



Şen Yaman, G. (2022). An examination of the studies on Arabic Language Teaching (ALT): a bibliometric mapping analysis. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 9(4). 1727-1740.

Received : 24.06.2022
Revised version received : 05.09.2022
Accepted : 08.08.2022

AN EXAMINATION OF THE STUDIES ON ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING (ALT): A BIBLIOMETRIC MAPPING ANALYSIS

Research article

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Abstract

This study aims to use the bibliometric analysis method to examine the scientific articles published between 2000-2022 in the field of Arabic Language Teaching (ALT) and to visualize the obtained data with visual mapping technique. The dataset consists of 861 educational research articles indexed in the “Web of Science” database and containing the terms Arabic teaching or Arabic learning or Arabic education. Content analysis and bibliometric analysis were used in the analysis of the data. In the research, the distribution of publications by language, years, countries, journals, organizations, publications and keywords were accessed. In addition, the data obtained were presented by creating visual maps with common word analysis. The results showed that the most used keywords “Arabic”, “higher education”, “Arabic language” and “bilingualism”. Most of the web of science indexed studies in the field of Arabic Language Teaching (ALT) are from the USA and Israel. The journals that publish the most papers in the field of Arabic Language Teaching (ALT) are "Reading and Writing" and "Foreign Language Annals". This study provides a guide for new studies, to identify the trends in the field of Arabic teaching and to compare the existing research on the topic.

Keywords: Arabic language teaching (ALT), visual mapping, bibliometric, VOSviewer; citation analysis.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, which is characterized as the age of information and communication, language teaching continues to be one of the most important elements in terms of communication. Individuals see language learning as a necessity in order to follow the rapid changes and developments of this age and to be aware of the flow of information in the globalizing world (Gürğenci & Yıldız, 2022).

For this reason, the number of individuals who are interested in foreign language learning is increasing day by day. This increase leads researchers to new studies. There are more than 256 million people speaking Arabic in the world today. Moreover, Arabic is a ritual language used in worship for more than 1,5 billion people worldwide. The decision to include Arabic as a working language by the UN has paved the way for implementing Arabic in educational discourses (UN, 2019). With the increasing importance of the Arabic language in international communication, it has become the language that is increasingly desired to be learned in the international community. Likewise, many researchers state that the increasing demand for Arabic as a second language is increasing worldwide, especially in countries with close political and economic ties with Arab countries. (Habbal, 2017).

It is a fact that with the increasing interest in learning and teaching Arabic, the researches in this field have also increased. Difficulties, developments and solutions in teaching Arabic are changing day by day. These differences are reflected in studies in the scientific field. In the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language, researches are carried out in the fields of four language skills, technology and language teaching, grammar and vocabulary teaching.



Making new plans in scientific research requires a realistic assessment of the current situation. Some internationally accepted indicators are used to evaluate the current situation. One of them is international scientific publications. Comparisons are made based on the bibliometric analysis of these publications at the level of research program, department, institution, discipline and country. Science policies are determined according to the results of these comparisons (Acun, 2012).

According to Zupic and Čater (2015), the link between a publication and other publications can be analyzed with the bibliometric analysis method and many studies can be analyzed in depth. It is an important method in terms of showing the most important publications and authors and revealing the general trends in the field. In this way, bibliometric studies are important in terms of pointing out current issues as well as shedding light on researchers or readers who want to conduct research on any subject.

In the literature review, no other study was found that bibliometrically analyzed the studies in the field of Arabic Language Teaching (ALT). For this reason, it is thought that the study will contribute to the literature in terms of showing the direction and trends of the researches in the related field. In addition, the analysis of the citations in the publications included in the study is expected to be a guide for researchers who are considering doing research in this field.

As a result, in this study, it is aimed to analyze the publications on "Arabic Language Teaching" in Web of Science between the years 2000-2022 with the bibliometric method.

