey, expressed a negative view on this issue. They do not consider their mother tongue as a primary factor contributing to their challenges in poetry reading. This divergence in opinions could be attributed to the unique linguistic landscape of Afghanistan, where Dari holds a prominent position. Given that the majority of the country's residents are versed in Dari alongside various other languages, its pervasive use in daily life, including in society, media, mosques, schools, etc., may contribute to the perception that it does not pose a significant hindrance to poetry reading skills.

Table 5: mother tongue has made it difficult for you to read Dari poetry correctly.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percentage | Cumulative percent |
|-------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| valid | Yes | 41 | 38.0 | 38.0 | 38.0 |
| | No | 67 | 62.0 | 62.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 108 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The following graph is a good indication of the fact that among the students of this department, people whose mother tongue is not Dari got the highest score in the theme of the text of the poem. Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected by the respondents.



The stress and anxiety experienced by students while reading poetry have been identified as a prominent factor contributing to misinterpretations. Table number 6 illustrates that a significant majority of respondents, precisely 83.3%,

equivalent to 90 individuals, acknowledge the significance of stress and anxiety as a crucial factor influencing their mistakes during poetry reading. This high percentage underscores the substantial impact of emotional factors on the accurate interpretation of poems among the surveyed students.

Table 6: Being stressed while reading poetry has caused you to misread your poetry.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percentage | Cumulative percent |
|-------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| valid | Yes | 90 | 83.3 | 83.3 | 83.3 |
| | No | 18 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 108 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

5- Poor teaching of students in schools has caused them to be weak in reading poetry. Gholamali Afroz (2013) in his book Psychology and Rehabilitation of Children, believes that the educational system in schools has a direct effect on the correct reading of people.

Considering the problems that exist in Afghanistan's schools, such as: Dari teachers are usually graduated from a field other than Dari literature, or that teachers have many teaching hours in a week, or that the number of students in the class is more than usual; All of them have become a reason for students to enter university with a weak knowledge of Dari literature (Radfar, 2021, p. 22).

Table number "7" clearly points to the deep influence of schools on the university course of students, in such a way that 88 percent of the respondents of this questionnaire, which equals 95 of them, consider this factor as the most important reason for the weakness of poetry reading in have expressed their existence.

Table 7: The fifth hypothesis test

| Poor Education in schools and in the part of reading poetry correctly has caused problems in your poetry reading. | | | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid percentage | Cumulative percent |
| valid | Yes | 95 | 88.0 | 88.0 | 88.0 |
| | No | 13 | 12.0 | 12.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 108 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

4. Discussion

Poetry is one of the most important parts of literature, especially Persian literature. Students majoring in literature must have complete mastery of correct reading, reading and analysis of poetry. On the other hand, it is not possible for students to analyze poetry unless they prepare themselves to read poetry correctly. Also, since most graduates of this field are assigned as literature teachers in schools, reading poetry is one of their most basic needs.

This research aims to identify the most important factors that affect their reading in the opinion of the literature students themselves and take steps to find their solution, so that in this way, in the most optimistic way, an end point will be put to these problems. Or at least reduce these obstacles.

Therefore, from the point of view of the students, the most important obstacles in reading poetry include: "poor Education and problems caused by the lack of standard Education in

schools" with an average rating of "2.59", which 88 percent of the respondents, which is equal to 95 of them, are attributed to this factor. The second obstacle is "high stress and anxiety of students while reading poetry" with an average rating of "2.54", which 83.3% of the respondents, equal to 90 of them, have acknowledged this point. The third factor is "limited storage and few words in the minds of students" with an average rating of "2.48" and 87.6% of the respondents, which is equal to 87 of them, gave a positive opinion to this phenomenon. Finally, the fourth obstacle that has a bad effect on students in reading poetry is "lack of practice in reading poetry by the students themselves" with an average rating of 2.39, which is 77.8 percent of the respondents, which is equal to 84 of them. This point can be emphasized.

Among the five hypotheses proposed, four hypotheses were confirmed by the respondents and one hypothesis was rejected by most of them. This is a rejected hypothesis, "the influence of the students' mother tongue on their lack of proper reading of Persian poetry", which received a negative answer from 62 percent of the respondents, which equals 67 of them. Since most of the students of Dari Department of Jawzjan University are people whose mother tongue is not Dari (in this survey, 66.7% of the respondents, which is equal to 72 of them), it is thought that this factor can be a fundamental factor in this. The process should be presented; But the opposite of this case was proven. In the rejection of this hypothesis, one of the reasons that can be mentioned as an influential factor is the proficiency and speaking of Dari language by most of the residents of Afghanistan, especially the residents of the city centers. Maybe if this factor is raised in another environment and in another language where those who are trained are not native speakers of that language and their mother tongue is something else; This factor is approved by the respondents of that survey.

5. Conclusion

In light of the research findings aimed at ameliorating the challenges associated with incorrect and disjointed poetry reading among students in the Department of Dari at Jawzjan University, the following recommendations are put forth: Firstly, there is a pressing need for a concerted effort from teachers and influential figures within the country's educational system to enhance the overall quality of education. A specific focus should be placed on refining correct reading skills and fostering a deeper understanding of Dari poetry among students. This entails a comprehensive review of the curriculum and teaching methodologies to ensure they align with the specific needs of the students within the Department of Dari. Secondly, addressing the psychological well-being of students is crucial in overcoming stress and anxiety, which have been identified as significant barriers to effective poetry reading. University professors, families, and school teachers should collaboratively implement psychological support mechanisms to create a nurturing environment. By recognizing and alleviating the emotional challenges faced by students, educators can contribute to a more conducive atmosphere for the development of improved poetry reading skills. Furthermore, an emphasis on vocabulary development strategies is paramount to overcoming language-related obstacles. Students should be encouraged to engage in extensive research and study, and professors, families, mass media, and the educational system should collectively implement detailed planning to enrich students' vocabulary reserves. This strategic approach aims to equip students with the linguistic tools necessary for a more nuanced and accurate interpretation of poetic texts.

Lastly, the promotion of practice and motivation is essential in fostering continuous improvement in poetry reading

skills. Both students and their support systems, including professors and families, should actively encourage increased effort and practice. Establishing an environment that fosters enthusiasm and motivation for continuous learning is pivotal in cultivating a sustained commitment to the refinement of poetry reading abilities. In summary, these recommendations span educational strategies, psychological support, vocabulary development, and the promotion of diligent practice. The implementation of these suggestions in a collaborative manner holds the potential to create a more effective and supportive learning environment for students in the Department of Dari at Jawzjan University.

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