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## **E-LEARNING PLATFORMS AND THEIR ROLE IN TEACHING ARABIC AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: “KAHOOT AND GLOBAL ARABIC OPEN PLATFORM MODEL”**

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### **Abstract**

Today's era is characterized by rapid progress, and technology is also experiencing a qualitative breakthrough that has led to the development of means and methods of teaching. New ways of learning, which we have never seen before, have emerged recently based on incorporating a broad variety of learning technologies and strategies to achieve E-learning. One such means is the E-Learning Platform. Over time, these digital platforms have become one of the most important instructional tools of modern times. As such, the present study aimed at introducing the importance of these platforms in general, and “Kahoot” and the global Arabic platform in particular as well as their role in teaching Arabic as a second language. The study identified the most important of these digital platforms that introduce open source courses online, or the so-called (MOOCs: Massive Open Online Course) according to the Learning Management System (LMS), which is one of the most important technologies that not only has facilitated education, but has also revolutionized online education and training. The problem posed by the study is how we can use these platforms in teaching Arabic as a second language! Also, what is the new and distinctive thing that the Global Arabic Open Platform has provided in this field! The descriptive analytical approach was used to present the findings and recommendations.

Keywords: Arabic, Global Arabic Platform, Kahoot, educational platforms, technology, e-learning, MOOCs.

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## **1.Introduction**

The cognitive revolution has reached its limits today through the Internet, which made it easier for everyone to solve a lot of crises through new technologies which we would never have imagined to see on the ground. These technologies include open learning platforms that use the Learning Management System (LMS) and other tools that serve digital learning such as Distance Learning, Virtual Schools and E-Learning, as well as many other technologies that we find all aim at the same goal: integrating technology with education and training, and making learning easier and accessible to everyone.

One of the most popular means of education today, and the most widely used on the level of major educational platforms, is the open source online courses, or the so-called MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) that have proven effective to be the best teacher after formal education as it was found when testing it in the Global Arabic Open Platform (see 4).

### **2.E-Learning:**

Our present day is known as the age of technological revolution and cognitive explosion. The last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed tremendous progress in information technology. One of the outcomes of the advancement of technology is that the geographical gap is bridged with the use of tools that make information easy to grasp and absorb. Technologies make words and sentences easy to learn and promote individual learning. 'Educational technology is a systematic and organized process of applying modern technology to improve the quality of education. At this point, preparation of a well-designed and an applicable syllabus can be a good start for an effective teaching.' (Aly and Can, 2017: 42) The world has become a small village, and this rapid development has been reflected in many areas, including the educational process (Abdul Majeed and Sha'ban, 2015), which in one way relied on the so-called E-learning.

E-learning may use modern communication mechanisms such as computers, networks and multimedia, i.e. the use of technology of all kinds in conveying information to the learner in the shortest time, the least effort and the greatest benefit, in a manner that enables the management and control of the educational process and measure and evaluate the performance of learners (Kafi, 2009).

The concept of E-learning has been spreading since the use of electronic displays to deliver lessons in the traditional classroom, the use of multimedia in classroom and self-education, and ending with building smart schools and virtual classrooms that allow students to attend and interact with lectures and seminars held in other countries through Internet and television technologies and interactive television (Kafi, 2009: 12). Alternatively, they may go beyond them by having special electronic platforms linked to institutions or universities that provide information with a special system (see 2.3).

#### **2.1.What is E-learning?**

E-learning "refers to the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to enhance and/or support learning in tertiary education" (OECD, 2005). This technology-based E-learning requires "the use of the internet and other important technologies to produce materials for learning, teach learners, and also regulate courses in an organization" (Fry, 2001 as cited in Arkorful and Abaidoo, 2014). Likewise, Hutton defined it as "any use of web technology and the Internet to effect learning (as cited in Atrubi, 2015: 118)." Similarly, Bader Khan, defined it as "an innovative way to provide a well-designed, interactive, learner-centered, interactive

environment available for anyone, anywhere, anytime, by using the characteristics and resources of the Internet and digital technologies in accordance with the principles of instructional design appropriate for an open and flexible and distributed learning environment (as cited in Atrubi, 2015, p. 118)."