In this direction, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What is the distribution of researches on "Arabic Language Teaching" by years?
2. What is the distribution of researches on "Arabic Language Teaching" by countries?
3. What is the distribution of researches on "Arabic Language Teaching" according to journals?
4. What is the distribution of researches on "Arabic Language Teaching" according to universities?
5. What is the distribution of studies on "Arabic Language Teaching" according to the number of citations?
6. What is the distribution of the researches on "Arabic Language Teaching" according to the number of the most cited keywords?

2. Method

2.1. Research design:

In this study, studies on "Arabic Language Teaching" (ALT) were examined using content analysis and bibliometric analysis methods, which are systematic compilation methods. Content analysis method can be defined in three basic ways as meta-analysis, meta-synthesis and descriptive content analysis (Çalık & Sözbilir (2014). Another method used in systematic review studies is bibliometric analyzes that quantitatively reveal the general status of publications related to a certain discipline or field (Bellibaş & Gümüş, 2018).

Bibliometric analysis is used to understand the temporal evolution of a research field from a multidisciplinary perspective (Bhatt et al., 2020). The bibliometric analysis method, on the other hand, is a content analysis method that reveals the connection of any publication, author or cited author with other publications and authors through visual maps (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

With the bibliometric analysis method, it is possible to learn what the general trends are in any field, what kind of publication cooperation the authors in the field are in, and the general status of the cited publications. Bibliometric analysis and general trends of publications can also be revealed with data analysis programs that offer different visual maps. With the bibliometric method, it is possible to reach the authors who publish together, the authors who are cited together, and the keywords used together (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

2.2 Data Collection

The current study used bibliometric data from Web of Science (WoS) on June 19, 2022. With over 7,000 subscribers, WoS is one of the best known and most widely used library resources (Roemer & Borchardt, 2015).

The WoS database provides access to information on the basis of the subject with its archive collection dating back to 1970. In this study, the words Arabic teaching, Arabic learning and Arabic education were used to search Web of Science database from 2000 to June 2022. The research data consists of 7258 studies using the search terms Arabic teaching, Arabic learning or Arabic education related to Arabic Language Teaching (ALT), which were published between 2000 and June 2022 and scanned in the WoS database. The data obtained were limited to the researches published in the field of Education research and 1185 scientific publications published between the years 2000 - 19 June 2022 were identified. In the study, searches were made without quotation marks in order to identify interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary studies related to Arabic Language Teaching (ALT) and to obtain a wider perspective. On the other hand, the WoS category is limited to education educational research in order to eliminate publications that are not related to the purpose of the study.

As a result, the research was carried out on 861 scientific publications by limiting the research to only the article category. When the same search strategy is performed on a different date, the results may differ due to the constant updating of WoS and the support of the study area with new articles (Liu, Zhan, Hong, Niu, & Liu, 2013).

2.3. Analysis of Data

In the research, bibliometric and descriptive content analysis were used in the analysis of the data. The data obtained in the study were first analyzed using descriptive content analysis. Web of Science (WoS) own system was used for content analysis. The distribution of studies on the terms Arabic teaching, Arabic learning or Arabic education by publication languages and publication years, the countries with the most publications, the journals with the most publications and the universities with the most publications were included in the content analysis process.

The data in the research were also analyzed through the VOSviewer program using the bibliometric analysis method. Common word analysis was carried out in the bibliometric analysis process of studies on Arabic Language Teaching (ALT).

