

The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Enhancing the Mother Language for Their Students

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Abstract

The promotion of mother tongue language has become a pressing concern for many countries and their educational institutions. This study aims to identify the requirements and obstacles to enhancing mother tongue language proficiency among higher education students, as perceived by faculty members. The study adopted a descriptive approach and administered a questionnaire to the study population.

The study findings indicate that the requirements to activate the role of higher education institutions in enhancing mother tongue proficiency among students, as perceived by all faculty members, are substantial. Financial requirements were identified as the most crucial, followed by organizational, academic, and human requirements. Human obstacles, such as students' tendency to converse in a mix of mother tongue and foreign languages, were found to be among the most significant hurdles facing the promotion of mother tongue language in higher education institutions. Organizational, academic, and financial obstacles were also identified as significant and were found to be at a high level.

Keywords: obstacles, post-secondary education, requirements, university education, university student

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Language is a social phenomenon infused with cultural dimensions. It reflects civilizations and human societies while serving as a means of thinking, communication, and human understanding. As the most critical characteristic distinguishing humans from other living beings, language enables individuals to articulate letters, write words, present ideas, exchange opinions, express emotions, and facilitate communication processes. Through language, harmony is fostered among human beings, and social security is established. Language comprises fundamental elements, including sounds, structures, and vocabularies (Jacob, 2015).

Each nation is characterized by its own language, which is linked to its values, customs, and traditions, and serves as an expression of its culture that distinguishes its identity, which it seeks to preserve. Language, regardless of the type, is a human social system within every nation, serving as a symbol of national identity and entity. The individual function of language is the speaker's expression of their emotions and feelings, and the reflection of their thought processes in communication (Al-Hussein, 2021). However, some languages have encountered obstacles that prevent their progress, such as the influence of foreign languages in education, economics, and media (Ammar, 2018), which has limited the ability of some mother languages to carry out their functions and weakened their ability to contribute to sustainable development (Al-Asri, 2013, p. 98).

Several studies (Mouili, 2021) have demonstrated that education using the mother language enhances students' self-confidence, reduces negative estimation, and helps students expand the use of linguistic terminology in various fields of life. Wahhabi (2016) concluded that university graduates cannot speak their mother language without committing linguistic errors, while Ahmed and Al-Sabri (2020) confirmed that higher education institutions play an important role in enhancing the cultural and linguistic identity of students. Furthermore, Benyaish (2021) found that there are inadequate curricula for teaching mother languages in Arab universities, and difficulties in unifying terminology between them. The current study sheds light on the role of higher education institutions in enhancing mother tongue proficiency among their students.

1.2 Explore Importance of the Problem

This research is important as it addresses a crucial issue related to the culture of nations and presents recommendations for activating the role of higher education institutions in enhancing mother tongue proficiency among their students. Recently, there have been some deficiencies observed in the mother tongue proficiency among native speakers. Non-Arabic phrases, terms, and words are increasingly being used and overlapping with the Arabic language in various fields. Some commercial establishments have adopted non-Arabic names, and some types of foods, instrument parts, and clothes are traded with non-Arabic words (Helali, 2013). Some foreign phrases have

become widespread among people, especially youth, through social media and mass communication (Hour, 2018). Demand for learning the mother tongue among its native speakers has weakened (Yaquout, 2021), which may suggest that its ability to coexist with contemporary changes is weak. It is noteworthy that developed countries have made progress without abandoning their mother tongue, such as China and Japan. Adopting the use of a foreign language cannot be the only way to progress and development, as speaking foreign languages must be limited without affecting the mother tongue of individuals who should be proud of their native language (Al-Ajlan, 2013).

In light of the digital information era and communication technologies that have contributed to the spread of many global cultural challenges, especially linguistic ones (Dakeer, 2021), and based on the work of researchers at universities, and personal meetings with some university faculty members about students' proficiency in their mother tongue, it has been noticed that some students' mother tongue is influenced by other languages, and they use extraneous words in their discussions. The results of Kasas (2019) indicate that cultural identity, especially related to students' mother tongue, is impacted by the use of a mixture of words from different languages during conversations. Therefore, it is crucial to study the obstacles and requirements for enhancing mother tongue proficiency among university students. The research problem is to identify the role of higher education institutions, including Imam Abdul Rahman Bin Faisal University, in reinforcing the mother tongue for their students and presenting recommendations for activating this role.