Meanwhile, Mustafa Jawdat Saleh (as cited in Atrubi, 2015: 118) defines it saying "it means using the Internet in the creation of and presenting educational content to the learner anywhere and anytime. It is the education that uses communication technology to create an alternative learning environment for face-to-face interaction and relies primarily on the practice of distance learning activities. If it involves face-to-face activities, education becomes integrated."

According to Rida Attiya, Sherif Shaaban Ibrahim and Ahmad Abdel Nabi Ali (as cited in Atrubi, 2015: 119), "E-learning is an important aspect of educational technological innovations. However, according to a summary by Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014), (see also Wilson, 2012), there has been an extensive debate about the definition and interpretations of the term E-learning. Some of the authors refer to E-learning as providing complete on-line courses only whereas comprise web-supplemented and web-dependent services for the provision of educational and support processes. Meanwhile, these views can be crystalized in the present study as follows:

1. It is seen as a style of curriculum or information delivery. This view looks at E-learning as a means or method to deliver curricula through the Internet, or any other electronic medium, CDs, satellites or other techniques used in education.
2. It is seen as a way of learning. Proponents of this view believe that E-learning is a way of teaching or instructing that uses advanced technologies such as multimedia, hypermedia, satellites and the Internet, where both parties of the educational process interact through these media to achieve specific learning objectives (as cited in Atrubi, 2015: 119).

## **2.2.Types of E-learning:**

Fundamentally, E-learning involves two types or modes of communication. They are synchronous and asynchronous (Alghatani, 2011, and Almosa, 2001 as cited in Arkorful and Abaidoo, 2014). Synchronous E-learning is real-time learning and as such it is more similar to traditional teaching because communication in this mode is carried out in real time. In synchronous learning, the learners and the teacher are online and interact at the same time from different locations. They deliver and receive the learning resources via mobile, video conference, Internet or chat. In this type of learning the participants can share their ideas during the session and interact with each other and they get detailed queries and solutions. Conversely, asynchronous E-learning is pause-and-resume kind of learning. In this type of E-learning the learner and the teacher cannot be online at the same time. Asynchronous E-learning may use technologies such as email, blogs, discussion forums, e-book's CDs, DVDs, etc. Learners may learn at any time, download documents, and chat with teachers and also with co-learners. In fact, many learners prefer asynchronous instead of synchronous learning because it is not tied to a physical location, and thus learners can take online courses to learn at their preferable time by not affecting their daily commitments. However, with the rise of online technology, another mode has recently emerged. It is called blended learning (for a discussion and explanation of this approach, see Lalima and Dangwal, 2017). Blended learning is the concept that includes framing teaching learning process that incorporates both face-to-face teaching and teaching supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), so the course materials and explanations are shared between traditional learning method and E-learning method in the classroom setting. Blended learning

incorporates direct instruction, indirect instruction, collaborative teaching, and individualized computer assisted learning.

Huda Al-Kanaan, on the other hand, has divided E-learning into three sections:

1. E-learning in the classroom.
2. Distance e-learning (which is what we mean in our study on E-learning platforms).
3. Mixed E-learning (as cited in Atrubi, 2015: 119).

E-learning in general is the activity that the student undertakes to learn - whether online, in-class or face-to-face - through the use of modern technologies such as the Internet, computerized software, utilities such as a smartphone and many other technologies to serve the educational process and make education more fun and closer to everyone.

Perhaps the most important objectives of E-learning as indicated by the Department of Education in Jeddah in 2006 are the following (as cited in Atrubi, 2015: 119):

1. They increase the effectiveness of teachers and increase the number of students in the classroom.
2. They assist teachers in preparing educational materials for students and compensate for the lack of experience of some of them.
3. They present the educational portfolio in its electronic form to both the teacher and the student and easily update it centrally by the curriculum development department.

