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Exploring the Impact of Finger-Point Reading: A Scaffolding Strategy for University Students Beginning to Learn Arabic in China

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, more and more universities in China have started to open a Faculty of Arabic, and as a result, Arabic education has received increasing attention in China. Chinese university-level students are faced with certain challenges from a psychological aspect and from the aspect of learning a new language when learning at the beginning stage of Arabic learning. To assist Arabic beginners in overcoming challenges encountered during lower-level Arabic learning and improve students' learning efficiency of Arabic language, the study is devoted to investigating challenges faced by lower-level non-native Arabic learners and analysis of finger point reading (FPR) as a strategy scaffold for *New Arabic Textbook Volume 1* (NATV1) learning for Chinese university-level learners by applied qualitative case study method and taking *New Arabic Textbook Volume 1* (NATV1) as an example. The research data is collected through observation and documentation methods. Based on the theory of Vygotsky's ZPD, this study forms a few aspects to prove the need for integrating FPR as scaffolding support in NATVI learning. The implication of the study includes promoting FPR for beginning stage Arabic learners in China and practicing FPR as a strategy of learning for all NALL globally in lower level of Arabic learning.

Keywords: Finger Point Reading; Arabic Language Learning; Theory of Vygotsky's ZPD; Non-Native Arabic Learner

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1. Introduction

Teaching Arabic is a growing industry in China, so the concepts of language teaching/learning Arabic remain immature. Arabic is a non-popular or "minority language" in China, which is true for most languages except English. For university-level Arabic learners they are zero starting learners. Wen and Zhou point out that students majoring in foreign languages face learning challenges that are distinct from those encountered by students in other majors when they enter university [1]. Consequently, foreign language learners experience significantly higher levels of learning anxiety compared to students in other majors taught in Chinese. This is because they must not only acquire disciplinary knowledge but also overcome language barriers, resulting in increased learning pressure. The situation is even more challenging for lower-level Arabic learners [2–4]. To assist Arabic beginners in overcoming challenges encountered during lower-level Arabic learning and improve students' learning efficiency of the Arabic language, the study aims to investigate previous research that has been done on the challenges faced by non-native Arabic language learners (NALL) and propose solutions to address these issues as finger point reading (FPR). The study is devoted to the analysis of FPR as a strategy scaffold for *New Arabic Textbook Volume 1* (NATV1) learning for Chinese university-level learners. Based on the theory of Vygotsky's ZPD, this study forms a few aspects to prove the need for integrating FPR as scaffolding support in NATV1 learning.

Research questions

(1) What are the challenges faced by non-native Arabic language learners (NALL)?

(2) Is finger point reading (FPR) a proposed solution to assist lower-level Arabic learners in NATV1 learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Background of Teaching Arabic in China

In recent years, to fit the great demand for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in China, many universities and colleges have started offering Arabic language programmes. These programmes typically cover the study of the Arabic language, literature, culture, and various aspects of politics, economics, and society in Arab countries. Students can pursue bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees in Arabic studies. He reported that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is taught in more than 160 universities in China [5], and more than 60 universities have opened an Arabic Faculty since 2014. With the increasing number of Arabic learners in China, the Arabic course has become a hot course in universities instead of a cold course. At the same time, Arabic language education in China has gained significance in recent years due to the increasing political, economic, and cultural ties between China and Arab-speaking countries.

Arabic language programmes in Chinese universities typically cover multiple aspects, including Arabic phonetics, grammar, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills and, consistent with each university learner's development programme, the curriculum may vary from one university to another. For Arabic language learning beginners, most universities in China use *New Arabic Textbook Volume 1* NATV1（الجديد في اللغة العربية）as textbook of foundational Arabic courses for beginning or first stage [6]. The book was published in foreign language teaching and research press in 2002, with the 24th edited version published in 2014 in China. The book is primarily designed for beginners with zero background in Arabic language learning. The content of the book consists of 24 lessons: Lessons 1 to 12 expose learners to the phonetic stage and Lesson 13 summarises the whole phonetic stage. Lessons 14 to 23 are the Text stage, and the last lesson, Lesson 24, is a summary of all the lessons. The whole book consists of 854 new words and 80 sentence patterns. Additionally, there is a supplementary teaching material, the Instructor's Manual for NATV1" (IMNATV1) [2], which was published to guide instructors on how to teach NATV1. According to IMNATV1 [2], the purpose of the NATVI phonetic stage teaching should be:

1) To have the ability to listen, distinguish, and imitate;

2) The ability to associate the sounds and shapes of words and respond quickly;

3) Have the ability to directly establish a connection between the pronunciation and meaning of simple sentences, so as to achieve the initial ability of communication through spoken language.