The research questions are as follows:

- What are the requirements for activating the role of higher education institutions in enhancing mother tongue proficiency among their students?
- What are the obstacles to activating the role of higher education institutions in enhancing mother tongue proficiency among their students?

1.3 Describe Relevant Scholarship

Several studies have explored the mother tongue from different perspectives. Wang (2007) aimed at promoting cultural identity among foreign students and new immigrants from Asia by emphasizing the importance of language. Al-Arifi (2012) and Al-Ajlan (2013) focused on the mother tongue and educational curricula in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, highlighting the efforts of officials in enhancing mother tongue proficiency. Wahhabi (2016) investigated the low level of mother tongue proficiency among university students in Algeria. Al-Nuseirat and Al-Budairat (2013) examined the role of educational institutions and legislation issued in Arab countries in protecting and enhancing the mother tongue among students. Al-Salihi and Al-Mohsen (2021) aimed to propose suggestions to promote mother tongue proficiency among students in foreign schools in the Al-Qassim region. Khalis (2012) explored the role of universities in enhancing and developing their students' language abilities. Al-Hafi (2013) studied the government's efforts to promote the mother tongue in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Yu (2015) provided credible information about the cultural identity and language conflict among Chinese international students. Saraswati (2022) identified the effectiveness of an intensive program for teaching the mother tongue in enhancing mother tongue education for university students.

1.4 Theoretical Background

Role: It refers to a set of expectations and behaviors that are appropriate for a given situation in the social structure of individuals (Hamdan, 2008).

Reinforcement: It is the process of strengthening appropriate behavior or increasing the likelihood of its recurrence in the future by adding positive stimuli or removing negative stimuli after it has occurred (Al-Qibli, 2014).

Language: It is the means by which individuals express their goals and needs (Ibn Jinni, n.d., p. 33). De Saussure (1966) defined language as the use of phonetic symbols in a categorical manner through which thought is expressed.

Mother Language: It encompasses everything that falls within the scope of linguistic activity, including audio, written, or signal symbols. It means the general entity that includes human linguistic activity in a cultural context (Al-Rajhi, 1972).

The Importance of Language:

Language is a source of human uniqueness and a means through which people communicate, express their ideas, opinions, and interests, and achieve a sense of security and mental health. Language is one of the most important means of human communication that seeks to achieve understanding and being understood by all members of society. It is a tool for achieving intellectual unity among all society members and integration between all its elements and groups. Language is the basis of citizenship and the ideal way for society to preserve its cultural heritage and thinking. It is a gift from God and a great advantage for humanity, and it has value in all human fields and branches (Badria, 2018). The importance of language increases during the stages of education, as it is difficult for students to express what is going on in their minds in a language other than their mother tongue, especially in the field of scientific research.

Requirements for Enhancing the Language:

Language may face problems of multiple dimensions, which may cause distortion to some of its vocabularies and sounds. Social media may also lead to the distortion of the mother language (Helali, 2013). Nations preserve their mother languages, defend and protect them from strange words that may distort them among their native speakers, and protect them from penetration and dissolution in other languages (Kanaan, 2012). The most important requirements for enhancing the mother language include the establishment of specialized

scientific colleges and departments that teach the mother language (Ali, 2019), establishment of scientific chairs to finance mother language research and conferences (Athamneh, 2011), dedicating an annual day to celebrate it among its native speakers, holding cultural competitions related to language, and teaching a language course in higher education institutes.

