Language Acculturation: Barriers to Social Distance & Psychological Distance for Malay Learners in Higher Learning Institutions

Akulturasi Bahasa: Halangan Jarak Sosial & Jarak Psikologi untuk Pelajar Melayu di Institusi Pengajian Tinggi

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to see the challenges of social and psychological distance among Malay students to learn foreign languages. The self-interest and awareness of students is not the only factor to ponder an engagement in learning a foreign language. At the same time, social distance challenges will occur considering the culture of Malay students thought that foreign languages are not easy to learn and complicated. This study also aiming at the alternative taken by the students in order to improve their learning process in mastering a foreign language. The challenges facing by them is in the aspect of self-confidence, peers who can interact in Arabic and Japanese and facilities provided in the campus. Based on the study and observation, students in public universities receive more of these facilities than students in private universities. The main reason is that a reliable financial injection given by the Ministry of Higher Education will certainly be able to help the public universities in strengthening learning facilities for students. 20 respondents were interviewed and information been analyzed narratively through qualitative techniques. The results came up that the variations in background, which is not from the community group that uses the language is also a challenge for them. As an alternative, students can double practice of communicating with foreign students who using both languages most of the times, as well as the role of social media that displays the story of society and by using it in the plot of the story.

Keywords: Language acculturation; Malay learners; Social distance; Psychological distance; Higher learning Institutions.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dibuat untuk melihat cabaran jarak sosial dan jarak psikologi dalam kalangan pelajar Melayu yang mempelajari bahasa asing. Minat dan kesedaran pelajar dalam mempelajari bahasa asing bukanlah faktor yang menyumbang kepada komitednya mereka dalam mempelajari bahasa asing. Pada masa yang sama, cabaran jarak sosial wujud disebabkan persepsi pelajar Melayu yang melihat bahawa bahasa asing tidak mudah dipelajari dan rumit Kajian ini juga akan melihat alternatif yang diambil oleh pelajar untuk meningkatkan proses pembelajaran mereka dalam menguasai bahasa asing. Cabaran yang dihadapi oleh mereka adalah dari aspek keyakinan diri, rakan sebaya yang dapat berinteraksi dalam bahasa Arab dan Jepun serta kemudahan yang disediakan di kampus. Berdasarkan kajian dan pemerhatian, para pelajar di universiti awam mendapat lebih banyak kemudahan daripada pelajar di universiti swasta. Keadaan ini berlaku kerana, terdapat suntikan kewangan yang diberikan oleh Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi yang sudah tentu dapat membantu universiti awam dalam memperkukuhkan kemudahan pembelajaran untuk pelajar. Seramai 20 orang responden telah ditemuramah dan maklumat dianalisis secara naratif dengan menggunakan teknik kualitatif. Hasil dapatan menunjukkan bahawa, cabaran wujud apabila terdapat perbezaan latar belakang kerana mereka bukan dilahirkan dari kelompok masyarakat yang menggunakan kedua-dua Bahasa tersebut. Sebagai alternatif, pelajar perlu melipatgandakan amalan berkomunikasi dengan pelajar asing yang sering menggunakan kedua-dua bahasa ini, serta peranan media sosial yang memaparkan kisah masyarakat dan menggunakan Bahasa tersebut dalam plot cerita.

Kata kunci:Akulturasi Bahasa; Pelajar Melayu; Jarak sosial, Jarak psikologi; Institusi pengajian tinggi.

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in a foreign language is an additional asset for each individual. The ability to communicate or interact well will help to increase the credibility of conveying a message to other individuals. Appreciation among students in Malaysia for learning related foreign languages

is still at a moderate level. Awareness to learn a foreign language formally or not depends a lot on the students' inclinations. Motivation and environmental influences are important agents in ensuring that foreign language proficiency occurs among students.

Most public and private institutions of higher learning have provided foreign language learning platforms by creating modern language faculties that offer language courses. Language proficiency is an important medium for communication. The dynamic communication function is due to current needs and the technological boom. According to Laswell and Wright (Baran & Davis 2000), communication functions can be categorised into four parts, namely the dissemination of information and warnings, establishing relationships with groups in society, transmission culture and entertainment (Mohd. Baharadin & Mohd. Khairie 2007).

