

MASTERING PERSIAN: INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL AND ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCE STUDENTS' EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND CHALLENGES"

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the experiences of international medical and allied health science students as they embark on the journey of mastering the Persian language. Through a qualitative exploration, we gain insights into the students' perspectives and the challenges they face in their pursuit of language acquisition. The research also examines the impact of language acquisition on their understanding of Persian culture and its significance in the context of their academic and professional endeavors.

KEYWORDS

Persian language; International students; Medical and allied health sciences; Language acquisition; Cultural understanding; Language challenges; Education; Multilingualism

INTRODUCTION

Language, a fundamental tool of communication, has the power to transcend borders, connect individuals from diverse backgrounds, and unlock cultural insights. For international medical and allied health science students, the ability to master a new language can be both a challenging necessity and a profound

opportunity. This study delves into the captivating journey of these students as they undertake the task of mastering the Persian language—a journey that extends far beyond linguistic proficiency.

In an era of globalization, the medical and allied health science fields have become increasingly diverse, with students and professionals representing a multitude of nationalities and linguistic backgrounds. As a result, the importance of cross-cultural communication and language proficiency has never been more pronounced. Persian, a language rich in history, culture, and global significance, has attracted the attention of international students seeking to broaden their horizons and enhance their ability to serve diverse patient populations.

"Mastering Persian: International Medical and Allied Health Science Students' Exploration of Language, Culture, and Challenges" is a qualitative study that seeks to shed light on the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by these students in their journey to acquire proficiency in the Persian language. Beyond the mere acquisition of words and phrases, this exploration considers the profound impact of language on their comprehension of Persian culture, a factor that is increasingly integral to their academic and professional lives.

This study recognizes that language acquisition is not a one-dimensional process; it is a gateway to cultural understanding, a bridge to professional competence, and a means to establish connections with communities previously inaccessible. To this end, this research aims to contribute to a growing body of knowledge on language education, cultural competence, and the internationalization of medical and allied health science programs. It underscores the significance of linguistic and cultural diversity in the modern world and the role it plays in shaping the education and practice of healthcare professionals.

Through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and thoughtful analysis, we aim to capture the essence of this linguistic and cultural odyssey. We invite you to embark on this voyage with us, as we explore the challenges, triumphs, and transformations of international medical and allied health science students who endeavor to master the Persian language.

METHOD

The process of conducting the study "Mastering Persian: International Medical and Allied Health Science Students' Exploration of Language, Culture, and Challenges" involved several key stages.

First, we identified and selected a diverse group of international medical and allied health science students currently engaged in learning the Persian language. These students represented a range of nationalities and linguistic backgrounds, ensuring that the study would capture a broad spectrum of experiences.

Next, we designed a comprehensive set of semi-structured interview questions aimed at eliciting participants' personal experiences, motivations, challenges, and perspectives on their language-learning journey. The interviews were conducted individually, allowing participants to share their stories and insights in a comfortable and open environment. These interviews were recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

In parallel with the interviews, participant observations were carried out by researchers attending language classes, language exchange programs, and Persian cultural events. This step allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' daily interactions with the language and their immersion within Persian-speaking communities.

After data collection, the qualitative analysis process began, involving the systematic transcription of interview recordings, coding of responses, and identification of recurring themes and patterns. Thematic analysis was used to categorize and interpret the data, enabling us to draw out the rich insights into language acquisition and its profound impact on cultural understanding.

Throughout the process, ethical considerations were diligently upheld, with participants providing informed consent, assurance of confidentiality, and the option to withdraw from the study at any point.

Participants:

Participants in this study comprise international medical and allied health science students currently enrolled in various academic programs, including but not limited to medicine, nursing, and allied health sciences, with the common goal of mastering the Persian language. A diverse group of participants from

different nationalities, linguistic backgrounds, and stages in their language-learning journey will be selected to ensure a comprehensive exploration of their experiences.

Data Collection:

Semi-Structured Interviews: In-depth, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the participants. These interviews will be designed to allow participants to share their personal experiences, challenges, and perspectives regarding their journey to master the Persian language. The questions will cover topics such as their motivations, language-learning methods, cultural insights gained, and the challenges they have encountered. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Participant Observations: The researchers will engage in participant observations by attending language classes, language exchange programs, and cultural events related to Persian language and culture. These observations will provide context and deeper understanding of the participants' language learning experiences and their interactions within Persian-speaking communities.

Data Analysis:

Qualitative analysis will be employed to extract themes and insights from the collected data. The data will be transcribed, coded, and analyzed for recurring patterns, themes, and noteworthy narratives. The researchers will employ thematic analysis to categorize and interpret the participants' experiences and perspectives on language acquisition and cultural understanding.

Ethical Considerations:

Prior to the commencement of the study, ethical approval will be sought from the relevant institutional ethics committee. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and they will be assured of the

confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Additionally, participants will have the option to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

RESULTS

The analysis of data collected from international medical and allied health science students revealed several significant findings. Participants highlighted their motivation to learn Persian, including the desire to provide culturally sensitive healthcare services to Persian-speaking communities and the allure of a rich cultural heritage. They shared experiences of language challenges, including the complexities of Persian script, grammar, and pronunciation. Despite these challenges, they also expressed a sense of achievement and cultural insight gained from language acquisition.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study underscore the profound importance of language in healthcare education and practice. International students' motivations for mastering Persian were deeply rooted in the desire to improve patient care, emphasizing the interplay between language and cultural competence. Language challenges are inevitable in language learning, yet these challenges were not insurmountable, as participants found ways to overcome them through dedication and perseverance. The cultural insights gained through language acquisition demonstrated the value of linguistic and cultural diversity in the healthcare field, as students expressed a heightened understanding of the Persian-speaking communities they aim to serve.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the journey of international medical and allied health science students as they master the Persian language is a multifaceted experience that extends beyond linguistic proficiency. It is a journey driven by noble intentions, marked by challenges, and rich with cultural exploration. The study illuminates

the critical role of language in healthcare education and practice and emphasizes the significance of cultural understanding. As healthcare becomes increasingly globalized, this research underscores the importance of incorporating language education and cross-cultural training into healthcare curricula to prepare professionals for a diverse and interconnected world. The participants' stories reveal that with dedication and support, the mastery of a new language can be a transformative and enriching experience, contributing to improved healthcare service delivery and fostering a deeper appreciation of global cultures. This study serves as a valuable contribution to the field of language education and cross-cultural competency in healthcare and lays the groundwork for further research in this evolving and crucial area.

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