2.2. Challenges Faced by Non-Native Arabic Language Learners (NALL) in China

2.2.1. Problems That Learners Face

The Arabic language is a zero-starting foreign language for Chinese university students. Normally, such adults need to learn both an entirely new language and cope with first-time literacy, meaning that the language is not necessarily in their first language (L1). Therefore, it is inevitable that students undergo high-intensity and long-term mechanical and boring exercises such as imitation, correction, copying, reciting, and so on in the entry Arabic learning process [7]. However, learners who come from high school (secondary school 4-6) that just finished an exam-oriented education system to a university environment (self-regulated learning environment) find it challenging because the control of learning shifts from a "teacher-centred" culture to a "student-centred" culture [8–10]. In other words, tasks that were previously carried out by the teachers or

educators, such as setting goals and evaluating progress, are now the learners' responsibilities. These tasks can be overwhelming for the unprepared learner who is now in a self-regulated learning environment [11]. Indeed, not all learners have the same ability to cope with the information they are given or know how to learn with minimal guidance. Xu et al. mentioned that students are generally confused about the teacher's letting go to some extent after entering the university [12]. The university beginners are not able to directly connect with an autonomous learning environment when entering university [13]. The autonomous learning ability of Chinese university students is generally low due to the traditional "teacher-centred" teaching mode, which seriously affects the quality of higher education [14].

2.2.2. Problems in the Lower-Level Processes of Learning Arabic

On the other hand, the Arabic language is an *abjad* writing system (where letters mainly denote consonants, and vowels are usually missing or optional). The writing is extremely different from the Chinese language in the phonemic, morphological, syntactical, and semantic systems, and these differences cause additional difficulties for Arabic learners with Chinese as their mother tongue. From empirical studies and based on researchers observing classes [2,4,13,15–18], it is found that word reading is essential and more difficult, especially for novice learners who are just embarking on the process of Arabic learning. In the reading process, errors occur in every letter and word due to similar sounding letters (e.g., ث /th/ and ش /sh/; ه /h/ and ح /h-kh/); and similarly spelt letters (e.g., ف /f/ and ق /k/; خ /kh/ and ح /h-kh/) among lower-level learners. To sum up the findings of past studies, the most common errors are made when substituting other letters with those appearing in the text. This kind of error is divided into several aspects in basic Arabic reading, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Errors that novice Arabic learners face.

Errors That Novice Arabic Learners Face	Examples from New Arabic (Volume 1)
Script Errors	For example, reading the word كتان /kitā:nun/ instead of the word كتاب /kita:bun/ "book"; عوب/aaw:bun/ instead of كوب /kaw:bun/ "cup"; and مهنلس /mu-hand-lisun/ instead of مهندس /mu-hand-dissuun/ "engineer";مستفي /moss-ta-fa/ instead of مستشفي /moss-ta-sh-fa/ "hospital".
Phonetic Errors	For example, spelling or reading the word دفتر /daftarun/ "notebook" as دفتل /daftalun/**;** the word غرفة /ghurfatun/ "room" as عرفة /aurfatun/
Vowel Errors	For example, reading the word صحيفة /saʿhiːfa/ "newspaper" as صحفة/saʿhifa/
Tanween Errors	For example, spelling the word كتاب /kita:b/ "book" in the sentence "قرئت كتاباً."/qara'tu kitā:ban/ "I read book" as " قرئت كتابً."
Shadda Errors	For example, spelling مدرّس /mudarrisun/ "teacher" as 'مُدَرْرِس'. On the other hand, when learners recognise words with Shadda diacritic as no shadda diacritic, it is also considered a shadda error. For example, reading or spelling "مُدَرّس"/ teacher as "مَدْرَس"/school.

All the above-mentioned errors are found in the lower-level Arabic language learning processes for non-native Arabic learners in China. As Koda mentioned that lower-level verbal processing efficiency such as letter identification and word recognition will contribute to successful of text comprehension [19]. Also, Guo emphasised in Instructor's Manual for NATV1" (IMNATV1) the importance of laying a solid foundation during the initial stages of Arabic learning [2]. He highlighted that Arabic pronunciation teaching is the starting point of the whole Arabic language teaching process. Therefore, the teaching of the pronunciation stage has special characteristics: 1) Pronunciation and intonation are the foundation of oral English, which directly affects learners' future oral ability; 2) There is a direct connection between pronunciation and writing and because Arabic is a pinyin text, writing and pronunciation are basically corresponding, so correct pronunciation is the key to memorising written words; and 3) For university students, the style of pronunciation and intonation is easy to fix, so we should pay attention to learning correct pronunciation when learning pronunciation. Therefore, it is essential to assist learners in coping with the beginning stage errors using certain language learning strategies [20,21]. After reviewing IMNATV1, the author found that the instructor's book for NATV1 did not mention language learning strategies other than memorisation and repetition practice. Also, the learners tend to use these two strategies more during their Arabic language learning [3]. Hence, this study attempts to search other effective strategies which can serve as a scaffold support to facilitate NATV1 learning and beginning reading acquisition.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