The importance of mastering a foreign language is not just for communication purposes but it is also important for improving the soft skills of students. Competition for employment is a common scenario for graduates in the 4.0 revolution. The changes anyway, now countries are shocked by the COVID 19 pandemic that is sweeping the world. Knowledge and degrees are not the main things in the qualification criteria, but what needs to be seen is what the advantages are in the graduate. Intensified competitors, as currently, the job offer is limited because employers are not willing to bear the cost payoff paying employees' salaries and some are even laid off due to the weak financial position of the company or institution.

In this research, we are going to see how malays students are interested to study Arabic and Japanese language. The reason for choosing both languages is because, if we look at the background of the Malays, it shows that they are Muslims. In Islam, it is a great reward for them if they learn Arabic because this language is considered as a `paradise language' and Muslims can understand the verses of Quran if they learn the Arabic language. And why does this research also focus on the Japanese language? It is because the culture in Japanese society is that they have more respect if a foreigner can speak their language. Aside from the rules of the Japan government asked the citizens to put at the par of their mother tongue, they also want outsiders to major the Japanese language when they come to their state or during dealing with their community.

Learning a foreign language requires seriousness in action as well as readiness in terms of emotional resilience. This is because emotional reactions will arise based on the stimuli that occur in certain situations during this language learning process. (Abd Aziz et al. 2015). Several previous studies have found that there are problems with Arabic language proficiency. Nadwah & Nadhilah (2014) who examined the cause of more than 70% of students are weak in Arabic proficiency and the study of Mohd Fadzli and Mohd Sukki (2012) and the study of Ku Fatahiyah et al. (2014) who studied the level of mastery of Arabic language skills among students found that the problem of mastery and achievement of Arabic language is due to the factors and attitudes of the students themselves. Students experience problems of interest, self-confidence, and negative perceptions in Arabic (Ashinida 2013; Ismail et al. 2013; Nor Aziah et al. 2017). The learning environment leads to their achievement. It may come from teachers' personality, anxiety, and sets of rules that all add effect to students' motivation and thus, success in learning (Bayu, Desfitranita & Martin 2021).

According to Hieda & Maserah Shabudin (2012), "Sakuragi (2006) has identified the benefits of mastering a foreign language divided into two". The first benefit is the significant benefit gained when a person can speak in a foreign language. For example, a person can understand an article or writing material that he reads without the need for a translator. The second benefit is from the point of view of the development of ideas and knowledge of an individual who will have experience and judgement from different cultural angles. This was also raised by the Vice-Chancellor of UiTM, Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr. Hassan Said, stating that language proficiency not only involves daily affairs but also in various fields up to the international level (Berita Harian 2017).

In the Language Philosophy Model, it is shown that to ensure the use of language achieves its objectives, students should use the right grammar and develop intellectual and knowledge. The second principle of this model is to speak up the correct information and facts. Intellectual should not be guided by emotion however, it should be guided by the rights fact (Rashid 2010). The effectiveness of learning language is through interactive as well as well as the use of cooperative groups and individualised testing and assessment procedures. The interaction maintains student attention and allows students to apply what they have learned in a real context. In a small groups or in a pair, students who feel hesitant or shy to speak up in a large group,

tend to open-up easily (Abha 2019). We also view the challenges faced by Malay students in Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT) to the social distance to master the language (language acculturation), to study the challenges to Malay students in higher education institutions revolving the psychological distance to master the language and to view alternatives taken by the students in order to improve their learning process in mastering a foreign language.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Statistics released by the Malaysian Labor Force Key statistics in January 2016 show that the unemployment rate has not changed, which is the same as December 2015 with a rate of 3.4%. Among the problems plaguing Malaysian graduates today is the weakness of mastering foreign languages such as English. The advantage of speaking in Mandarin is also seen not only to give an advantage in daily life but also to help in other fields such as business because it can increase one's competitiveness in the domestic and international career market. As we can see in China today, a population of over 1.3 billion and is one of the major markets in the world economy, including in the Asian region. Chinese is also the language with the largest number of speakers in the world, with 14% of the world's population speaking the language and 92% of Chinese speakers are from China (Teh, 2015).