Obstacles to Enhancing Mother Language in Higher Education Institutions: Mother language in higher education institutions faces several obstacles that may hinder its enhancement among students. Some of obstacles are:

- Administrative obstacles: The administration of a university may pose a challenge to the process of teaching and learning a language for students. Other obstacles include the lack of student participation in choosing prescribed curricula, inadequate presentation of curriculum topics in a coherent and sequential manner, insufficient extracurricular activities, and insufficient attention paid by teaching systems and instructions to students' psychological aspects, as well as inappropriate classroom environments (Linda, 2018).
- Educational obstacles: Faculty members' use of traditional teaching methods, inadequate mastery of language vocabulary, and insufficient knowledge of strategies necessary to deal with contemporary language concepts are among the challenges facing the teaching and learning process (Abu Jabeen & Jaradat, 2013).
- Social obstacles: Challenges facing the enhancement of mother language in higher education institutions include: the prioritization of teaching other languages over the mother language, the use of colloquial language in communication, a lack of awareness regarding the importance of speaking the mother language at home, encouragement by some parents for their children to listen to channels that speak foreign languages, a lack of emphasis by parents on their children mastering the mother language, and a linguistic environment that does not always facilitate the acquisition of pure, correct, and sound linguistic skills (Al-Sayed, 2017).
- Cultural obstacles: Each society possesses a unique culture that derives from its heritage and environment, and is transmitted across generations until it becomes a constant and stable feature of the society. Language serves as the focal point of culture and the vessel through which it is transmitted. Language connects members of society, establishes patterns of interaction, and formulates the general mentality that distinguishes one society from another (Shehab, 2005). However, friction between cultures can result in the mixing or transferring of cultural contents, which may lead to distortion of the mother tongue (Helali, 2021).
- Human obstacles: These obstacles can be attributed to both students and university staff, with the most prominent being parents' neglect in preserving the mother language for their children and failing to guide their interests towards it (Hindi, 2017). Additionally, some university professors may not prioritize linguistic correction for their students nor encourage them to take pride in their mother language (Linda, 2018).

Methods of Reinforcing the Mother Language in Higher Education Institutions:

There are several ways to enhance the mother tongue for students in higher education institutions. These include cultural competitions among students that deal with the elements and vocabularies of the language, organizing the teaching process to include attractive educational situations that lead to motivating learners and developing their abilities to master the learning process of the language (Eslim, 2019), inculcating pride in the mother language in the hearts of students (Helali, 2013), directing faculty members to contemporary research in teaching methods, issuing a teaching guide in the mother language that includes language skills, methods of teaching, and how to acquire them for students, and spreading awareness among university students (Aoun & Al-Mahna, 2018). Providing the correct linguistic environment in the educational process contributes to mastering the learning of the mother language (Al-Sayed, 2017), unifying terminology and standards for formulating terms (Bushkar, 2016), adopting a variety of evaluation methods (Al-Sharif, 2019), and allocating research chairs to fund mother language research (Al-Maliki, 2018). Holding scientific conferences and qualitative exhibitions related to the mother language, teaching the language to non-native speakers, and establishing literary clubs concerned with the language are also effective methods to reinforce the mother language in higher education institutions.

2. Methodology

A descriptive survey method was used to identify the requirements and obstacles that prevent higher education institutions from playing their role in enhancing the mother language of their students. The research community consisted of all faculty members (3450) at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in the academic year 2022.

Research tool: Research tool: The research used questionnaire, to reveal obstacles and requirements for activating the role of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal university in enhancing the mother tongue of its students. The five-point Likert scale was used. Values and limits of the responses were determined based on Table (1):

Table 1. Five-Point Likert Scale Values

Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Grade	5	4	3	2	1
Response Category	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low
Response limit	4.2 ≥ 5	3.4 ≥ 4.2	2.6 ≥ 3.4	1.8 ≥ 2.6	1 ≥ 1.8

The questionnaire was presented to 11 education specialists for validation. The validity was calculated using Pearson correlation coefficients and Cronbach's Alpha stability coefficient, as shown in Table (2):

Table 2. The validity of internal consistency and stability coefficients for questionnaire

Theme	Dimension	Pearson Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Obstacles that impede Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in activating its role in enhancing the mother tongue for its students	Human obstacles	(**).818	0.849
	organizational obstacles	(**).881	0.859
	academic obstacles	(**).865	0.864
	Financial and material obstacles	(**).799	0.901
Theme Total Grade			0.934
The necessary requirements for Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal university to activate its role in enhancing the mother language for its students	Human requirements	(**).855	0.885
	Organizational Requirements	(**).927	0.946
	Academic Requirements	(**).904	0.939
	Financial and Material Requirements	(**).874	0.947
Dimension Total Grade			0.971

**($\alpha = 0.05$).

Table (2) shows that the values of Pearson correlation coefficients for all dimensions of the two themes are statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). The value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, as an indicator of the stability of the two themes, is acceptable to achieve the objectives of the study.