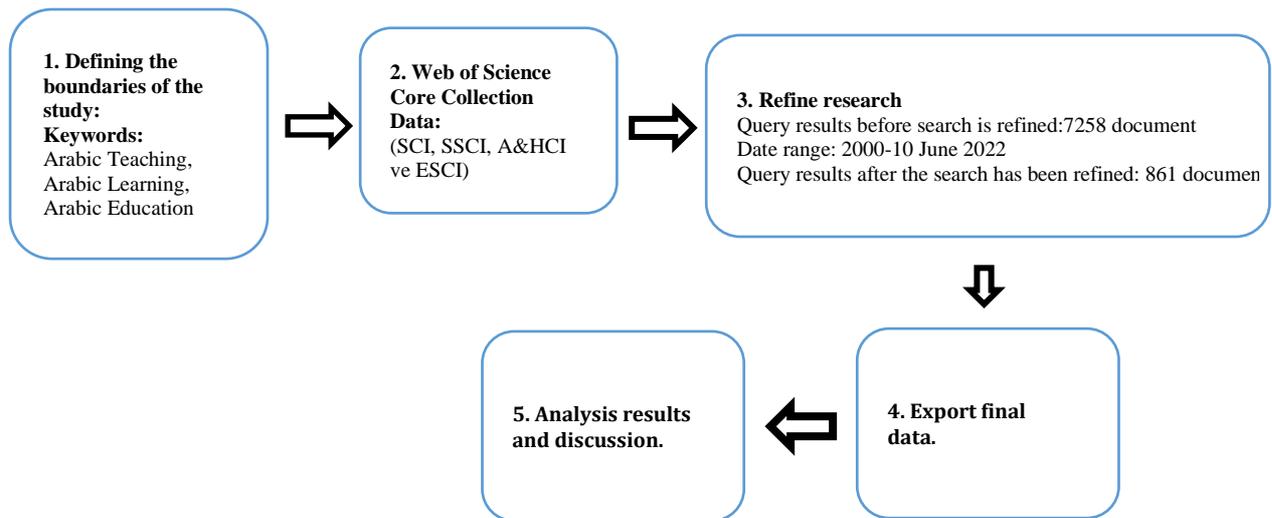


Figure 1. *The bibliometric process of the research*

3. Findings

In the research, the following findings were obtained by examining the distribution of the publications by publication languages, years, countries, journals, universities and the most cited publications. In addition, in the study, word analysis was performed and relationship patterns were visualized in the form of cognitive maps.

Distribution of publications by language

It was seen that 861 articles included in the study were published in English ($f = 785$), Arabic ($f = 47$), Indonesian ($f = 11$), Spanish ($f = 7$), French ($f = 4$), Malagasy ($f = 3$), Malay ($f = 2$), German ($f = 1$), Turkish ($f = 1$).

This result may have been derived from the data on the distribution of languages, since WOS journals generally accept articles in English, and English is more accepted by academic journals.

Distribution of publications by year

According to the data obtained from the WoS database, the distribution of the articles based on years is shown in Figure 2. Accordingly, the least number of articles were published in 2000 and the most articles were published in 2021 in the date range covered by the study ($f = 125$).

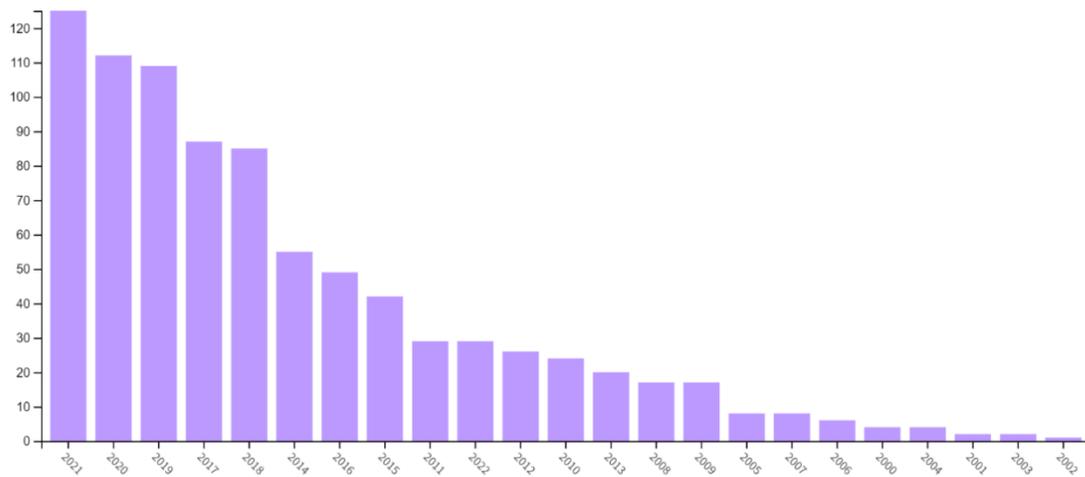


Figure 2. *The number of articles published on the Web of Science between 2000 and 2022*

In Figure 2 although the rate of increase in publications between 2000 and 2005 is low, it is seen that the increase in the number of publications doubled in the years from 2008 to 2018. The figure above indicates the increasing trend in the number of articles over the years.