What distinguishes E-learning is the combination of diversity and interdependence to create an intellectually strong learning environment and an asynchronous learning environment. If we want to achieve qualitative learning, we must pay attention to this method of education because E-learning itself is a cooperative and interactive process constructive (Amer, 2015: 22) that advances the educational field and makes it more fun and useful for the new generation.

Moreover, E-learning does not eliminate the primary role of the teacher in the educational process; his role becomes more important and more difficult. He needs to develop himself to be a highly competent person who manages the learning process, and strives to achieve his high presentation ambitions and technical progress. Furthermore, today's teaching profession is a mix between a professional mentor, a skilled leader and a patient teacher. Thus, in order for education to be at its best and achieve the desired goal, the teacher must combine expertise and specialization and be qualified with an experience that pushes him towards the advancement of the new generation.

### **2.3.E-Learning Platforms:**

Learning platforms are defined as an interactive learning environment that employs web and digital technology in the learning process. It enables teachers to disseminate their lessons, assign their students homework online and divide students into groups. It also helps to exchange ideas and opinions between teachers and students and between experience and teaching expertise to share educational content widely, and apply extra-curricular activities. In addition, it is an opportunity to connect teachers with the diverse new technologies and achieve high-quality learning outcomes.

These platforms use the LMS or may use other systems that are compatible with the learning process introduced as AICC- IEEE-ADL. Nevertheless, all fall under the XML-

based E-learning standard (SCORM: Standard Sharable Content Object Reference Model) (Kafi, 2009: 63).

**AICC + IEEE + ADL + LMS = SCORM**

However, introducing all these systems is beyond the scope of this study. What matters to us is the LMS, which transforms the learning environment using software technologies into a virtual space that enables everyone to teach and learn anywhere, anytime and at times free of charge.

Perhaps the most important characteristics of this system as we found are:

- Conducting assessments and tests for scientific material.
- Preparing and disseminating schedules for the courses offered which are called courses.
- There are reminders and notifications sent in the mail to students about the time period, content and so on.
- Supervising payment for lessons by acting as an intermediary.
- Creating an interactive environment between teacher and student.
- Easy environment for student and teacher registration.
- There are certificates at the end of each course.
- There is live interaction and feedback through each course's feedback.

The best which these educational platforms present are open source online courses, (or MOOCs: Massive Open Online Course), which have proven to be the best teacher after formal education.

Moreover, these courses are based on the system of short and long-term registered courses, which are produced professionally by official or non-official bodies according to a special electronic system, so that the student chooses the right time and place for him to continue his lessons. He can also repeat and stop the lessons at will and then obtain a certificate from the sponsor and the provider of this course. Meanwhile, sponsoring or supporting bodies may be a university, educational or academic institution that offers an educational course for basic, secondary, university or post-graduate education, or for various disciplines that benefit the community.

All this is done online and using a computer with moderate efficiency. Also, these courses may be free or paid depending on the sponsor.

There are many such platforms that teach foreign languages. However, Arabic language unfortunately has not received enough attention although there are platforms for teaching Arabic as a second language, but they are not specialized in it. For example, the well-known Busuu website and application uses the interactive element in education and many other features. Another website and application is Rosetta Stone, the software giant in teaching languages, including Arabic. Also, there is the website and application Interactive Arabic for non-native speakers, Arabic Institute at King Saud University. Coursera is another website and application specialized in various sciences, including international languages and sometimes Arabic by contracting with well-known international universities. In addition, the website and application italki is specialized in teaching languages, including Arabic through live streaming. Moreover, preply, website and application, is specialized in teaching languages, including Arabic through live streaming. Another example is the well-known website and application Edx platform with its rich content of science and knowledge. Also, the distinctive Aljazeera channel, website, application and platforms

provide various services, including the service of and teaching Arabic language. Other platforms are Edraak, Rwaq, and Nafham as well as many other platforms, applications and websites.

### **3.Educational electronic games and their role in teaching Arabic:**

Electronic games are very important for the new generation. Sometimes they do not realize that they live two separate lives, one digital and the other real. They live in both worlds at the same time, which is a form of hybrid and dangerous consciousness as well (Schaaf, 2019: 3).

