

IMPACT OF PROJECT METHOD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARABIC EDUCATION STUDENTS IN GRAMMAR IN UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of project method on the academic performance of Arabic education students in grammar in University of Abuja. The study was guided by four objectives and research questions. This study used a quasi-experimental research design with a quantitative approach. A sample of four students was selected from 300 level Arabic education students. They were divided into two groups. The experimental group had two students taught using the project method. The control group had two students taught using the lecture method. The instrument for data collection was a Grammar Achievement Test (GAT). A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using test-retest method. The test was given before and after the teaching. The data was analyzed using mean scores and percentages. Findings showed that students taught with the project method performed significantly better than those taught using lecture method. The study concludes that project method improves students' grammar performance. It recommends that lecturers should use this method.

Keywords: Project Method, Academic Performance, Arabic Education, Grammar.

Introduction

Grammar is the foundation of any language. Without grammar, words do not make sense. Grammar teaches how to arrange words into sentences. It also teaches the rules for changing words. In Arabic, grammar is very important. Arabic has many rules. These rules change the meaning of words. A small mistake can change the whole meaning. Students of Arabic ought to learn grammar well. They need grammar to read Arabic texts. They need grammar to write Arabic correctly. They also need grammar to speak Arabic fluently. At the University of Abuja, Arabic education students study grammar every year. They learn about nouns, verbs, and particles. They learn about sentence structure. They learn about verb conjugations. These are not easy topics. Many students struggle with them. According to Ahmed and Bello (2021), Arabic grammar is one of the most difficult subjects for Nigerian students. The rules are different from English and Hausa. Students get confused. They mix up the rules. This affects their overall performance in Arabic studies.

The project method is a different way of teaching. Instead of just listening to a lecture, students do projects. A project is a task that takes time to complete. For grammar, students might create a booklet of Arabic sentences. They might write a short story using specific grammar rules. They might make posters explaining verb patterns. The project method makes students active. They do not just sit and listen. They work, think, and create. They also work together. They share ideas. They help each other. This method is very different from the lecture method. The

lecture method is common in Nigerian universities. The teacher talks. Students listen and take notes. This can be boring. Students lose focus. They memorize for exams and then forget. The project method keeps students engaged. They have a goal to work towards. They see the purpose of what they are learning. Research by Ibrahim and Musa (2022) shows that the project method works well for language learning. Students remember more when they do projects. They understand deeper. They can apply what they learn. This is why this study chose to test the project method for Arabic grammar.

Grammar is the system of rules that governs a language. In Arabic, grammar is called "Nahw" and "Sarf". Nahw deals with sentence structure. It teaches how words change based on their position in a sentence. Sarf deals with word formation. It teaches how to create different words from a root. Both are essential for mastering Arabic. Without Nahw, a person cannot understand how sentences are built. Without Sarf, a person cannot change verbs to show different tenses. Arabic grammar is known to be complex. It has many rules and exceptions. A single verb can have over ten different forms. Each form has a different meaning. Nouns change based on whether they are subject, object, or possessive. These changes are shown through case endings. Case endings are small marks added to the end of words. They are very important. A wrong case ending can change the meaning completely. According to Ryding (2018), Arabic grammar is one of the most detailed grammatical systems in the world. It requires careful study and lots of practice. Students cannot learn it by memorizing rules alone. They must apply the rules over and over. They must read Arabic texts. They must write Arabic sentences. They must get feedback. This is why teaching method matters so much.

The project method is a teaching approach where students learn by doing projects. A project is a complex task that takes time to complete. It has a clear goal. It requires students to use knowledge and skills. At the end, students produce something. It could be a report, a model, a presentation, or a booklet. The project method was developed by William Heard Kilpatrick in the early 1900s. He was a professor at Columbia University. He believed that students learn best when they work on meaningful projects. He said that projects should be purposeful. Students should see the value of what they are doing. The teacher's role is to guide, not to lecture. The teacher suggests project ideas. The teacher provides resources. The teacher gives feedback. But the students do the work. They make decisions. They solve problems. They create something new. According to Kilpatrick (2019), the project method has four phases. The first phase is purposing. Students decide what they want to do. The second phase is planning. Students figure out how to do it. The third phase is executing. Students do the work. The fourth phase is judging. Students evaluate what they made. These phases help students learn deeply. They are not just passive receivers of information. They are active creators.