Distribution of publications by countries

Table 1. *Distribution of publications by countries*

Country	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength	Country	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
Usa	180	1682	18354	Morocco	11	105	590
Israel	114	1193	9154	Algeria	11	16	1573
Saudi Arabia	86	313	6029	Nigeria	11	5	48
Indonesia	61	38	532	France	10	25	2142
UAE	56	260	4262	Russia	10	14	525
England	51	577	8558	Pakistan	10	21	487
Australia	34	285	2885	Spain	10	41	88
Malaysia	32	48	1141	Kuwait	9	26	991
Jordan	27	96	809	Sweden	9	65	449
Canada	26	180	3041	Netherlands	8	75	784
Egypt	25	111	1889	Tunisia	8	20	416

Oman	24	68	1315	Iraq	8	34	446
Qatar	19	92	6142	Bahrain	8	17	262
Lebanon	19	94	1645	New Zealand	7	64	1074
Germany	17	68	1685	Palestine	7	23	1232
Belgium	15	173	1345	South Africa	7	9	499
Turkey	15	65	749	Cyprus	5	44	967
China	13	46	975	Scotland	5	23	400
Iran	13	34	435	Japan	5	85	209

The countries with the most publications in the field of teaching Arabic are presented in Figure 3. The USA (180 publications, 18354 Total Link Strength) is at the forefront of the countries that publish the most in the field. This country is followed by Israel (114 publication, Total Link Strength 9154), Saudi Arabia (86 publication, Total Link Strength 6029), Indonesia (61 publication, Total Link Strength 532) and UAE (56 publication, Total Link Strength 4262).