Studies related to the challenges or constraints of mastering a foreign language in terms of social and psychological differences have not been highlighted much by previous researchers. Besides, there is less research on foreign language proficiency based on ethnicity. Most researchers have seen aspects of teaching and the role of teachers in instilling an interest among students in in learning a second language apart from the main language used in communication. Besides, many studies look at factors and motivation for students to learn English. This caused researchers to take the initiative to look at the social and psychological differences that may contribute to the difficulty of Malay students in mastering a foreign language. In addition to looking at aspects of social and psychological differences, the students of this study aimed to see the strength of the model developed by John H. Schuman.

Throughout this study, what will be seen is the challenge faced by students, educators in the process of mastering a foreign language based on a model developed by John H. Schumann related to Acculturation Theory. Among the challenges are social distance and psychological distance. Social and psychological differences, of course, occur in the context of foreign language proficiency. This is because, pronunciation and dialects between one race and another are not the same. In terms of social distance, what will be seen are social dominance, cultural concurrence, and integration pattern. Next, from the psychological distance aspect that can be seen are motivation, attitude, and culture shock. The Acculturation Model is a theory proposed by John Schumann to describe the acquisition process of a second language (L2) by members of ethnic minorities that typically include immigrants, migrant workers, or the children of such groups. Schumann based his Acculturation Model on two sets of factors: social and psychological. Schumann asserts that the degree to which second-language learners acculturate themselves towards the culture of the target-language group generally depends on social and psychological factors. Schumann identifies eight factors that influence social distance: social dominance, integration pattern, enclosure, cohesiveness, size factor, cultural congruence, attitude factor, and intended length of residence. He also identifies three factors that influence psychological distance: motivation, attitude, and culture shock (Ellis, *1994)*.

According to this research, the study is focusing on Malays because not so many researchers do research on language acculturation concerns by ethnicity. Noor Hanim & Norshiha, 2016 in their writing explained the word 'Malay' itself is an ancient term and can be found in ancient manuscripts by Marco Polo and Yijing in the early twelfth century and later to the days of the Kingdom of Sri Vijaya and the Melaka Sultanate in the early thirteenth (Reid 2001, Omar Din 2007, in Mat Zin & Mohd Shukri 2007). The term Malay started to be used to refer to the people of Melaka who consisted of Melakans. The Malays majority in Malaysia are Muslims by practice and definition. In addition, the Malay language is the central element in defining the Malays. This can be seen in the definition of Malays by the Federal Constitution:

`…a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to the Malay customs…,

(Malaysia, Federal Constitution, 160(2)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Identifying the challenges faced by Malay students in Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT) to the social distance to master the language (language acculturation).
2. To study the challenges to Malay students in higher education institutions revolving the psychological distance to master the language.
3. To view alternatives taken by the students in order to improve their learning process in mastering a foreign language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on previous studies, we will focus more on the aspects that have been studied by researchers before. Most of the studies conducted on students' tendency to learn foreign languages were more focused on schools compared to tertiary education. There are a few studies related to learning foreign languages that relate to the ethnicities found in Malaysia.

Azman (2013) in his study says that there are not many differences regarding students' interest at Universiti Teknologi MARA (Uitm) Terengganu and Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UnisZA) in learning Arabic. Motivational factors and attitudes of students need to be addressed by Arabic language teachers so that students are more serious and focused on learning. Psychologically, studies have shown that, the learners of English experience Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). According to Wan Iman, Vijayaletchumy, and Arbaayah (2017) in a study conducted among learners of English language at Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysia France Institute (UniKL MFI) in terms of factors of FLA and learners' coping strategies, there are differences between male and female students to solve this anxiety problem. The strategy used to solve this problem is with learners who were found to prefer working in groups and seeking assistance from more proficient classmates. Learners were also found to adopt debilitating strategies such as minimising class participation and occupying back seats in the class.

Next, a study related to students' attitudes and perceptions was also made on foreign language learning among students. According to Norlida (2018), students at UiTM Kelantan show a positive attitude to learning Mandarin as a third language. Experience in learning this language before entering university is very helpful in forming a positive attitude to continue learning the language. The experience gathered at school and the influence of peers are contributors to why they are interested in mastering Mandarin at IPT. Besides, the advancement of social media technology such as dramas, movies, and mandarin songs that are often watched and heard makes them excited to delve into this language.