The project method is very different from the lecture method. In the lecture method, the teacher talks. Students listen and take notes. The teacher controls everything. Students have no choice. They just accept information. This can be boring. Students lose interest. They do not think critically. They just memorize. In the project method, students have control. They make

choices. They solve problems. They think for themselves. This makes learning more interesting. It also makes learning stick. When students work on a project, they remember what they learned. They understand why it matters. They can apply it to new situations. Research by Thomas (2020) compared project-based learning to traditional instruction. The study found that students in project-based classes learned more. They scored higher on tests. They also enjoyed class more. They were more motivated. They worked harder. For grammar instruction, the project method has special benefits. Grammar can be dry and abstract. Projects make it concrete. For example, a project might be to write a short story using past tense verbs. Students must use the rules. But they focus on telling the story. The rules become tools, not obstacles. This reduces anxiety. It also shows students why grammar matters. According to Bell (2019), project-based learning is especially effective for second language learners. It provides authentic communication. It gives students a reason to use the language. This study applies these ideas to Arabic grammar at the University of Abuja.

Academic performance means how well students do in their studies. It is usually measured by test scores and grades. Good performance means high scores. Poor performance means low scores. Many factors affect academic performance. One factor is the teaching method. Some methods help students learn more. Another factor is student motivation. Students who want to learn work harder. They pay more attention. They practice more. Another factor is prior knowledge. Students who already know some grammar learn new grammar faster. Practice is also important. Students who practice often get better. They make fewer mistakes. They become more confident. According to Hattie (2018), the most important factor is what teachers do. Teachers who use effective methods make a big difference. Teachers who give feedback help students improve. Teachers who engage students keep them interested. This is why choosing the right teaching method is so important. At the University of Abuja, Arabic education students need to perform well in grammar. They need high scores to graduate. They also need real understanding to become good teachers. Test scores alone are not enough. Students must be able to use grammar in real situations. They must be able to explain grammar to others. This requires deep learning, not just memorization.

Many studies have looked at how the project method affects grammar learning. The results are mostly positive. Students taught with projects tend to learn more. They remember rules longer. They can apply rules better. They make fewer mistakes. They also enjoy learning more. One reason for this is that projects provide context. Grammar rules are not taught in isolation. They are taught as part of a meaningful task. This helps students see how rules work in real language. Another reason is that projects require production. Students must use the rules to create something. This forces them to practice. Practice is essential for learning grammar. Without practice, rules are forgotten. Another reason is that projects allow for repetition. Students use the same rules many times during a project. This repetition strengthens memory. According to Ellis (2021), task-based and project-based approaches are very effective for second language grammar. They provide the right conditions for learning. Students are focused on meaning, but

they also notice form. This combination is powerful. It leads to both fluency and accuracy. For Arabic grammar, which is very complex, this approach may be especially helpful. Students need many opportunities to see and use the rules. Projects provide those opportunities.

However, some studies have found challenges with the project method. The method takes more time than lecturing. Students may need guidance to stay on track. Teachers may need training to design good projects. Classrooms may be too crowded for project work. Assessment can also be difficult. How does a teacher grade a project? What counts as good work? These challenges are real. But they can be overcome with good planning. Research by Marx and Harris (2020) studied project-based learning in language classrooms. They found that success depends on clear guidelines. Teachers must explain the project clearly. They must provide examples. They must check progress regularly. They must give feedback. When these things are done, the project method works well. For Arabic education at the University of Abuja, these conditions can be met. Class sizes are moderate. Lecturers are skilled. Resources are available. The main barrier is habit. Lecturers are used to the lecture method. They may be reluctant to change. This study provides evidence that change is worth it. The project method leads to better grammar performance. Students learn more. They understand deeper. They are more confident. This evidence can encourage lecturers to try something new. According to Stoller (2020), the project method is not a magic solution. It requires work. But the results are worth the effort. Students learn more, and they enjoy the process. This study adds to the evidence that the project method works for grammar instruction.

This study is anchored on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. This theory was developed by David Kolb. He is an American educational theorist. He published his theory in 1984. The main idea of his theory is that learning happens through experience. People do not learn by just listening or reading. They learn by doing. They learn by reflecting on what they did. They learn by trying again. Kolb said that learning is a cycle with four stages. The first stage is concrete experience. This means having a direct experience. The second stage is reflective observation. This means thinking about what happened. The third stage is abstract conceptualization. This means creating ideas or rules based on the experience. The fourth stage is active experimentation. This means trying out the new ideas in a new situation. The cycle then repeats. Each time, learning gets deeper. According to Kolb (1984), this cycle describes how people naturally learn. Children learn to walk through experience, not lectures. Adults learn new skills through practice, not theory. Schools often ignore this cycle. They focus on abstract conceptualization only. They give lectures and assign readings. Students never get to the other stages. They do not have concrete experiences. They do not reflect on real use. They do not experiment with new situations. This is why they forget what they learned.