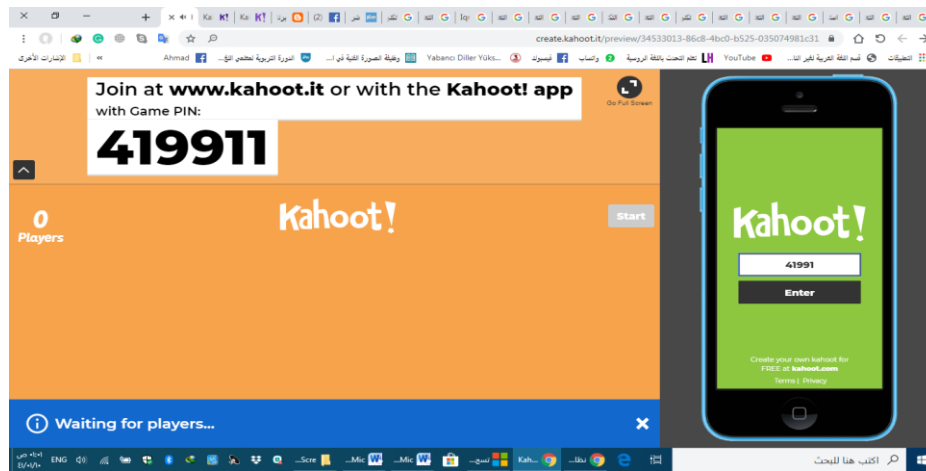
Hence, electronic games have been very important in education for young and old, especially in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. Teaching languages in general and Arabic in particular does not depend on classroom. Rather, the language originally lives outside the classroom. Therefore, the teacher must pay attention to the use of language with his students outside classroom and in different life situations as well as follow up modern technology' (Aly, 2018: 231). It can be computer programs that a student can use in class or at home. They are widely available on the Internet but lack the high quality in design and performance. Alternatively, they may be interactive games connected to smartphones as in Kahoot website and platform, for example. In our opinion, it is one of the most interactive educational platforms that use games to serve the educational process.



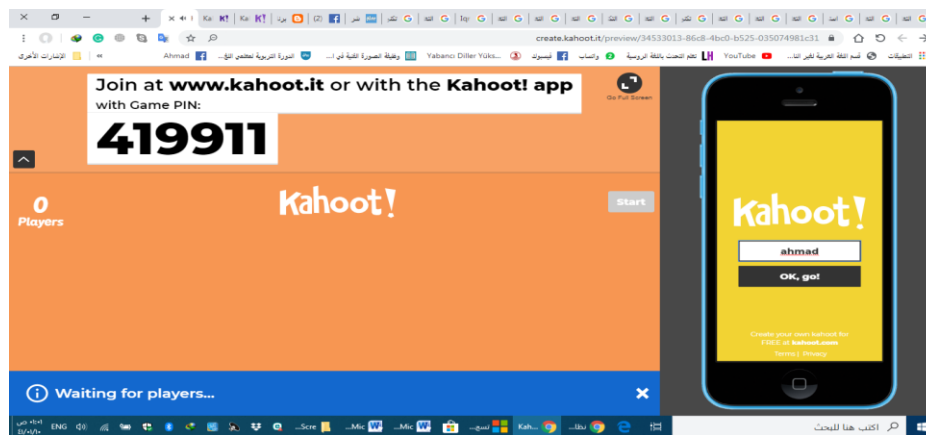
The principle of this platform is based on the design of the teacher for interactive questions that may include pictures or videos through a system covering a topic, using any language the teacher wants to be presented to students through the projection screen and interaction with students via their smartphones.