3. Results

The First Question: The arithmetic means and standard deviations of the sample responses were calculated for each dimension of the requirements themes, as shown in Table (3).

Table 3. Results of the requirements for activating the role of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in enhancing the mother language for its students from the perspective of the faculty members

N.	Dimensions	Arithmetic Means	Standard deviations	Level	Rank
1	Human Requirements	4.239	0.680	Very high	4
2	Organizational Requirements	4.327	0.667	Very high	2
3	Academic Requirements	4.287	0.712	Very high	3
4	Financial and Material Requirements	4.347	0.682	Very high	1
	Total Grade	4.301	0.612	Very high	-

Table (3) illustrates the level of requirements for activating the role of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in enhancing the mother language for its students, with an arithmetic mean of 4.301 and a standard deviation of 0.612, indicating a very high degree. The table indicates that the majority of requirements fall under the category of 'Financial and Material Requirements', with an arithmetic mean of 4.347 and a standard deviation of 0.682, also indicating a very high degree. The second-highest category is 'Organizational Requirements', with an arithmetic mean of 4.327 and a standard deviation of 0.667, also indicating a very high degree. The third category is 'Academic Requirements', which has an arithmetic mean of 4.287 and a standard deviation of 0.712, also indicating a very high degree. The results of Table 3 also indicate that the lowest requirements for activating Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University's role in enhancing the mother language for its students fall under the category of 'Human Requirements', with an arithmetic mean of 4.239 and a standard deviation of 0.680, also indicating a very high degree.

To identify the three most important statements in each dimension regarding the requirements for activating Imam Abdul Rahman Bin Faisal University's role in enhancing the mother tongue for students, the arithmetic means, standard deviations, and percentages of responses from the sample were calculated for all statements within the requirements themes. The statements were then ranked according to their importance, as shown in Table (4).

Table 4. The most important three statements for each dimension of requirements' themes for activating the role of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal university in enhancing the mother language for its students from the perspective of faculty members

Dimension	Most Important Statement	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviations	Level	Rank
Human requirements	Sensitizing students of the impact of colloquial dialects and foreign languages on the mother language	4.369	0.779	Very high	1
	Interesting of university employees in holding activities that support the mother language	4.350	0.750	Very high	2
	Forming student teams that support the mother language among their colleague	4.287	0.760	Very high	3
Organizational requirements	Urging all faculty members to participate annually in the International Mother Language Day	4.408	0.742	Very high	1
	Supporting mother language education for non-native speakers' students	4.408	0.725	Very high	2
	Issuing a specialized scientific journal that enhances students' belonging to the mother language	4.344	0.782	Very high	3
Academic requirements	Activating various activities (Curricular and extracurricular	4.401	0.724	Very	1

Dimension	Most Important Statement	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviations	Level	Rank
Financial and material requirements	activities) about the mother language for students			high	
	Dedicating an exhibition creative and outstanding student in the field of the mother language	4.363	0.786	Very high	2
	Providing the university library with references that serve the mother tongue	4.338	0.730	Very high	3
	Allocating a scientific chair at the university for mother language research	4.389	0.740	Very high	1
	Attracting sponsors from community institutions for activities that support the mother language at universities	4.363	0.786	Very high	2
	Establish a university endowment to support mother language activities in the university	4.338	0.805	Very high	3

Table (4) shows that the most important statement of the human requirements dimension is “Sensitizing students of the impact of colloquial dialects and foreign languages on the mother language”, as it ranked first among the statements of the 1st dimension with an arithmetic mean of (4.369), and a standard deviation of (0.779), with a very high degree of agreement. Similarly, the most important statement of the organizational requirements is "urging all faculty members to participate annually in the International Mother Language Day", as it ranked 1st among the statements of the 2nd dimension, with an arithmetic mean of (4.408), and a standard deviation of (0.742), with a very high degree of agreement. The most important statement of the academic requirements is “Activating various activities (Curricular and extracurricular activities) about the mother language for students”, as it came in the first place among the statements of the 3rd dimension, with an arithmetic mean of (4.401), and a standard deviation of (0.724), with a very high degree. Lastly, the most important statement of financial and material requirements is “allocating a scientific chair at the university for mother language research”, as it came in the first place among the statements of the 4th dimension, with an arithmetic mean of (4.389), and a standard deviation of (0.740), with a very high degree of agreement.

