

Feasibility Study of Teaching Persian Language and Foreign Languages to the Immigrants and Users of Tehran Public Libraries

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Abstract

This research has been done to survey the public libraries' function in supporting of the language teaching process for immigrants and refugees.

It is an analytical survey. A structured questionnaire is used to gather information.

The study population includes 100 managers of Tehran public libraries attached to Iranian Public Libraries Foundation.

The results revealed that the most managers, 85% ,emphasized the need for establishing facilities for the Persian language and other live languages as a self-regulated learning method in the libraries .

The supply of resources and facilities to instruct the mentioned languages for the users and immigrants, in self-learning process were remarkably lower than mid- level range; all managers believe that those possibilities might be made available, but in a very low measurement around %27. In addition, the amount of using subsidiary services of the library to support this project is lower than the average. The managers believe that they can use these services very low, %9.

The managers strongly urge that the amount of budget is inadequate to instruct and promote a language training system in the libraries with a very low budget, %8. But, regarding the positive views of the managers toward the language learning programs for immigrants, it is hoped that in near future considering the government program for developing the different language teaching systems, the public libraries would predict and prepare the budget and needed facilities to help immigrants and lingual minorities.

Keywords: Language learning, Public Library- Tehran, immigrants, multicultural society, lingual minorities

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Introduction

Usually, the expanding and range of information is more investigated through the public libraries by people. Iranian public libraries foundation intends to help improving and flourishing individual talents, raise thoughts, science and enrich the culture.

“Public Library is a foundation which employs suitable uses of human resources and information by holding a vast number of codified science ;in this way; by providing necessary opportunities ,this foundation help keeping constant learning process and increase social life improvement . Public Library holds a considerable amount of human knowledge, and provides opportunities for lifelong learning of all the members of society to improve social life” (Malek Ahmadi, 2003, 2).

Public library services are divided into two groups: 1) providing services to all users, 2) providing special services for special groups such as immigrants and ethnic groups with different cultures and languages.

A particular supervision must be considered on those are neglected as being various cultures in the society .we can classify these groups as follows: minorities, refugees, vagabonds, people with temporary resident, immigrants, labors and native societies.

Considering UNESCO manifesto for public libraries “Public library is a gateway to knowledge and its services is based on equality and availability for all people not regarding age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social position .Library special services must be granted to those users can’t enjoy ordinary services and library materials at any reasons like languages minorities, disabled people, sick in hospitals and prisoners (UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1995).

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) guidelines for public libraries urge that “one of the fundamental principles of public libraries emphasize that the services must be available for everybody and it doesn’t have to be restricted to a special group of society that ends to deprive the other bands. They must be used for all users with no discriminations and prejudices.

Public libraries obligations:

The following main duties regarding learning, teaching and cultural information must be considered at the heart of the services:

1. Create and strengthen the study habits in children from the early age in childhood.
2. Support of individuals and self- regulated learning methods same as the formal teachings in all levels.
3. Opening up opportunities for expanding personal creativities.
4. Imagination and creation stimulation for kids and adolescences.
5. Raising information of cultural heritage, expressing gratitude for arts, scientific achievements and inventions.
6. The availability of cultural terms for all theatrical arts.
7. The cross-cultural discourse propagation and considering the cultural differences.
8. Protection of verbal customs and traditions.

9. Providing all social information to citizens.
10. Providing enough information services for economical investors, local merchants, associations, and interested groups.
11. Facilities for information development and the computer science skills.
12. Protection and partnership in activities and the learning programs for all group ages and starting these activities if necessary (IFLA/ UNESCO Guidelines for Development, 2001). Observing the IFLA /UNESCO declaration, the purpose of multicultural library services are as follows:

-In a society enjoying various culture, serious consideration is based on the following ideals regarding information, learning, teaching and culture:

- Raising information for positive values of the cultural variations and leading cultural discourse.
- Encouraging for the language variation and respecting for the first language (mother tongue).
- Providing opportunities or facilities for the harmonized coexistence of some languages that should be taught at the early age.
- The protection of language and cultural heritage and supporting the cultural discourse, creativity and cultural distribution to all those related languages.
- Supporting the protection of verbal tradition and impalpable cultural heritage.
- Supporting the coalition and partnerships of individuals and groups enjoying various cultural antecedents.
- cheering up to dominate news transmission and communication means in the digital age and knowing digital well
- Raising the variety of languages on the virtual atmosphere
- Cheering up the global availability to the virtual atmosphere.
- Supporting the knowledge interchange and the best methods and actions related to the cultural pluralism.

The concept of multicultural library enjoys holding united service operations from the whole kinds of libraries.