One rationale for this study is based on some studies supporting the causal link between learning strategies and the automated lower-level Arabic language learning processes, which is supported by the theory of Vygotsky's ZPD and its related scaffolding metaphor. The concept of ZPD was proposed by Vygotsky, who defined "*The zone of proximal development defines functions that have not matured yet, but are in a process of maturing, that will mature tomorrow, that are currently in an embryonic state; these functions could be called the buds of development, the flowers of development, rather than the fruits of development, that is, what is only just maturing*", as shown in **Figure 1** [22].

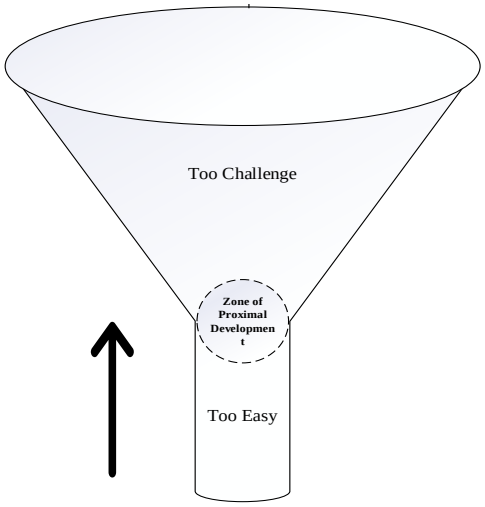

Figure 1. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) [Adapted from the work of Vygotsky] [22].

He further defined the ZPD as those supportive behaviours by which an expert can help a novice learner achieve higher levels of regulation while they are in their ZPD, and this support is gradually tapered off or fully withdrawn once that very assistance becomes unnecessary, as shown in **Figure 2** [23].

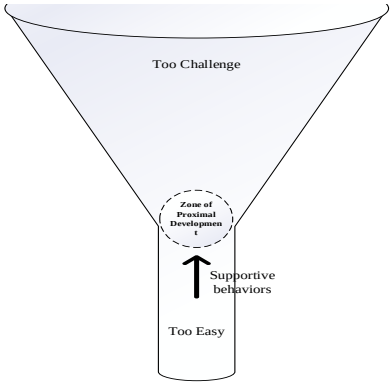

Figure 2. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) and supportive behaviours [Adapted from the work of Vygotsky et al.] [23].

As van Lier pointed out [24], pedagogical scaffolding is strategic behaviour determined by close and continuous scrutiny of what is easy and difficult for the learner. The integration of ZPD with scaffolding and differentiated instruction provides the conceptual foundation for the experienced teacher's continual adjustment of instruction and support so as to maximise each individual student's learning.

Indeed, 2L/foreign language beginners pay more attention to lower-level processing throughout the reading process. Adams began by noting that efficient lower-level word identification processing frees cognitive resources for higher-level comprehension processing [25]. Nishida described that when lower-level processes are automated, processing speed increases since readers are no longer required to focus on word recognition [26]. Subsequently, they can concentrate on comprehending sentence meanings and contexts utilising background knowledge. According to Ehri [27,28], the theory of beginning word reading mentioned 'Letter knowledge' as important for noticing that letters in the text have been altered and for locating words in the text. It helps to unravel the complex relationships between various knowledge sources as they are used by beginning readers to process written text in a focused, word-by-word manner. Also, research in L2 reading demonstrated that readers of alphabetic-second-languages rely heavily on visual processing strategies, especially at the beginner level [29]. Finger-point reading (FPR) is an activity in which all the components of Ehri's [27,28]; and Adams' learning propositions can be offered [25]. Besides, Shepherd's empirical study verified that practice and experience using FPR promoted better achievement in early literacy skills [30]. That is, FPR assists in the development of early literacy skills. Pointing at words in a text may build on the natural tendencies and behaviours of adult-infant, who use pointing and seek to isolate objects or events for attention. This focus on joint reference points scaffolds early language learning and is promoted in the early reading stages.

Moreover, Morris pointed out that FPR involves saying the words from memory while pointing at target words and matching speech with print [31–33]. Morris, Bloodgood et al. investigated how learning to read helped children gain competence in phonemic awareness [34]. The finding suggested that understanding the ability to FPR plays a linchpin role in reading development because the skill helps to bridge an early form of phoneme awareness, beginning consonant, with a later form, segmentation.

Recently, Korbach et al. explored a beneficial effect of FPR on learning performance [35], i.e., a significant shift in visual attention and deeper processing of information when finger-pointed learning was used. In context, FPR assists learners in amending the errors that they make at the lower-level stage.