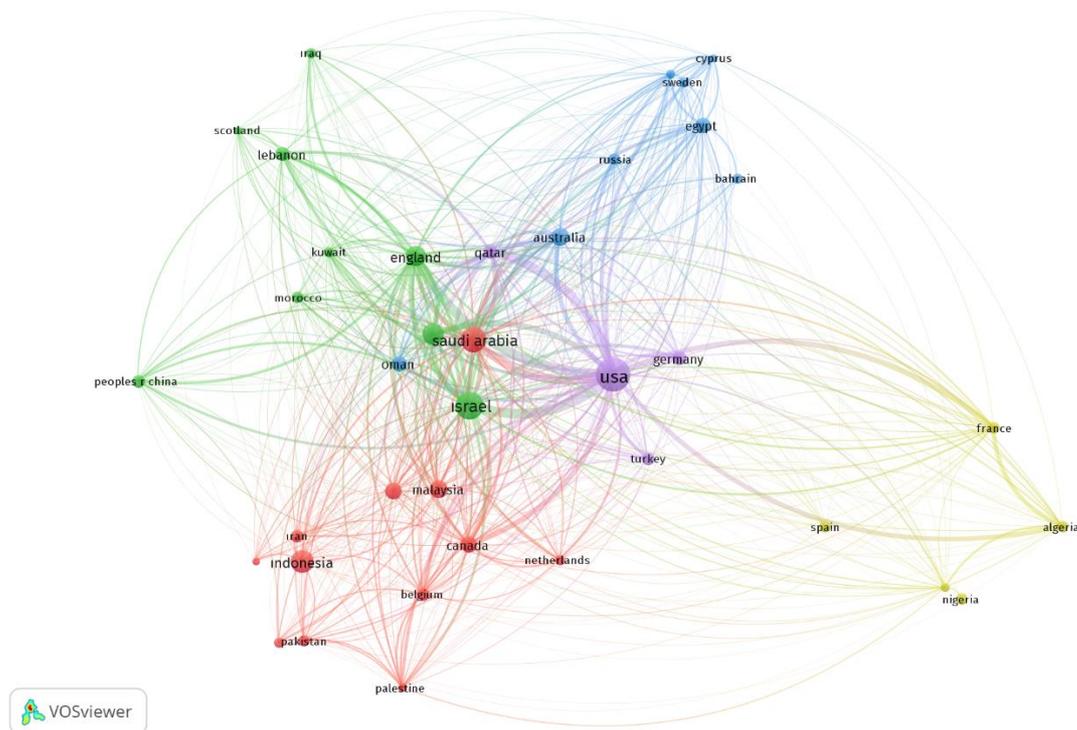


Figure 3. Network visualization map of countries.

Distribution of publications by most-cited journals

Table 2. *Top 10 most cited journals on teaching Arabic*

Journals	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
1 Reading and writing	30	422	3000
2 Foreign language annals	32	401	1291
3 Modern Language Journal	10	301	662
4 Reading research quarterly	6	154	808
5 System	15	147	539
6 Language teaching research	8	128	231
7 International journal of science education	5	114	1162
8 Language policy	8	111	402
9 Learning and instruction	5	105	216
10 International journal of bilingual education and bilingualism	20	95	1169

The WoS (SCI, SSCI, A&HCI and ESCI) journals that contribute to the scientific interaction process in the researches related to Arabic teaching and the bibliometric information about them are given in Table 2. In addition, the network analysis of the most cited scientific journals is presented. The most cited source in the articles is the US-addressed journal Reading and writing, represented in the blue cluster. It is seen that 30 publications of this journal have been published with 3000 link strength and 422 citations have been made. Reading and writing is followed by the Foreign language annals, which is in the center of the red cluster. Foreign language annals journal, on the other hand, has 401 citations and 1291 link strength.

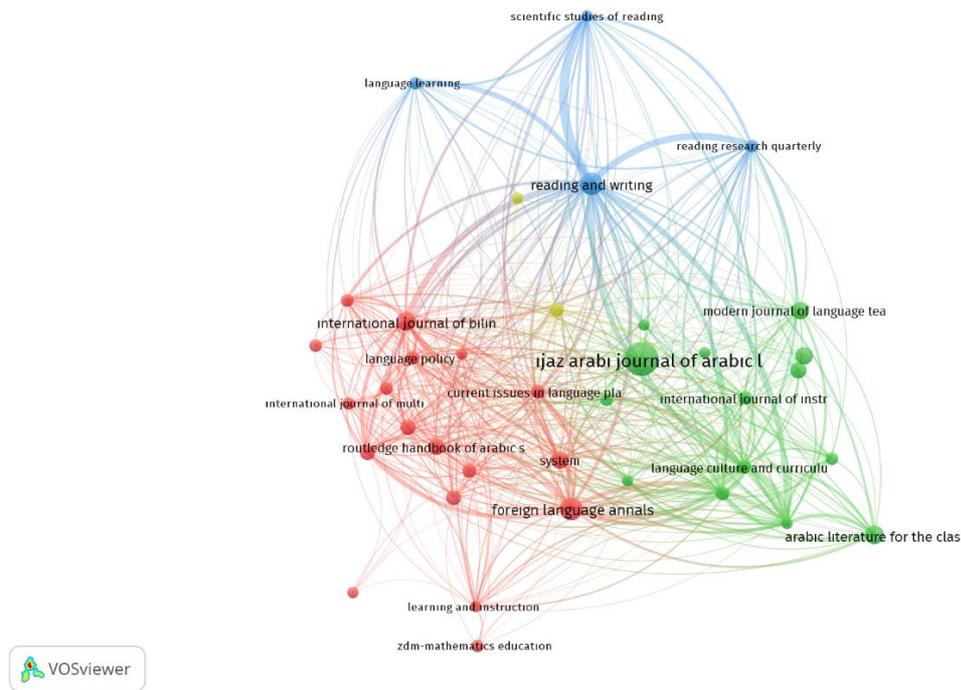


Figure 4. Network visualization map of journals

Distribution of publications by the most-cited organizations

Table 3 shows the number of publications and citations of the most influential organizations in the educational research area. The minimum number of documents of an organization was adjusted as 2 and the minimum number of citations of an organization was stated as 2. The first 10 organizations with at least 90 citations in the relevant indexes are listed according to the number of citations. When the citations received by the publications in the mentioned organizations are examined, it is seen that the most-cited organizations are University of Haifa, Tel Aviv University, University of Washington, Michigan State University, University S Florida, and Bar Ilan University.