Foreign language learning at the school level also occurs. It's just that not all schools offer foreign language learning. Most boarding schools offer Japanese, Mandarin, French, and other language courses compared to regular day schools. However, some researchers see the aspect of learning a foreign language is also important in regular day school. As a study by Nor Sahayu, Zaid, & Mohd Abdul Ghafar (2019) found that there is a high motivation among students to learn foreign languages, namely Japanese. It is seen that the intrinsic motivation factor is more dominant than the extrinsic motivation in learning a foreign language. The students are more dependent on their peers than on their teachers while learning the Japanese language.

Several studies discuss linguistic factors in learning a foreign language. Researchers see linguistic factors as an influence on this foreign language learning process. Vahid, Maryam & Lin Siew (2014) look at linguistic competence and cultural competence development, as something that requires a high level of acculturation attitude towards the target language culture. Based on a study done on 70 Iranian undergraduate students of English as a Foreign Language, following a one-semester academic sojourn indicated that sojourners tended to have close contact with the people of the target society while maintaining their original culture, adopting integration and assimilation strategies as their acculturation attitudes. While the pedagogical implications of the findings suggest providing opportunities for students of English as a Foreign Language to immerse themselves in the target language culture through organising academic exchange programs.

The same thing is also discussed by Ayuni & Rohaidah (2016) in a study that has been made by them. For them, extra linguistic factors are dominant in second language learning. The focus of the study is on the aspects of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. To continue this effort, researchers are trying to analyse the dominant factors in the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

in learning a second language among 150 foreign students at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). The results showed that intrinsic motivation is more dominant for students in learning a foreign language namely Bahasa Melayu. They have to strive hard so that they will be able to interact well with the Malay students themselves. If they still have problems, then they will refer to the teacher. This is in contrast to the view of Ab. Halim & Mohd. Azidan (2017). Based on the study, language errors among students learning the second language occur due to linguistic factors such as transfer between languages, extreme generalizations, misconceptions about language concepts, and ignorance of language regulation restrictions. Some errors occur due to non-linguistic factors such as second language learning strategies and second language communication strategies.

The English language curriculum is planned in line with the National Education Philosophy, which has at its core the concept of lifelong education geared towards developing a morally upright person who is intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically integrated. This curriculum also seeks to educate learners in the larger context of life towards producing citizens who are knowledgeable, informed and able to contribute to the betterment of the society and nation (Sidhu, Audrey & Suthagar, 2011).

Kameli and Kishima (2012) conducted a research which explained the role of the language learning environment. They stated that the teaching methods, peer groups and classroom atmosphere can be considered as the learning environment and can affect the learning process. During classes, students prefer to use their mother tongue because it is easier for them. Any topics discussed in class can be better understood in their native language as they are at ease when teachers use the student's language while teaching (Erda Wati & Emily, 2018).

Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) state that good attitudes and an environment can be encouraged by having a conducive and comfortable environment where students feel more relaxed. Low anxiety environments such as in classrooms or any learning centers can give a great impact on language acquisition (Erda Wati & Emily 2018). The center of the educational process is not just the knowledge imparted to students, but also their active acquisition in the process of cognitive and research activities at universities (Tatiana, Oxana & Elena 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The present study is a case study and employed a qualitative approach. A case study is seen as appropriate for the objectives of the research as it is the way to help the researcher understand complex issues, the process, and phenomena by using a very small group of samples (Noraini 2013). However, Trochim (2006) defined a qualitative is a study about questions and statements and it is not about the hypothesis. Bryman (2008) in his writing says that qualitative research focuses on `verbatim or words and it is not about the quantity of data collected and analyzing' (Ghazali & Sufean 2016).

The purpose of the selection of qualitative techniques is because this study requires the expression of feelings, souls, and thoughts of respondents directly about their experience of learning a foreign language. The individual selected as the object of study is the instrument. The instrument is also the researcher's self. Both of those involved in conducting qualitative research are key instruments in data collection and analysis. Researchers create themes and categories for all informant conversations and actions. In this way, the researcher will easily make an assessment and interpretation of the answers given. In this way, the researcher will be able to explore in-depth the aspects that want to be studied through interviews.

The design in this research is a field study and the data obtained are analysed narratively. The information obtained through storytelling and confirmation can give a clear picture of the questions given to the respondents. According to Zikmud (2003), the design is special planning for a method and procedure to collect and analyze data (Ghazali & Sufean 2016). Such research has a high degree of validity, is very reliable and accurate because the data collection is very thorough and is believed through verbal and behavioral.