Some societies enjoy a variety of cultures and languages, focal activities of news transmission and library services are “centralized” not “distinct” or “extra”, and they also planned to answer special or local needs. A library must be possessed a strategy or guideline to present its functions, purposes, priorities and available services in accordance with a variety of cultures. This plan must be based upon comprehensive analytic of user needs and enriched sources.

Taking Issue

Today, in the 21st century, globalization, increasing immigrations, faster communications, and easy traveling, and the other factors caused a variety of cultures among the different nations out of the previous structure and have emerged multicultural society.

Multicultural library can be a code to encounter a society holds various cultures in discourses. The public live in an enormous society which is heterogeneous increasingly. There are more than 6000 different languages around the world. The

increasing rate of international immigration per year causes increasing population by mixed identities and makes multicultural structure of the majority of human societies.

By using “cultural diversity” or “multiculturalism” we mean a homogeneous coexistence and different cultures interaction. According to the universal declaration on cultural diversity, culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations

Cultural diversity is a truth in our increasingly diverse societies, and it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. We should notice that, the market forces alone cannot guarantee the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity, which is the key to sustainable human development. From this perspective, the pre-eminence of public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society, must be reaffirmed. (Universal declaration on cultural diversity, 2001)

Second language learning is a key factor for multicultural society, so, one should learn any other languages out of mother tongue. As this concept is called “second language learning”, but it can also include more language learning even the third, the fourth,....

Language acquisition is one of the most effective and prepossessing aspects of human development. It is also used for communications and operates in a speech community. In order to explore how the second language acquisition happens, we may consider some commonly used topical categories.

According to Lightbown and Spada about how languages are learned some second languages acquisition theories give primary importance to learner’s innate capacity for language acquisition. Others emphasize the role of the environment especially opportunities to interact with speakers who adapt their language and interaction patterns to meet learner’s needs. Still others focus on learner’s engagement with the broader social content (Lightbown, 2010).

The survey and study of languages enjoy some specific conditions like a very peaceful and quiet scientific area, too. A place like a library can be a suitable selection. Learning is facilitated in a cheerful environment. If we can provide and equip our libraries to advanced and modernized facilities, users and students can learn more from what is present in the environment even if their attention is not directed to it, i.e; peripheral learning is going to be happened too.

A lot of questions may arise when we are going to analyze them. Let’s consider H. Douglas Brown’s Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, you would find a little more elaboration: “How does learning take place? Are there specific steps to

successful learning? What mental or intellectual processes are involved in second language acquisition (SLA)? What kinds of strategies are available to a learner and which ones are optimal? What is the optimal interrelationship of mental, emotional, and physical processes for successful SLA” (Brown, 2014).

Recently, in Iran, the necessity of language learning has been discussed vastly by the authorities. Ministry of Education has committed itself to enter teaching of the different languages, out of English and Arabic which were being taught earlier. It is inevitable that Ministry of Education may not fulfill its crucial function without any protection and support of the public libraries, because there are many immigrants and refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen who are not able to benefit the formal educational system, so they have to use the non-formal educational systems. This research has been done to survey the public libraries’ function in supporting of the language learning process from the viewpoints of the managers.

Research questions:

1. Do the managers of the public libraries agree on providing facilities for teaching Persian language and foreign languages as a self-regulated learning method?
2. How is it possible to provide facilities to teach the languages for the users and immigrants as self-regulated learning process?
3. Are there any possibilities of using subsidiary services to support the project?
4. How much budget is available to public libraries to teach and promote live languages training system?

Methodology:

It is an analytical survey. The study population includes of all 100 managers of Tehran public libraries attached to Iranian public libraries foundation. A structured questionnaire is used as a research tool.

After propounding questionnaire, some experts and university professors supervised the questions to confirm the validity referring to the context. The Cronbach’s alpha test with 72% is used that confirms the reliability of the questionnaire.

Literature review:

Leong (2016) in a research named actions & principles from a global perspective investigates the concept of “multicultural library” presented in the Multicultural Library Manifesto, endorsed by IFLA in 2006 and UNESCO in 2009, lays out interesting principles for offering culturally and linguistically relevant, appropriate, and accessible library services in the culturally diverse societies shaped partly by immigrants and refugees. It paves a smooth path for social inclusion and coherence in a world that is becoming more heterogeneous with an increasingly number of immigrants and refugees. Libraries have a long tradition of providing sanctuary to all people who seek information, space and services to understand and adapt to the changing and globalizing environment. In IFLA’s manifesto, “cultural diversity” or “multiculturalism” refers to the harmonious co-existence and interaction of different cultures. It acts as the foundation of our collective strength in our local communities and in our global society. Building on these values, libraries of all types should

reflect, support and promote cultural and linguistic diversity at the international, national, and local levels, and thus work for cross-cultural dialogue and active citizenship. In this paper, I summarize the principles presented in the manifesto and the guidelines published by IFLA. From literature review and survey of library services, I discuss actions and implementation of the concept of multicultural library around the world in the last decade responding to users consisting of more and more immigrants and refugees.