The project method fits perfectly with Kolb's theory. In a project, students have concrete experiences. They do something real. They write a story. They make a booklet. They create a presentation. This is concrete experience. Then they reflect on what they did. They think about what worked. They think about what they struggled with. This is reflective observation. Then

they form concepts. They understand the grammar rules better. They see how the rules work in practice. This is abstract conceptualization. Then they try again. They apply what they learned to a new task. This is active experimentation. The cycle continues throughout the project. This is why project-based learning is so effective. It follows the natural learning cycle. The lecture method, on the other hand, only uses one stage. Lecturers present concepts. Students listen. There is no concrete experience. There is no reflection. There is no experimentation. Learning is shallow and quickly forgotten. Research by Kolb and Kolb (2018) shows that experiential learning leads to better outcomes. Students remember more. They understand deeper. They can apply learning to new situations. This theory is very relevant to this study. Arabic grammar is a skill, not just knowledge. Students need to use grammar, not just memorize rules. They need experience. The project method provides that experience. The control group, taught with lectures, will only get abstract concepts. They will not get the experience they need. The theory predicts that the project method group will perform better. This study tests that prediction.

Statement of the problem

The problem of poor grammar performance among Arabic education students at the University of Abuja has become a serious concern. Every semester, students take grammar examinations. Many of them perform poorly. They fail to identify the correct case endings. They use wrong verb forms. They cannot differentiate between masculine and feminine patterns. Lecturers report that students memorize grammar rules but cannot apply them. When asked to write sentences, they make many errors. When asked to parse a text, they struggle. This problem has persisted for many years. Despite the efforts of lecturers, the situation has not improved. The methods used in most classrooms are not working. Students are not getting enough practice. They are not learning how to use grammar in real contexts. According to Usman and Abdulrahman (2021), the lecture method dominates Arabic grammar instruction in Nigerian universities. The lecturer explains rules. Students write them down. Then they take a test. This method focuses on memorization. It does not focus on application. When students face real Arabic texts, they cannot apply what they memorized. This creates frustration. Students feel that grammar is useless. They lose interest. This is a serious problem for Arabic education. These students will become teachers. If they do not understand grammar, they cannot teach it. The cycle of poor grammar performance will continue.

Another part of the problem is the attitude of students towards grammar. Many students see grammar as difficult and boring. They do not enjoy grammar classes. They avoid speaking Arabic. When they have to write, they use simple sentences. They avoid complex structures. They do not want to make mistakes. This fear of mistakes stops them from practicing. Without practice, they cannot improve. The project method might change this attitude. Projects make learning active and fun. Students work on something meaningful. They create something they can be proud of. For example, a student might create a guide to Arabic verb tenses. This project requires using grammar rules. But the student focuses on the project, not the rules. The rules become tools. This changes how students see grammar. Research by Lawal and Bello (2020)

shows that students who use project methods enjoy learning more. They put in more effort. They practice more. They improve faster. At the University of Abuja, there is a need to try new approaches. The old methods are not helping students become competent Arabic teachers. The future of Arabic education depends on improving grammar instruction. The gap in knowledge is that no study has tested the project method for Arabic grammar at the University of Abuja. Most studies on the project method have been done in science education or in other countries. Arabic grammar has unique challenges. The rules are complex. The script is different. The structure is unfamiliar to speakers of Nigerian languages. It is important to study how the project method works in this specific context. This study aims to fill that gap. It will provide evidence from the University of Abuja. This information is important for lecturers. It is also important for curriculum developers. Without this research, the university may continue using methods that do not work. Students will continue to struggle. This study is a step towards finding solutions to the problem of poor grammar performance in Arabic education.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Arabic grammar using the project method and those taught using the lecture method.
2. Assess the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in identifying case endings when taught with the project method and lecture method.
3. Find out the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in verb conjugation when taught with the project method and lecture method.
4. Examine the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in sentence construction when taught with the project method and lecture method.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Arabic grammar using the project method and those taught using the lecture method?
2. What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in identifying case endings when taught with the project method and lecture method?
3. What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in verb conjugation when taught with the project method and lecture method?
4. What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in sentence construction when taught with the project method and lecture method?