Finger-point reading (FPR), as the name implies, is to point at words with the finger, at the letters, to read or synchronise "vocalisations with individual printed words" [36], which helps to match voice-to-print, and is associated with success in phoneme segmentation and invented spelling. Morris defined FPR as a "concept of word in text" because it synchronises the voice and the act of finger-pointing of text [31,33]. In other words, it is to follow the words with your finger from "left to right" as you read them. The place where their fingers reach is the place where their attention is most concentrated. Reutzel found FPR to be "a critical strategy during the early stages of learning to read" [37]. Mason has argued that it is essential for beginners to practice these forms of reading to come to understand what reading is all about and how the act of reading is executed [38]. In the same vein, Ehri and Sweet and Uhry noted that skilled FPR learners tend to apply syllable-adjustment strategy flexibly when necessary [39,40].

On the other hand, FPR as a self-management strategy in learning assistance helps tackle problems that occur with novice learners. Pi et al. found that in a series of research, finger-pointing with split-attention condition outperformed the no-pointing with split-attention condition [41,42], that is, finger point significantly contributed to split-attention condition in the learning process. Also, finger point in the unguided self-management phase showed that participants who frequently pointed outperformed those who barely pointed on the comprehension test in this phase. Therefore, these findings show some suggestive evidence for the effectiveness of pointing as a self-management strategy in the learning from split-attention examples.

Several studies have shown that lower-level language learning processes, such as letter knowledge, phonemic skills, one-to-one correspondence, early literacy and spelling can be linked to FPR with children or English language acquisition [18,30,31,39,43,44]. However, FPR in Arabic language learning has not been studied yet. Based on the ZPD theory, this study aims to identify FPR as a strategy scaffold the New Arabic Textbook volume 1 (NATV1) learning in China as shown in **Figure 3**. This strategy can be structured in the form of learners being supported by experts or technology aids that introduce FPR while he/she reads the NATV1 by practising what he/she knows. Gradually, the learner becomes empowered to accelerate learning and later progress from internalisation to repetition as new knowledge becomes automatised as an ability rather than a proximal level of development [45].

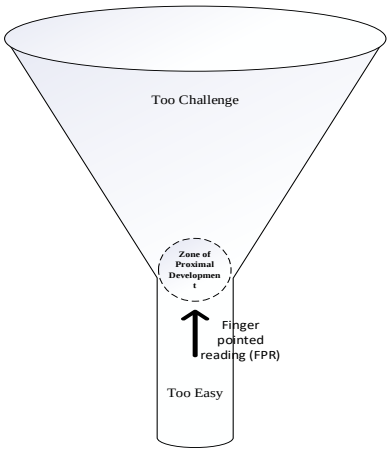

Figure 3. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) and supportive behaviours (FPR) [Adapted from the work of Vygotsky et al.] [23].

We have identified substantial literature on learning strategies that assist non-native Arabic-speaking students in enhancing their Arabic skills. Garba et al. argue that AI intervention can aid students in learning Arabic [46]. Al-Rohili proposes strategies including Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social to assist students in addressing various challenges in learning Arabic [21]. Almelhes found that Arabic instructors' emphasis on enhancing feedback practices, developing tailored curricula [18], and integrating technology and multimedia resources into their teaching methods can assist learners in overcoming the challenges they face. Bahruddin concluded that students benefited from the use of Arabic as the language of instruction in enhancing speaking skills [20]. Nonetheless, research on employing the finger pointing strategy as a scaffold to assist non-native Arabic beginners in overcoming language learning challenges remains absent.

3. Research Methodology

To figure out the research question, the study applied qualitative case study method by taking *New Arabic Textbook Volume 1* (NATV1) as an example. To analysis previous researches that have been done on the challenges faced by non-native Arabic language learners (NALL) and propose solutions to address these issues as finger point reading (FPR). The research data is collected through observation and documentation methods. The procedure of the study starts from selecting textbook content, problem analysis identifies technical intervention method and verification technical intervention method (FPR) based on the errors that occurred during NATV1 learning in detail. The procedure as displayed in **Figure 4**.