Gundersen(2011) has done research about Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant women. In Norway municipalities are required by the Library Act to have a public library. The public libraries are well used. Women are more frequent users than men, and the immigrant population are also big user groups.

Several Norwegian libraries have special programs or services for immigrant women or they have initiated projects with immigrant women as target group. The city of Lillehammer has run ICT training for immigrant women. The county library in Upland is involved in a Project to see how libraries can play a part in intercultural and political education in adult and community learning for immigrant women. Tromsø library cooperates with the municipal adult learning centre on services directed towards immigrants. Other libraries provide reading circles for immigrant in combination with language courses.

The paper will present these cases and discuss what impact they have.

Findings:

Table 1: facilities in libraries for teaching Persian language and foreign languages as a self-regulated learning method.

statistical characteristics	average	standard deviation	No.	supposed average	differential average	T	free range	possible error
facilitate of language learning	3.39	1.07	100	2	1.39	12.97	99	0.000

The results of the mono-variable T –test considering the mentioned questions, we may conclude that the measurement of agreement on the project were remarkably higher than the mid-level range and those questioned managers had urged that they agreed with providing facilities in libraries for teaching Persian language and foreign languages as a self-regulated learning method up to a point with 3.39 which is higher than the supposed average.

Table 2: feasibility of providing resources and facilities to instruct Persian language and foreign languages teaching

Statistical Characteristics	average	Standard deviation	No.	Supposed average	Differential average	T test	Free range	Possible error
Providing Resources	2.95	1.82	100	5.5	-2.55	-14.04	99	0.000

The results of mono- variable T-test shows that there is feasibility of providing resources for the project from the mentioned managers points of view, as a basis, we may declare that this feasibility is noticeably lower than the mid –level range so that those managers also believe that an atmosphere of providing facilities and resources for the project is in a very low range with 2.59

Table 3. Using the subsidiary services to support self-regulated learning of foreign languages

statistical characteristics	average	standard deviation	No.	supposed average	differential average	T test	free range	Possible error
Using services subsidiary	0.98	1.46	100	5.5	-4.52	-30.89	99	0.000

The results of mono-variable T-test to consider the amount of using subsidiary services of the library to support this project is vastly lower than the average with 0.98.

Table4. Amount of foregone budget for teaching and promoting foreign languages training system in public libraries.

Statistical Characteristics	average	Standard deviations	No.	Supposed average	Differential average	T test	Free Range	Possible error
Support of Budget	0.16	0.39	100	1	-0.84	-21.27	99	0.000

The results of mono-variable T-test is a bit far-fetched to foresee the budget to develop the plan so as the average is about 0.16; we may discuss that the foregone budget to support the system in the libraries is considerably lower than the average and those mentioned managers also urge that a low budget is foreseen to promote and train the discussed project.

This research has been done to survey the public libraries' function in supporting of the language learning process.

The mono-variable t- test revealed that the most managers, 85% ,emphasized the need for establishing facilities for the Persian language and other live languages as a self regulated learning method in the libraries .

The supply of resources and facilities to instruct the mentioned languages for the users and immigrants , in self-learning process were remarkably lower than mid- level range, on the other hand ;all managers believe that those possibilities might be made available, but in a very low measurement around %27 .

In addition, the amount of using subsidiary services of the library to support this project is lower than the average. The managers believe that they can use these services very low, %9.

The managers strongly urge that the amount of budget is inadequate to instruct and promote a language training system in the libraries. They believe that a very low budget, %8 is considered to develop these instructions.

Regarding the positive views of the majority of the managers toward the language learning programs for immigrants and the users, it is hoped that in near future considering the government program for developing the different language teaching systems, the public libraries would predict the budget and needed facilities to help those immigrants and lingual minorities in need of learning languages. In fact the majority of immigrants and refugees to Iran are from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen who are among poor people who do not access to the educational systems, internet or smart phones, so that they really need to be supported by Public libraries.

Suggestions:

Predicting enough fund for each new-year for learning languages through acquisition department for special services to the immigrants and refugees.

Providing enough facilities such as: learning tool kits including books, DVD etc.

Providing referral services to guide users for learning new languages free of charge via social networks etc.

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