Table 3. Citation Ranking of Organizations

Organizations	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
1 University of Haifa	37	458	146
2 Tel Aviv University	21	235	29
3 University of Washington	4	232	6
4 Michigan State University	10	200	4
5 University S Florida	4	166	0
6 Bar Ilan University	18	159	56
7 Technion Israel institute of technology	2	151	0
8 University of Melbourne	4	121	1

9	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem	7	119	15
10	Beit Berl College	9	93	13

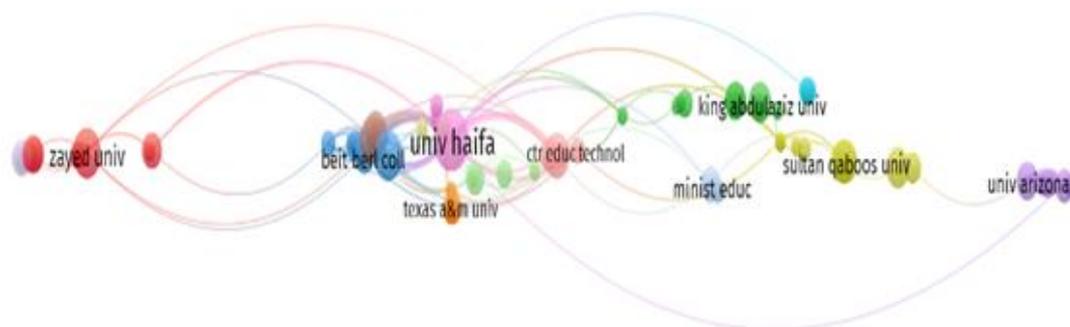


Figure 5. *Network visualization map of organizations*

The most influential publications on Arabic Teaching by number of citations

Although citations to an article do not necessarily indicate the quality of that article, it can be a measure of the impact or visibility of the publication (Lv et al., 2011). In this analysis, using the statistical data in the WoS database, articles with high impact in the field and directing the field are presented below (Table 4)

The number of citations to scientific publications is one of the most important criteria used to measure the scientific, intellectual, economic and social impact of a publication. The average number of citations to a country's scientific publications is interpreted as an indicator of that country's scientific wealth. Small and well-governed countries with a long democratic history transform their economic wealth into scientific wealth more effectively (Allik, Lauk, & Realo, 2020).

In particular, metrics such as journal impact factor, article impact score, h index, which are based on the number of citations to articles published in scientific journals, are considered as "quality indicators" and are also used to measure the success of individual publications, researchers and research institutions (Tonta & Akbulut, 2021).

Table 4. *Most cited publications*

	Title	Author /year	Source	Citation
1	Listening comprehension and anxiety in the Arabic language classroom	Elkhafaifi, H/ 2005	Modern Language Journal	195
2	Motivation to learn in massive open online courses: Examining aspects of language and social engagement	Barak, M; Watted, A and Haick, H. / 2016	Computers & Education	144
3	The Effects of Captioning Videos Used for Foreign Language Listening Activities	Winke, P; Gass, S and Sydorenko, T / 2010	Language Learning & Technology	131