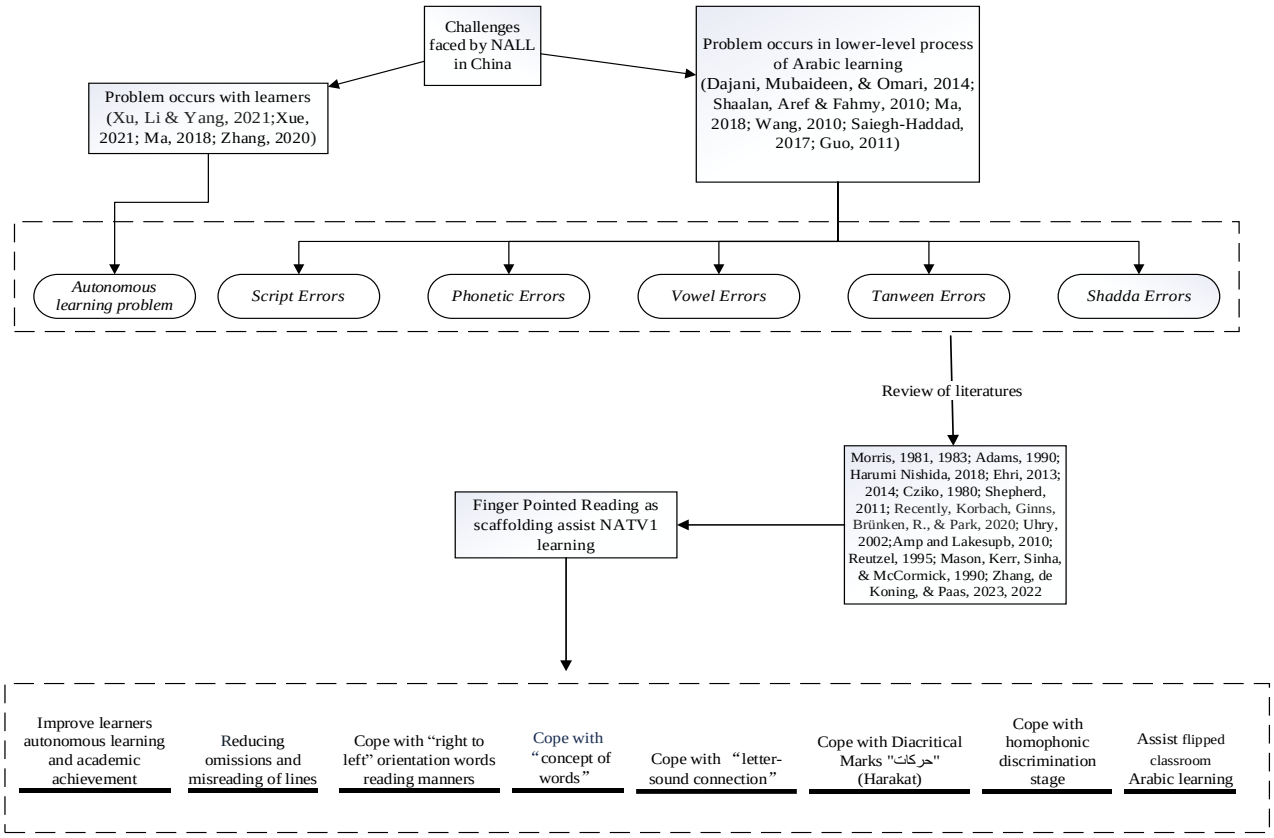

Figure 4. The construct of the current study.

3.1. Selecting Textbook Content

This study will focus on NATV1, the most widely utilized resource among Chinese universities, and will examine representative chapters 1–12, which align with the alphabet stage, particularly those addressing common linguistic challenges faced by students learning Arabic for the first time.

3.2. Problem Analysis

Analyze the difficulties of students faced in the content of NATV1 by the observing of researchers in the class and, through documentation methods, explore the specific issues students encountered: Script Errors; Phonetic Errors; Vowel Errors; Tanween Errors and Shadda Errors as we discussed in literature review.

3.3. Technical Intervention Method (Finger-Reading Strategy)

The study, following an extensive literature review, concluded that FPR serves as a Technical Intervention Method to assist lower-level Arabic learners in China in addressing the challenges faced while learning NATV1.

4. Research Results

To reach the academic goals of NATVI and assist novice Arabic learners in overcoming the challenges they face, it is necessary to guide the novice Arabic learners to use FPR as scaffolding assistance for NATV1 learning in some aspects. Firstly, The Arabic language is one of the morphologically rich languages. Non-native Arabic learners learn that print moves from right to left, and there is no text-transform such as capital and small letters. The rules are entirely different from the Chinese learners' mother tongue, and even English, which learners are more familiar with as a foreign language. Ehri and Sweet mentioned that FPR helps to unravel the complex relationships between various knowledge sources as they are used by beginner readers to process written text in a focused, word-by-word manner [39]. In this way, the learners may not feel such difficulty at the beginning of learning [30]. Secondly, FPR can assite learners achieve the "concept of words"; for example, speakers do not pause between the words they utter, so word units are not as obvious in speech as they are in print. Readers may need to recognise how initial letters in printed words correspond to initial sounds in spoken words in order to distinguish and point to words in a line of memorised text [31,33,39]. Finger-point reading (FPR) assists beginners in understanding the alphabetic principle, which is that speech is made up of individual sounds (phonemes) that translate into letters, and those letters are combined