Here are examples of using the platform in teaching Arabic as a second language:

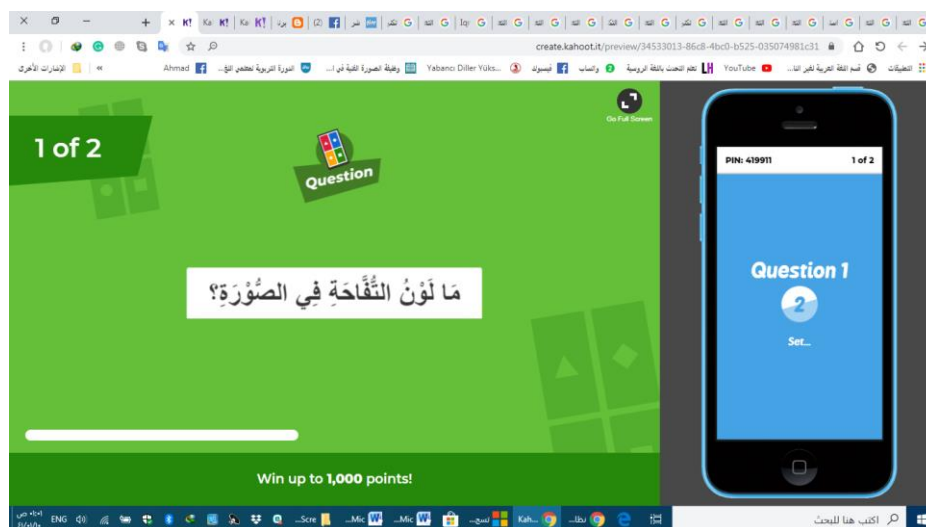
The question appears before the student after each student or groups log in.



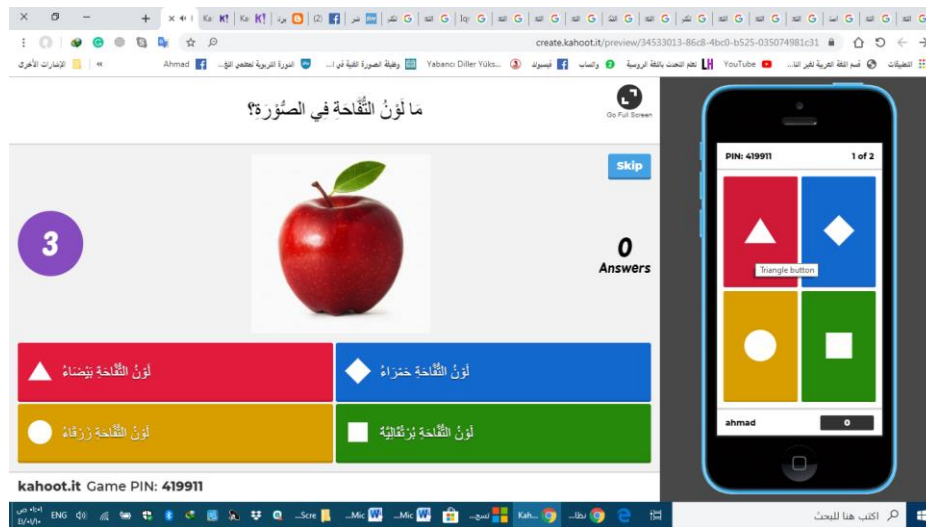
Then the name or group is typed:



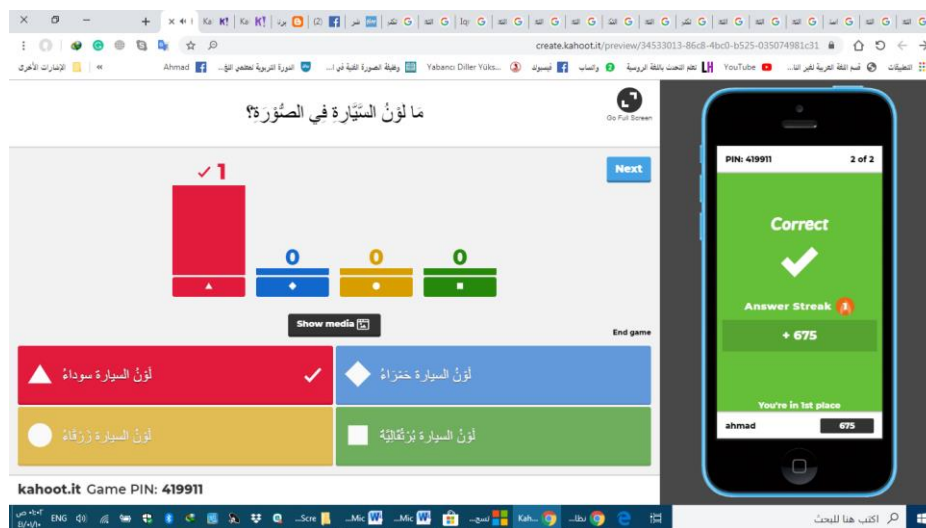
After that comes the question:



Then it proceeds to the question options.



Then comes the answer and winners are determined.



Perhaps the most beautiful thing that Kahoot offers students is that interactive environment through technology and its role in promoting the concept of learning by playing in the classroom in an easy and fun way. In my experience<sup>3</sup>, it stimulates the students and motivates them to move to a new atmosphere full of competition and interest.

#### **4.Global Arabic Open Platform:**

Recently, the Global Arabic Open Platform specialized in teaching Arabic as a second language in a new innovative (non-traditional) to countries interested in Arabic has been launched. It is one of my applied projects winning the second place at the level of

<sup>3</sup> This is based on the experience of GAOP's founder (Dr. Ahmet Derviş Müezzini).



Syrian entrepreneurs in Turkey in cooperation with Spark International, SIAD, and Harran University in Turkey. It is also patented by the Turkish Ministry of Commerce and Technology to be the first Arab platform specialized in teaching Arabic as a second language in new ways and different ideas. It uses E-learning (LMS) through the MOOC system, in accordance with the European Framework of Languages (CEFR) standards, Flipped Classroom technology, and self-direct instruction to serve and facilitate Arabic.

The platform seeks to serve the Arabic language, the language of the Holy Quran, and teach it as a second language by integrating digital technology with education and training, and promoting innovation and experience in finding new ways in teaching Arabic as a second language.

It also relies on modern and interesting means of education in accordance with carefully studied scientific material prepared in advance, and then obtain an international certificate of the Arabic language to be internationally recognized and from one of the Turkish universities.

The platform connects Arab academics in state and private universities to students all over the world using the participatory courses and personal pages system, in addition to the technology (live streaming) to be the first technology launched in Arabic with Arab academics in universities.

The platform is divided into three sections:

**First, Visual Interactive Education:** It is an interactive instructional material that teaches Arabic in a new and innovative way according to the European Framework for Languages and the carefully studied scientific material to obtain an international certificate later.

**Second, Free Participatory Education:** It is high quality sessions or courses offered by Arab academics from all over the world and shared with students through the platform, so that the student can interact with these open courses anytime and anywhere as if living in an interactive classroom environment. What distinguishes these courses is that they are carefully studied and presented by specialists in Arabic for non-native speakers, and are filmed in special studios to be professional and likable for international students. They also serve the sound, image, text, books, infographic, among others.

**Third, Free Chat (Live streaming):** It is a section that teaches standard Arabic conversation through certain hour sessions for a number of Arab instructors and academics who are periodically in the platform so that the student can communicate with the instructor who deems appropriate to his level, and thus he can be as a guide and facilitator to learn Arabic. In addition, there may be live courses for a group of students or individuals through special platform programs that integrate formal education with distance education.