4	Learners' use of first language (Arabic) in pair work in an EFL class	Storch, N and Aldosari, A / 2010	Language Teaching Research	110
5	Web 2.0 and Second Language Learning: What Does the Research Tell Us?	Wang, SG and Vasquez, C . /2012	Calico Journal	107
6	The role of vowels in reading Semitic scripts: Data from Arabic and Hebrew	Abu-Rabia, S /2001	Reading and Writing	104
7	Learning to Read: Should We Keep Things Simple?	Cain,K; Catts,H; (...); Nelson, JR. / 2015	Reading Research Quarterly	95
8	Measuring Oral Proficiency in Distance, Face-To-Face, and Blended Classrooms	Blake,R; Wilson,NL; (...); Pardo-Ballester, C. / 2008	Language Learning & Technology	86
9	English as a medium of instruction in the Gulf: When students and teachers speak?	Belhiah, H and Elhami, M/ 2015	Language Policy	80
10	Numerical Magnitude Representations and Individual Differences in Children's Arithmetic Strategy Use	Vanbinst,K; Ghesquiere,P and de Smedt, B. /2012	Mind Brain And Education	79

In Table 4, the WoS citation counts of the articles in the field of Arabic Language Teaching and the journals in which they were published are given.

According to the table 4, it is seen that the article titled “Listening comprehension and anxiety in the Arabic language classroom” published by Elkhafaifi (2005) in the Modern Language Journal is the most cited article in the field. The article titled “Motivation to learn in massive open online courses: Examining aspects of language and social engagement” published by Barak et. al. (2016) is the second most frequently cited article. This article published in the journal Computers & Education. 144 citations were made to the article until 2022.

The most cited keywords (co-word analysis)

In this group analysis, author keywords of the articles were investigated. When the repeating keywords in the publications are analyzed, it is found that 2455 different keywords are used. When "being used at least 4 times" was determined as the cut-off point, 111 frequently used words were reached. In Figure 6. it is observed that the most-used keywords in the articles tend towards such keywords as Arabic (n=102), higher education(n=24), Arabic language (n=21) and bilingualism (n=20).

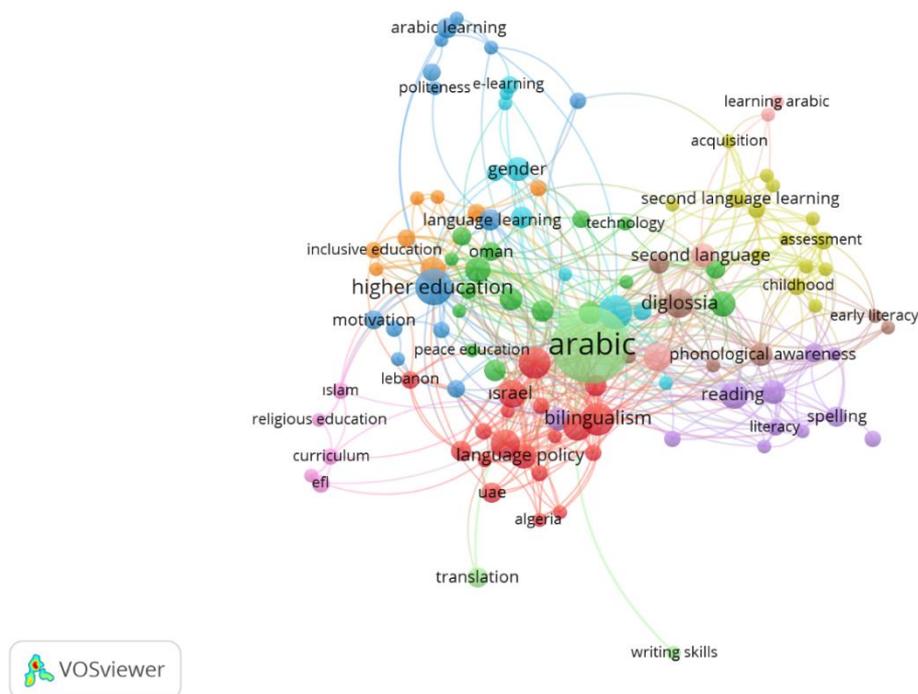


Figure 6. *Network visualization map of keywords*

When the map is examined, it is seen that main clusters (red, green, blue, yellow, and purple) and relatively smaller clusters are formed. It is understood that the red cluster, which is a very large cluster, focuses on bilingualism. Studies on bilingualism often focus on concepts such as multilingualism, language policy and language attitudes. The second large cluster is the green cluster. In this cluster, the concepts of “attitudes, comprehension, teacher education and teacher beliefs” were studied together.