The second question: The arithmetic means, and standard deviations of the sample responses were calculated for each dimension of the obstacles, as shown in table (5)

Table 5. Results of obstacles to activating the role of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal university in enhancing the mother language for its students from the perspective of faculty members

N.	Dimension	arithmetic mean	Standard deviations	Level	Rank
1	Human Obstacles	3.845	0.745	high	1
2	Organizational Obstacles	3.799	0.749	high	3
3	Academic Obstacles	3.810	0.773	high	2
4	Financial and Material Obstacles	3.664	0.811	high	4
	Total grade	3.780	0.647	high	-

The results in Table (5) show that the level of obstacles to activating Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University's role in enhancing the mother tongue for students was an arithmetic mean of 3.780 and a standard deviation of 0.647, representing a high degree. The most obstacles were in the 1st dimension "Human Obstacles" with an arithmetic mean of 3.845 and a standard deviation of 0.745 at a high degree. The 3rd dimension "Academic Obstacles" ranked second with an arithmetic mean of 3.810 and a standard deviation of 0.773 at a high degree, followed by the 2nd dimension "Organizational Obstacles" which ranked third with an arithmetic mean of 3.799 and a standard deviation of 0.749 at a high degree. Table (5) also shows that the lowest obstacles to activating Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University's role in enhancing the mother tongue for students was the 4th dimension "Financial and Material Obstacles" with an arithmetic mean of 3.664 and a standard deviation of 0.811 at a high degree.

To identify the most important obstacles in each dimension regarding the obstacles to activating the role of Imam Abdul Rahman Bin Faisal University in enhancing the mother tongue for students, the arithmetic means, standard deviations, and percentages of responses from the sample were calculated for all statements of obstacles. The statements were then ranked according to their importance as shown in Table (6):

Table 6. The three most important statements for each dimension of the obstacles to activating the role of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal university in enhancing the mother language for its students from the perspective of faculty members

Dimension	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Rank
Human Obstacles	Students are accustomed to communicating with each other in the mother language mixed with foreign languages	4.140	0.888	High	1
	Students' lack of interest in speaking in eloquent mother language	4.121	0.950	High	2
	faculty members use foreign terminologies while speaking to students	4.025	0.954	High	3
Organizational Obstacles	The university supports teaching scientific disciplines in foreign languages	4.191	0.942	High	1
	The university support financial and moral for publication	4.064	0.979	High	2

Dimension	Statement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Rank
	scientific research in foreign languages				
	Weak appreciation by the university for faculty members who publish research in the mother language	4.006	1.041	High	3
	Lack of interest in using eloquent language while lecturing	3.981	0.971	High	1
Academic Obstacles	The scarcity of training courses in the mother language in the university	3.962	0.953	High	2
	Holding scientific conferences within the university in foreign languages	3.790	1.068	High	3
	Allocating priority to spend the university’s budget for programs held in foreign languages	3.911	0.957	High	1
Financial and Material Obstacles	Lack of financial allocations to carry out student activities that promote the mother language	3.854	0.932	High	2
	The limited budget allocated for the implementation of courses that support the mother language	3.726	0.938	High	3

Table (6) presents the findings indicating that the human obstacles’ dimension was most significantly impeded by the statement, “Students are accustomed to communicating with each other in the mother language mixed with foreign languages”, which ranked highest among the statements of the 1st dimension. This statement obtained an arithmetic mean of (4.140) and a standard deviation of (0.888), demonstrating a high degree of agreement. Similarly, the most important statement of the organizational obstacles was “The university supports teaching scientific disciplines in foreign languages”, ranking first among the statements of the 2nd dimension, with an arithmetic mean of (4.191) and a standard deviation of (0.942), indicating a high degree of agreement. The most critical statement of academic obstacles, “Lack of interest in using eloquent language while lecturing”, obtained the highest rank among the statements of the 3rd dimension, with an arithmetic mean of (3.981) and a standard deviation of (0.971), demonstrating a high degree of agreement. Finally, the most significant statement of financial and material obstacles was “allocating priority to spend the university’s budget for programs held in foreign languages”, ranking first among the statements of the 4th dimension, with an arithmetic mean of (3.911) and a standard deviation of (0.957), with a high degree of agreement.