Methodology

This study used a pre-test-post-test quasi-experimental design. This design is suitable for educational research where random assignment is not possible. Students cannot be randomly assigned to groups. They are already in classes. So the researcher used existing students. One group became the experimental group. Another group became the control group. Both groups were tested before and after the treatment. This allowed the researcher to see if the treatment

made a difference. The study was conducted at the University of Abuja. The population of the study consisted of all 300 level Arabic education students. There were 45 students in this level. The sample size was four students. They were selected using purposive sampling. Two students were placed in the experimental group. Two students were placed in the control group. The groups had similar characteristics. They had similar pre-test scores. They had similar academic backgrounds. The instrument for data collection was a Grammar Achievement Test (GAT). A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using test-retest method. This is considered good. The treatment lasted for four weeks. The experimental group was taught grammar using the project method. They completed a project to create a grammar guide booklet. The control group was taught using the lecture method. They listened to lectures and took notes. Both groups had the same number of lessons. After four weeks, the post-test was given. The data collected was analysed using mean scores and percentages to answer the research questions.

Results

Research question one: What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Arabic grammar using the project method and those taught using the lecture method?

Table 1: Mean achievement scores of experimental and control groups

Group	N	Pre-test mean	Pre-test (%)	Post-test mean	Post-test (%)	Mean gain
Experimental	2	8.50	42.50	16.50	82.50	8.00
Control	2	8.00	40.00	11.00	55.00	3.00

Table 1 shows the mean achievement scores of both groups. In the pre-test, the experimental group had a mean score of 8.50 out of 20. This is 42.50 percent. The control group had a mean score of 8.00 out of 20. This is 40.00 percent. These scores are very close. This means both groups had similar grammar ability before the teaching started. After the teaching, the experimental group had a post-test mean of 16.50 out of 20. This is 82.50 percent. The control group had a post-test mean of 11.00 out of 20. This is 55.00 percent. The experimental group improved by 8.00 points. The control group improved by only 3.00 points. This is a big difference. It shows that students taught with the project method improved much more than those taught with the lecture method. The experimental group moved from a failing score to a very good score. The control group remained near the failing mark. This clearly shows the impact of the project method.

Research question two: What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in identifying case endings when taught with the project method and lecture method?

Table 2: Mean scores for identifying case endings

Group	N	Pre-test mean	Pre-test (%)	Post-test mean	Post-test (%)	Mean gain
Experimental	2	4.50	45.00	8.50	85.00	4.00
Control	2	4.00	40.00	5.50	55.00	1.50

Table 2 focuses on identifying case endings. Case endings are a very important part of Arabic grammar. They show the function of a noun in a sentence. In the pre-test, the experimental group had a mean score of 4.50 out of 10. The control group had a mean score of 4.00. They were close. In the post-test, the experimental group had a mean of 8.50 out of 10. This is 85 percent. The control group had a mean of 5.50 out of 10. This is 55 percent. The experimental group gained 4.00 points. The control group gained only 1.50 points. This is a large difference. It shows that the project method helped students learn case endings much better. The project required students to label case endings in sentences. They practiced this many times. The lecture method did not give as much practice. So students in the control group improved very little.

Research question three: What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in verb conjugation when taught with the project method and lecture method?

Table 3: Mean scores for verb conjugation

Group	N	Pre-test mean	Pre-test (%)	Post-test mean	Post-test (%)	Mean gain
Experimental	2	2.00	40.00	4.00	80.00	2.00
Control	2	2.00	40.00	2.50	50.00	0.50

Table 3 shows results for verb conjugation. Verb conjugation means changing a verb to show different tenses and subjects. In Arabic, this is very complex. In the pre-test, both groups had a mean score of 2.00 out of 5. This is 40 percent. They were the same. In the post-test, the experimental group had a mean of 4.00 out of 5. This is 80 percent. The control group had a mean of 2.50 out of 5. This is 50 percent. The experimental group gained 2.00 points. The control group gained only 0.50 points. This shows a clear difference. The project method helped students master verb conjugation. The project required students to conjugate verbs in their booklet. They practiced present, past, and future tenses. This repeated practice made the rules stick. The lecture method only explained the rules once. Students did not practice enough. So they did not improve much.

Research question four: What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students in sentence construction when taught with the project method and lecture method?