The blue cluster is focused on the concept of "higher education". In this blue cluster, the concepts of "learning Arabic, teaching Arabic, motivation, covid-19, online learning, media and second language acquisition" were studied together. The concepts of "assessment", “second language learning” and “acquisition” were studied together in the yellow cluster, which has the same number of items (n=14) as the blue cluster. In the purple cluster, the concepts of "reading", "spelling" and "Arabic as a foreign language" take place in the center.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The present study used the bibliometric method to identify trends and changes in ALT “Arabic Language Teaching” over the past 22 years. In this study, in which citation information was used, analysis was carried out on publications, publication years, countries, authors, institutions and research topics. Due to field limitations, it is not possible to provide a complete description of all major publications in the field. When the literature is examined, it has been determined that there is no direct bibliometric study on ALT "Arabic Language Teaching".

An attempt to partially eliminate this deficiency in the field reveals the importance of the study. In this study, network maps and keyword analysis of scientific studies related to Arabic language teaching were made to reveal new trends and deficiencies in the field. In addition to

this, we can state that the present study manages to list some of the most influential publications, journals, authors and research institutions on teaching Arabic. We can say that this study gives ideas about new trends in this field to researchers who are interested in teaching Arabic. This list of the most cited and influential publications on teaching Arabic is a useful resource for researchers considering working in this field. This list can be considered as a mini guide for students who are planning a master's degree in Arabic teaching. In addition, this study can help academics and researchers working in the field of Arabic teaching to quickly find important publications and authors. Besides, the network analysis of journals that make publications on the field helps researchers interested in this field in choosing a journal. According to the results obtained from the research, it is seen that there has been a slight increase in the studies on "Arabic Language Teaching" since 2000, but this increase has gradually increased since 2008 and the most publications were made in 2021. In the distribution of publication languages of the studies, English and Arabic are the most common; It is seen that there is one Turkish publication. When the countries that make the most publications on the subject are examined, it is seen that the USA is the country with the most publications. It is followed by Israel and Saudi Arabia. In the list of the most published and cited journals, the "Reading and writing" journal is in the first place in the list of journals with studies on "Arabic Language Teaching".

The top five universities that direct the field are the University of Haifa, Tel Aviv University, University of Washington, Michigan State University, and University S Florida, respectively. From here, it can be suggested that researchers who want to work on "Arabic Language Teaching" should collaborate with academics working in these universities. The most cited article on "Arabic Language Teaching" is the study published by Elkhafaifi (2005) in the *Modern Language Journal*.

When the analysis of the common words in the publications on "Arabic Language Teaching" in Web of Science is examined, the words "Arabic", "higher education" and "bilingualism" are among the words that are studied in common with all words. When we look at the usage of common words together, it is seen that the word "bilingualism" is used together with the words "multilingualism", "language policy" and "language attitudes". It is also seen that the words "learning Arabic", "Arabic teaching", "motivation", "covid-19", "online learning", "media and second language acquisition" are used together with the word "higher education". In addition, when we look at the word associations for the research area, we see that the words "assessment", "second language learning" and "acquisition" are in the common cluster.

According to the results of the analysis, it can be said that the publications on "Arabic Language Teaching" are handled in a wide framework, and studies on higher education are published in journals with higher indexes.

4.1 Limitations and Recommendations

There are some limitations to this present study. The first of these limitations is related to the subject of the research. This research is limited to studies on teaching Arabic. Secondly, the publications examined in the study are limited to the articles in the field of education scanned in the SSCI, SCI-expanded, ESCI and AHCI indexes in the WoS database. Studies other than WoS data are not included in the research.

Therefore, in order to increase the generalizability of the results obtained from the research, studies that include studies in different languages, searched in different databases and using different indexes should be conducted.

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