In order to gain information from respondents, questions were designed earlier. Section A seeks to extract demographic information from the respondents such as gender, year, and field of study. The pattern and flow of the questions that have been asked to the respondents are flexible and not accordingly. It depends on the response of the respondents towards the questions given to them. The procedures taken by the researcher before interviewing the respondents are by informing the 20 respondents about the time and date for the interview session. In section B, the study focuses on the student's perspective looking at the personal

experience in learning a foreign language. Their view provides valuable data about the interest of Malay students to gain extra knowledge outside of their field of study. Initially, a set of open-ended questions was set up to measure the complexity of social distance and psychological distance to a group of respondents, identified by the parameters (Malay learners, higher learning institutions). Upon completion, the analysis was done by identifying the answers given by the respondents.

Before this research is conducted, a pilot test is done earlier to identify problems that may arise during the run of an actual study. From this test, all the problems and weaknesses that exist can be fixed. Pratt (1980) describes the pilot test as a small scale test and is a test before items from the actual test are applied to the actual sample (Ghazali & Sufean 2016).

TABLE 1. Respondent Demography

Respondent	Gender	Course	Year of Study
R1	F	Arabic & Art Studies	3
R2	F	Islamic Banking	2
R3	F	Finance	2
R4	F	Islamic Studies	4
R5	F	Business Administration	3
R6	F	Arabic & Art Studies	2
R7	F	Accounting	2
R8	F	Islamic Studies	3
R8	F	Business Administration	3
R9	F	Economics	4
R10	F	Economics	4
R11	M	Accounting	3
R12	M	Electrical Engineering	4
R13	M	Islamic Studies	2
R14	M	Mechanical Engineering	4
R15	M	Mechanical Engineering	4
R16	M	Economics	4
R17	M	Islamic Banking	2
R18	M	Accounting	2
R19	M	Electrical Engineering	4
R20	M	Economics	4

Source: (Interview, 2020)

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

A qualitative sample is a sample selected not randomly or non-random sampling (non-probability sampling). Qualitative research requires only a small or small sample. Within this research, we selected 20 Malay under graduate students from different local universities and fields of studies to take part in this research. Hopefully, the different experiences faced by the students, it will help the community to understand the social distance and psychological distance faced by Malay students. Patton (2002) also stressed that the selection of study samples needs to be personally agreed and the

sample is indeed interested in engaging themselves in a study proposed by the researcher (Ghazali & Sufean 2016).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In terms of interest, most respondents stated that their interest in learning a foreign language arose from a young age, while in high school or since entering university. Some discourse such as "I learned Arabic or Japanese since I was in boarding school…", "… when I was old enough to continue my studies at university", "… since I was in primary school where

there are subjects taught in Arabic" and "I started to like Arabic when I entered high school… In my school, there are several foreign language options such as Mandarin, Arabic, French, Japanese and so on but my choice is Japanese. I think Japanese is more interesting than Arabic or other foreign languages because I was never exposed to Arabic while in school before". Other explanations have been stated by the respondents such as, "I learned Arabic because it is the language of the Quran ... Muslims are required to learn this language…It will be a big loss if I do not learn this language"

Therefore, based on the above discourse marking, schools and Higher Learning Institutions are mediums that play an important role in sparking interest among students. Today, more and more Institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia offer Arabic and Japanese language courses. Thus, in the future, it is expected that more students pursuing university studies will take the opportunity to learn a foreign language.

Next, students' interest in Arabic and Japanese is greatly influenced by the encouraging factors of peers and lecturers, apart from that they will be respected by native speakers once they are in a foreign country. It is also for the purpose of graduation. Almost all of the respondents agreed that peers and lecturers are the main factors that motivate them to learn a foreign language. Some described "… many of my friends can communicate in Arabic, and" I take Arabic studies, so indirectly I need to be proficient in Arabic... "I and my friends like to watch Japanese stories, so we started from there in learning Japanese". These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Yamato et al. (2010) (Hieda & Maserah, 2012) who stated that UPM students who take Japanese language courses are students who actively use popular cultural products and strive to apply what is watched, heard and read in learning Japanese. Also, there are several other answers given by respondents related to social media attractions that make them interested in learning a foreign language". Japanese society has a polite, disciplined, and hard-working personality… lifestyle and way of thinking and Japanese society itself make me interested in learning Japanese.