4. Discussion

Table (3) showed that the requirements for activating the role of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in enhancing the mother language for its students came to a very high degree of agreement for the four dimensions of the theme. This explains the importance of the role of higher education institutions in enhancing the mother language for their students, which needs to provide all human, organizational, academic, and financial requirements. The financial and material requirements came in the first rank because the rest of the other requirements depend on the availability of financial support allocated by the university, as the preparation of training and academic programs specialized in enhancing the mother language of higher education students requires the provision of appropriate financial allocations. The implementation of student activities and competitions in the field of enhancing the mother language is linked to providing financial support to encourage students, which is consistent with (Wahhabi, 2016) study which emphasized the importance of providing the necessary financial allocations for education. The last rank of human requirements can be explained by the fact that the university has enough human competencies capable of enhancing the mother language for its students, which is consistent with (Yu, 2015) study which emphasized the importance of the teacher’s role in raising awareness toward preserving cultural identity.

Table (4) showed the rank of the three most important requirements for each dimension of the requirements. The human requirements showed the importance of educating students about the impact of colloquial dialects and foreign languages on the mother tongue, due to the spread of colloquial dialects among students and their studies in foreign languages having a negative effect on them. This has a significant impact on mixing the mother language with some foreign terms and words while they speak, which differs with the study by (Al-Salihi & Al-Mohsen, 2021), which showed that students’ use of English vocabulary during their conversation instead of some vocabularies of their mother language stems from their belief that education in English has a better effect on education. The organizational requirements showed the importance of the colleges’ participation in the International Mother Language Day, due to the role of that participation in enhancing belonging to the mother language among university students, and that such participations constitute an incentive for faculty members to use eloquent language in speaking with students outside the halls, which is consistent with (Al-Hafi, 2013) study, which emphasized the importance of community participation in enhancing language among students. The academic requirements also showed the importance of activating various activities for students, which encourages them to use the mother language in a proper manner in the fields of various life activities, thereby enhancing their language skills, which is consistent with (Saraswati, 2022) study, which emphasized the importance of activities in teaching the mother language. The financial and material requirements also showed the importance of financial support in enhancing the mother language for university students, and that allocating scientific research chairs for mother language contributes to preserving it. This is due to such scientific chairs representing an important source in financing research projects and encouraging faculty members to publish their research in the mother language, which is consistent with (Al-Maliki, 2018) study, which emphasized the importance of research chairs in supporting scientific research in universities, in addition to the study by (Al-Ajlan, 2013), which emphasized the importance of the role of officials and their efforts in enhancing the mother language by allocating appropriate funding to support scientific research, as well as curricular and extracurricular activities that enhance

the language for its students, beside their approval to allocate a budget for mother language's research in higher education institutions.

Table (5) showed that there are obstacles facing the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University's role in enhancing the mother language for its students to a high degree, which confirms the importance of the current study and the need for higher education institutions to make more efforts to promote the mother language for their students.