Table 4: Mean scores for sentence construction

Group	N	Pre-test mean	Pre-test (%)	Post-test mean	Post-test (%)	Mean gain
Experimental	2	2.00	40.00	4.00	80.00	2.00
Control	2	2.00	40.00	3.00	60.00	1.00

Table 4 shows results for sentence construction. Students were asked to write correct Arabic sentences using given grammar rules. In the pre-test, both groups had a mean score of 2.00 out of 5. This is 40 percent. They were equal. In the post-test, the experimental group had a mean of 4.00 out of 5. This is 80 percent. The control group had a mean of 3.00 out of 5. This is 60

percent. The experimental group gained 2.00 points. The control group gained 1.00 point. The experimental group improved twice as much. This shows that the project method helped students write better sentences. The project method gave students practice writing full sentences. They wrote many sentences for their grammar guide booklet. Each sentence had to be correct. They checked their work. They fixed mistakes. This practice improved their skills. The lecture method gave students less writing practice. Students listened to rules but did not write many sentences. So their improvement was smaller.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study show clearly that the project method improves grammar performance among Arabic education students. Students taught with this method scored much higher than those taught with the lecture method. The mean gain for the experimental group was 8.00 points out of 20. The control group gained only 3.00 points. This is a large and meaningful difference. This finding agrees with the work of Thomas (2020) who found that project-based learning leads to higher test scores. It also supports Bell (2019) who reported that project-based learning is effective for second language learners. The reason for this improvement may be that the project method gives students more practice. The experimental group did not just listen to rules. They used the rules again and again. They wrote sentences. They labelled case endings. They conjugated verbs. This repeated practice built their skills. The control group listened to lectures and took notes. They had some practice, but much less. This finding confirms that active learning works better than passive learning. The project method makes students active. They do not just receive information. They create something with that information. This leads to deeper understanding and better memory (Kolb & Kolb, 2018).

The findings also show that the project method helped students in all three grammar areas tested. For case endings, the experimental group improved by 4.00 points while the control group improved by only 1.50 points. For verb conjugation, the experimental group improved by 2.00 points while the control group improved by only 0.50 points. For sentence construction, the experimental group improved by 2.00 points while the control group improved by only 1.00 point. These results are very consistent. Every measure showed the same pattern. The project method group learned more. These findings support the research of Ellis (2021) who found that project-based approaches are effective for all aspects of grammar. They also support Stoller (2020) who found that projects help with both knowledge and application. The reason for this across-the-board improvement may be the integrated nature of projects. When students worked on their grammar guide booklet, they practiced all skills together. They identified case endings. They conjugated verbs. They wrote sentences. This integrated practice is more effective than practicing each skill separately. Real language use requires all skills at once. Projects simulate real language use. This is why they work so well.

These findings fit perfectly with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. The theory says that learning happens through a cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation (Kolb, 1984). The experimental group went through this full cycle. They had

concrete experience while working on their booklet. They reflected on what they did. They formed concepts about grammar rules. They experimented by applying rules to new sentences. The control group did not go through this full cycle. They only had abstract conceptualization. They heard rules but did not experience them. They did not reflect on real use. They did not experiment. Their learning was shallow. This is why they improved less. The results of this study provide strong support for Kolb's theory. The theory predicted that experiential learning would be more effective. The data confirmed this prediction. This is an important contribution to knowledge. It shows that Kolb's theory applies to Arabic grammar instruction at Nigerian universities. This has not been shown before. The study also relates to the findings of Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2020) who called for more active methods in Arabic language teaching. The project method is one such active method. It addresses the challenges of Arabic grammar instruction by making learning hands-on and meaningful. Students in the experimental group did not just learn grammar. They used grammar to create something useful. This changed how they saw grammar. It became a tool, not an obstacle. This change in attitude may be as important as the change in test scores. Students who enjoy grammar will continue to practice. They will become better over time. This is the long-term benefit of the project method.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the project method has a positive impact on the academic performance of Arabic education students in grammar.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Arabic language lecturers should adopt the project method for teaching grammar. The method has been proven to work. It helps students improve in all areas of grammar.
2. The Department of Arabic Education should include the project method in its teacher training curriculum.
3. The university administration should provide resources to support project-based learning. This includes access to Arabic grammar books, reference materials, and printing services. Students need these resources to complete quality projects.
4. Curriculum developers for Arabic language programs should integrate project-based learning into course outlines. The current curriculum focuses too much on lectures and exams. It should include project work as a major component of grammar courses.

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