together to make words that ultimately carry meaning [41]. Moreover, according to Morris [31], "*One of the primary tasks facing a beginning reader is to negotiate a match between an internalised spoken language system and that language system's representation in printed form*". Uhry pointed out that FPR involves the ability to make a voice-to-print match when reading or repeating memorised text in a familiar book [44]. Furthermore, it assists novice-level learners in understanding the relationship between reading instruction and spelling instruction, making letter-sound connections, and when isolating word reading does not make much sense to learners [31,39]. Additionally, FPR improves learners' print awareness and captures the complicated Arabic script cursive writing regarding the various feature prints such as lines, words, phrases, spaces, and punctuation, and prompts them to recognise between the cursive and the printed Arabic alphabet (**Figures 5** & **6**) [44].

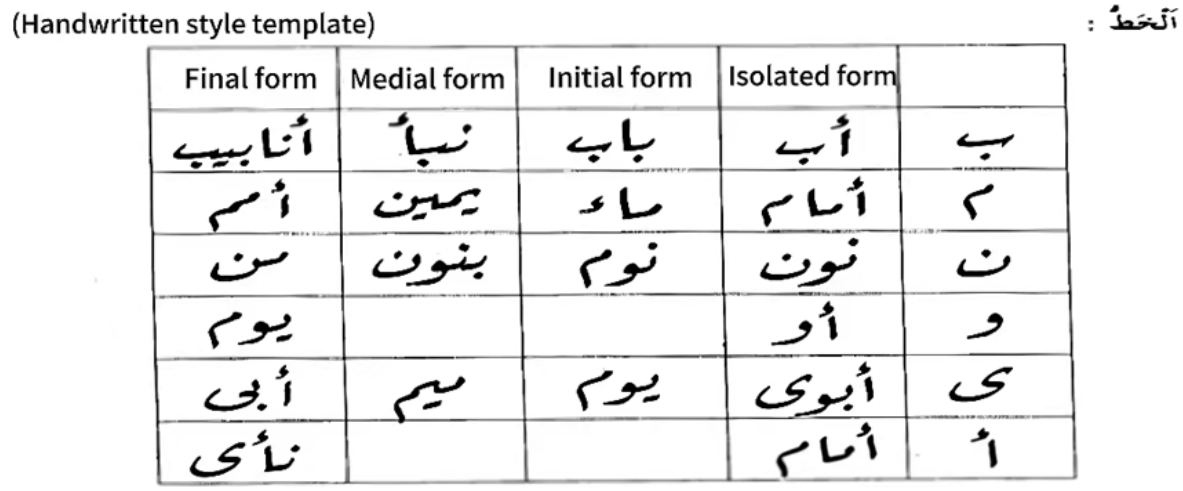

Figure 5. Handwritten Arabic script [6].

Total	Final form	Medial form	Initial form	Isolated form	Letter name
أ	ى و ـا (نأى)	ـئـ		ء أ (أمام)	* اَلْأَلِفُ
ببب	ـب (أنابيب)	ـبـ (نبأ)	بـ (باب)	ب (أب)	اَلْبَاءُ
مـمم	ـم (أمم)	ـمـ (يمين)	مـ (ماء)	م (أمام)	اَلْمِيمُ
و	ـو (يوم)			و (أو)	اَلْوَاوُ
نٰنن	ـن (من)	ـنـ (بنون)	نـ (نوم)	ن (نون)	اَلنُّونُ
يِيي	ـى (أبى)**	ـيـ (ميم)	يـ (يوم)	ى (أبوى)**	اَلْيَاءُ

Figure 6. Printed Arabic script [2].

Also, FPR assists learners to cope with the complicated "حركات" /Harakat/ and Arabic diacritical marks. Clay pointed out that FPR helps to construct matches [47]. In NATVI, Harakat is displayed in every single Arabic word. Guo mentioned that "*In Arabic, there are no standalone vowel letters; vowels are formed by diacritical marks in conjunction with consonants. Therefore, mastering the pronunciation marks is crucial for accurate pronunciation*" [6]. Meanwhile, in Arabic, there are various groups of letters that share the same basic shape and only differ in the location of diacritical points. Perea et al. found that the diacritical marks play an essential role in the "feature letter" level of models of visual word recognition in Arabic (**Table 2**) [48].

Table 2. The "حركات" /harakat/ difference with the words in same basic shape "درس".