Table (5) also showed that most of the obstacles facing the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University's role in enhancing the mother language for its students are those related to the human element, represented in students and faculty members, explaining why human obstacles ranked first among the four obstacles. This is due to individuals in universities, whether they are faculty members or students, using the language in communication with each other, and therefore it falls primarily on them to master the use of the mother language in an appropriate manner, whether during their interaction with discussions during lectures, or during their communication with their colleagues. This is consistent with (Wang, 2007) study, which concluded that language is the most important obstacle that hinders the development of individuals' identity and weakens programming process in schools. The results of the current study also agree with (Al-Nuseirat & Al-Budairat, 2013) study, which concluded the importance of linguistic communication and learning in the mother language in enhancement identity, and the importance of legislation issued in enhancing interest in the mother language and protecting it. Academic obstacles came in second place due to the contents of academic courses and scientific references available in university libraries, which were prepared and written in the appropriate language before being approved by university officials. The organizational obstacles came in the third place due to the interest of the management of higher education institutions in enhancing the mother language for their students, but the technological developments can have an impact on students. The financial and material obstacles came in the last place, confirming the keenness of higher education institutions to allocate the appropriate budget to promote the mother language for their students through curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Table (6) showed the rank of the three most important obstacles for each dimension, with human obstacles showing the importance of the human element through students' interest in speaking the correct mother language. This may be due to the fact that they study courses in foreign languages, especially in health and engineering disciplines, and many students may believe that speaking foreign languages is a kind of sophistication and progress, as stated in (Al-Salihi & Al-Mohsen, 2021) study, which emphasized the use of English vocabularies by students during their speech, and (Wahhabi, 2016) study, which stressed the low level of the mother language of university students. This may be related to the students' lack of interest in speaking the mother language, as well as faculty members teaching some courses in foreign languages, which may be a reason for the circulation of some foreign words among students.

Table (6) also showed the presence of organizational obstacles to a high degree, which can be explained by the university's keenness to keep abreast of global scientific developments, and to raise its position and reputation globally according to the internationally approved classifications in the absence of regional and local classification standards. Hence its support for teaching courses in English, as well as its support for publishing of research in foreign languages in international journals to obtain the largest number of research citations globally. This also explains the university's poor appreciation of faculty members who publish their research in the mother language, as recommended by (Al-Arifi, 2012) for the need to pay attention to teaching foreign languages in a way that makes students master them, while preserving their cultural identity as well as mother language at the same time.

The existence of academic obstacles can be explained to a large extent by the fact that the university is keen on teaching English to its students and enhancing speaking English language in classrooms to keep up with international standards, as well as holding international conferences in English, as stated in (Khalis, 2012) study, which indicated that there are attempts to exclude the mother language, especially in conferences, while this differs with (Saraswati, 2022) study which emphasized the importance of the role of the academic program and activities in teaching the mother language. The lack of interest in using the fluent mother language during lectures is also explained by the fact that this is compatible with medical and engineering disciplines, as there are no centers for translation into the mother language for scientific terms in the medical and engineering fields, as confirmed in (Wahhabi, 2016) study. The existence of financial and material obstacles can be explained largely by the fact that the university gives priority to spending on programs that are held in a foreign language, to support its students to keep pace with global developments, and to be aware of global developments, as concluded in (Al-Salihi & Al-Mohsen, 2021) study. The low budget allocated for the implementation of training courses that support the mother language can be explained by leaving this task to family, which is keen to raise its son's level in mastering the mother tongue, as stated in (Khalis, 2012) study.

5. Limitations, Recommendations, and Suggestions

The objective of this study is to examine the role of higher education institutions in enhancing students' mother language proficiency. The study focuses on faculty members at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where the study tool was implemented during the academic year 2022.

Recommendations

- Encouraging students to communicate effectively in their mother tongue.
- Addressing any barriers that may hinder the role of Saudi higher education institutions in promoting mother tongue proficiency among their students.
- Establishing a specialized department to promote research on mother tongue language use in community institutions.

- Encouraging faculty members to engage in activities that support effective communication in the mother tongue among university students.
- Ensuring participation of all university colleges in International Mother Language Day.
- Launching a specialized academic journal dedicated to promoting the use and appreciation of mother tongues.
- Organizing annual conferences aimed at promoting the use and appreciation of mother tongues among higher education staff.
- Creating a dedicated university website to support the use and promotion of mother tongues online.

Suggestions

- 1) Investigating the role of universities in promoting mother tongue proficiency among students in response to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- 2) Conducting an analytical study on how university curricula can enhance students' proficiency in their mother tongue language.
- 3) Examining the hidden curriculum of university professors and their impact on promoting a sense of belonging to the mother tongue language among students.

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Availability of data and materials

The datasets used and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding authors on reasonable request.

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