Other than that, the interest factor in learning a foreign language arises among many students because they think it is very useful to apply in the career world or can be used if they continue their studies in Japan or the Arab world. Among the descriptions given by them are. "I am interested in pursuing a Master's Degree in the country of the

rising sun. So, I need to be proficient in Japanese. This is because the Japanese people will feel proud when there are foreigners who are pursuing their studies in their country and are proficient in speaking Japanese" … "If I can speak a foreign language then I will easily communicate with the local community when I am abroad… and learning this foreign language is fun". Another answer given is "I learn a foreign language so that I am respected by those around me…" My tendency to learn a foreign language is because I will easily understand the meaning of the conversation of Japanese and Arabic actors… "I do not want to be deceived when I travel abroad".

Meanwhile, the aspect of the current situation that requires students to have soft skills is a vital factor in why they need to learn a foreign language. Today, it is difficult for a student to get a job. Competitively challenging is the reason they have to master a language other than the French and English languages. Among the answers given is "Communication skills using a foreign language can make employers interested in hiring me. … but I face a challenge when the interest in learning a foreign language does not exist in me, but due to the compulsion factor I need to learn it too so that it is easy to get a job "." I am interested in working for a Japanese company… .so I need to be fluent in Japanese… "… I face a challenge in terms of the disciplinary system highlighted by the employer. If a Japanese employer does not encourage the use of foreign languages other than Japanese itself and is very concerned about punctuality, in contrast with local employers who are more open in terms of language use in communication…where I aspire to be a translator one day". If I can speak Arabic and Japanese that is an advantage for me "…" The attraction of a university student is when he is proficient in using foreign languages in writing and speech ". ... "foreign language can improve your self-confidence when I meet clients who are not proficient in Malay or English". Some respondents responded" I have a problem to upgrading my knowledge in learning foreign languages especially Arabic and Japanese because at my university, the lab facilities are out of date…. I need to find other solutions like sharing ideas about those languages with my friends at other universities"….Other student said…"Sometimes I feel really upset about learning foreign languages because the facilitator in charge is not expert and does not have experience in teaching foreign languages".

TABLE 2. Barriers in Social Distance and Psychological Distance in Language Acculturation

No	Perspectives on Learning Foreign Language	Description
1.	Understand the reason of learning foreign language	Built-up self-confidence when they go to oversea and for graduate
2.	Support system	Self-motivation, Lecturers, friends and social media
3.	Intention to learn	to upgrade knowledge and to gain experience
4.	Realize the function of foreign language	Self-confident and easy to communicate with people
5.	Impact towards personality	Feeling people will respect towards them.
6.	Positives impact on language acculturation	Showing personal expertise for workforce
7.	Self-motivation	Develop self-motivation although not confident while dealing with peoples
8.	Difficulties arise	in some places lack of facilities and facilitator. Self-motivation slow down. The cynical view of the original group that this language against the ability of foreign students to learn Arabic or Japanese.
9.	Response from students	Realize the importance of learning foreign language but the language is too difficult to be practiced.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Scenarios of learning a foreign language need to be taken into account by students so that they can build new skills within themselves. The opportunities and offers available need to be seized because the competition to get a job nowadays is very challenging. But there is no denying that there are distinct challenges in mastering a language. In this essay, noticed that aspects related to social distance and psychological distance are challenges in learning Arabic and Japanese. From a social distance point of view, the function of social media that shows films using Arabic and Japanese helps them to understand the culture and language of the Arab and Japanese communities. In terms of psychological distance, self-confidence to continue learning Arabic or Japanese is due to the experience of learning it during school days as well as the influence of peers is an attraction for them to learn this language. This interest in learning a foreign language also arises to build self-confidence when they continue their studies in relevant countries. The Ministry of Higher Education can also place some requirements for learning a foreign language among students of higher institutions before graduation so that students will learn a foreign language for the enhancement of their career path. Lecturers from relevant faculties such as modern language faculty can also encourage students to master a foreign language by explaining the benefits gained if a student can communicate well in any foreign language. It is hoped that through this writing, students' awareness of the importance of learning a foreign language with get attention. The benefit that can be obtained in learning this language is that it can be used in daily communication, employment or to be used while in foreign countries later.

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