(Past Verb) Learned دَرَسَ	**(Present Verb) Learning** يَدْرُسُ
(He learned) دَرَسَ	(He is learning) يَدْرُسُ
(Two males learned) دَرَسَا	(Two males are learning) يَدْرُسَانِ
(Three or more males learned) دَرَسُوا	(Three or more males are learning) يَدْرُسُونَ
(She learned) دَرَسَتْ	(She is learning) تَدْرُسُ
(Two females learned) دَرَسَتَا	(Two females are learning)تَدْرُسَانِ
(Three or more females learned) دَرَسْنَ	(Three or more females are learning)يَدْرُسْنَ

The homophonic discrimination stage in NATV1 forms Lessons 8 to 11 [6]. Finger-point reading (FPR) scaffolds learners to focus on the exact letters and assists them in homophonic discrimination, that is, helps them recognise similar letters and words, from their different mannerisms (**Figure 7**).

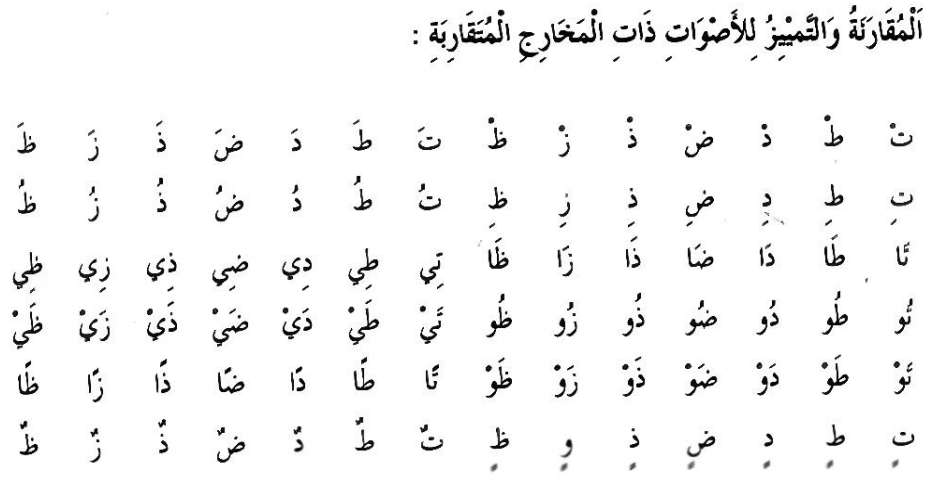

Figure 7. Homophonic discrimination stage in the new Arabic textbook (Volume 1), lesson 11 (p.90) [6].

From a psychological aspect, FPR improves learners' autonomous learning ability, applies strategy in learning, and improves learners' academic achievement. Also, it assists novel learners in adapting to the university learning system [36,49]. Because of the small font and numerous pronunciation exercises in NATVI, students easily misread lines during reading exercises, which significantly decreases reading accuracy and reading efficiency. For example, the Appendix highlights NATV1 lesson 11 " هذان موظفان" /hāzān mawẓafān/ "These two employees". Besides, Finger-point reading (FPR) assists online learning. Nowadays, as the flipped classroom is becoming a trend in future classroom teaching, the research on conducting online teaching and learning for various subjects in Arabic courses is well underway [50,51], and pointer assisted reading (PAR), which is similar to FPR when reading a book, could be an effective strategy in locating issues in the textual content of websites and especially in online learning and educational technology applications [52].

5. Discussion

To improve lower-level Arabic learning among Chinese university-level Arabic learners and assist them in getting through the phonetic stage, this study explores the FPR strategy to assist NATV1 teaching and learning in China. The strategy of FPR as scaffolding, applied in the basic Arabic learning context among non-native Arabic learners, is a novel endeavour. Past studies have shown that FPR assists beginners to cope with "right to left" words in reading and mannerisms, as shown by Ehri and Sweet [39], FPR achieved the "concept of words" [31,33,39,44]; made letter-sound connection [39,53]; assisted beginners to recognise similar words and similar sounds per Morris [31,33]; and assisted beginners to cope with the complicated Arabic script cursive writing, per Morris [31,33]. Finger-point reading (FPR) also encourages students to focus on the content pointed, reducing omissions, and misreading of lines [54]. Finger-point reading (FPR) improved learners' self-regulated learning and academic achievement [36,49]. Additionally, the FPR strategy assisted learners in coping with the complicated Arabic Diacritical Marks "حركات" /Harakat/.

To sum up, using FPR strategy in the phonetic stage of Arabic learning can effectively improve reading outcomes, helping students overcome the beginning difficult stage from both a psychology and practice level perspective in NATV1 learning. Thus, students can lay a good foundation for the language and promote a successful transition to a more advanced stage of Arabic learning.