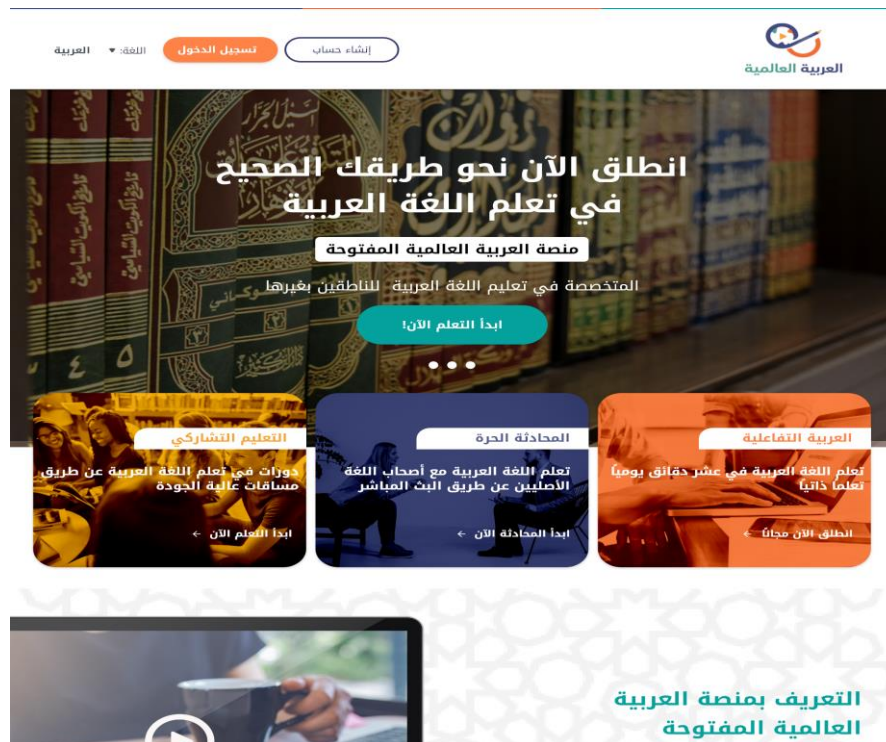
**What distinguishes the platform and its role in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers?**

1. It is an innovative, unconventional platform that provides opportunities and participation in giving, and serves Arabic in particular.
2. There is an increasing demand for learning Arabic by foreigners, and a lack of similar applied research at the level of research centers. If they are found, they are not enough for the digital world, nor do they present with sufficient professionalism, as we found in the Interactive Arabic of the Institute of Arabic

Language at King Saud University, and the Arabic Directory website based on scarce personal efforts.

3. It connects Arab academics with each other and with their students by establishing their own courses.
4. There is the advantage of open chat or live streaming in standard Arabic with Arab academics specialized in teaching Arabic as a second language at affordable prices, to be the first service launched in standard Arabic with Arab academics and not education amateurs as in chat programs.
5. There are monthly and annual subscriptions to stimulate both the student and the teacher to work.
6. It provides the necessary skills and expertise in this field, and it is one of the reasons for the success of the platform as I found (it contains a teaching staff specialized in teaching Arabic as a second language, and always seeks to provide its cadres with new specialists and experts in the educational and technical level).
7. There is a specialized center for translation and research which works to translate scientific researches and printed books from other languages into Arabic and vice versa, with a special section for scientific articles specialized in teaching Arabic as a second language by experts and academics.

This is a picture of the platform showing the sections and what they offer in the service of the Arabic language as a second language <sup>4</sup>.



<sup>4</sup> The platform's website address is [www.arabicglobal.org](http://www.arabicglobal.org) and is currently in trial streaming phase until the official launch in three languages: Arabic, English, and Turkish.

## **5. Conclusion:**

E-learning has emerged today, especially E-learning platforms as a means of conveying information to the learner. It uses computer, networks, multimedia and digital technology of all kinds to deliver information to the learner in the shortest time and the least effort possible in any place or time. It also measures learners' performance and the quality and success of the learning process.

This education has succeeded in moving the educational process from the traditional classroom system to a multimedia electronic display-based system that serves digital education to self-education, as we have seen in smart schools and virtual classrooms.

The Learning Management System (LMS)-based educational platform is one of the new systems that has proven itself on the ground. It has also had a great role in teaching foreign languages through open source courses (MOOCs) as we have seen through this study. Moreover, teaching Arabic as a second language remained lacking in these techniques with some scarce efforts in serving this field until the Global Arabic Open Platform emerged and had a major and leading role in teaching and learning Arabic as a second language. This has been achieved through the introduction of dynamic content, new ideas and techniques that have contributed to the development of teaching Arabic as a second language as we have seen in the study.

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