Anis et al. mentioned the use of creative writing strategies to improve learners' Arabic translation level [55]. Chanderan and Hashim indicated in one study that learners tend to use their preferred language learning strategies to improve their language skills [56]. Moreover, MA investigated Arabic learners' strategy use in Chinese universities and found that students used few learning strategies during study, mainly resorting to memorising [3]. The reason might be that the learners are not familiar with other specific strategies. Additionally, the IMNATV1 did not mention specific strategies apart from repetitive practice (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and memorisation [2]. Therefore, we are strongly advised to guide learners to use FPR as an essential strategy in the beginning stage of Arabic learning in China, and for all non-native Arabic learners in the world as well.

Through a review of literature on the FPR, the author has found that research on this strategy in China is limited to kid's native Chinese character recognition stage [57–59]. Internationally, most studies on the FPR strategy focus on kids whose native language is English, with only a few studies related to adult second or foreign language learning. Up to this point, the researcher has conjectured that the FPR as a strategy is applicable to the initial stages of learning any language and to learners of any age, be it adults or children. We suggest that future research could explore the applicability of the FPR from different language perspectives to validate whether the FPR strategy is applicable to the initial stages of learning in all languages.

Also, for future studies, the researcher suggests conducting an experimental study to verify the effectiveness of FPR for NATV1 teaching and learning in China or for Non-native lower-level Arabic learning globally.

5.1. Implication of the Study

This research presents significant ramifications for the instruction of the Arabic language as well as theories related to second language acquisition. The research sheds light on the particular challenges encountered by learners who are not native speakers of Arabic, especially during the initial phases of their language acquisition, thereby offering crucial understanding of the factors that impede their advancement. These findings can guide the development of educational methodologies and curriculum design, enabling teachers to create more suitable teaching materials and learning contexts that cater to the requirements of novice non-native Arabic learners. The research, in particular, provides effective reading strategies for the initial phases of learners learning NATV1.

This research emphasizes the utilization of Finger Point Reading (FPR) as a supportive method, which provides effective strategies to tackle these difficulties. Evidence indicates that the integration of FPR in teaching lower-level Arabic can significantly boost students' fluency and understanding in reading, creating a more dynamic and participatory learning experience. This approach can foster better retention among students, increase their involvement, and establish a solid groundwork in the language, especially in addressing challenges related to recognizing script, pronunciation, and vocabulary development.

Additionally, the research enhances the broader domain of second language acquisition (SLA) by confirming the successful application of FPR in accordance with established theoretical frameworks. This deepens the comprehension of how particular pedagogical strategies can aid the acquisition of a language as intricate as Arabic. These results not only advocate for the use of FPR but also promote the investigation of additional support strategies that could aid Arabic learners.

In the end, this research provides significant insights for educators and those involved in curriculum development, offering data-driven suggestions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of Arabic language teaching. Furthermore, this research can inform the development of teacher preparation programs, enabling educators to acquire effective strategies to assist novice students in navigating the distinct challenges associated with learning Arabic.

5.2. Limitation of the Study

One of the limitations of this study lies in the fact that the current analysis focuses on the theoretical exploration and argumentation phase and has not yet been empirically investigated. Specifically, there is a lack of data collection and validation of theoretical hypotheses through experimental design, such as assigning participants to experimental versus control groups and using questionnaires. Therefore, future research should focus on testing the currently proposed theoretical framework through the support of empirical data. By setting up experimental versus control groups and combining quantitative or qualitative data collection instruments, the effectiveness of FPR in assisting lower-level Arabic learning.

6. Conclusion

The research focuses on identifying and tackling the diverse difficulties encountered by individuals learning Arabic as a second language, with the goal of improving their learning effectiveness and overall language acquisition journey. Through a comprehensive analysis of prior studies, the research aims to pinpoint significant challenges that learners frequently face, including difficulties related to pronunciation, grammar, script recognition, and the retention of vocabulary. As part of this exploration, the

research intends to offer effective strategies, including one known as Finger Point Reading (FPR), which stimulates active interaction with written material by encouraging individuals to trace the text with their fingers, thereby enhancing both reading fluency and understanding. This research holds significant value for educators and trainers in the field of language instruction. By exploring effective educational strategies, including techniques like FPR, educators are equipped with methods that can be integrated into their teaching frameworks, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of training initiatives for both novice and veteran teachers. This approach can assist students in addressing specific challenges, including the difficulties of interpreting the Arabic script or grasping intricate grammatical rules, which ultimately enhances their success in learning the Arabic language. Consequently, educators and students alike can gain from more focused and effective strategies that enhance their command and understanding of the Arabic language.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, X.D. and SQ.G.; methodology, X.D. and RH.L.; software, JJ.C.; validation, X.D. and SQ.G; formal analysis, X.D.; investigation, RH.L; resources, RH.L; writing—original draft preparation, X.D. and JJ.C.; writing—review and editing, X.D. and SQ.G; supervision, X.D.; project administration, RH.L.; funding acquisition, X.D. and RH.L.. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

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Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Some or all data, models, or code generated or used during the study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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