

[ENJOYMENT AND ENGAGEMENT OF MALAYSIAN LEARNERS IN ARABIC STUDIES PROGRAMME]

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Abstract

Language learners with a strong international posture are generally more willing to communicate in the foreign language that they learn. Past studies have shown that international posture is largely associated with variable levels of motivation, enjoyment, and cultural motives. However, studies on engagement were poorly conducted, especially for Arabic language learners. Therefore, this study aims to examine the level of readiness of students of Arabic studies programmes in terms of enjoyment in learning Arabic and engagement in Arabic. This study uses quantitative design by distributing online questionnaire instruments to 180 final year students of the bachelor's degree from three public universities in Malaysia, namely Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), and International Islamic University (UIA). Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. The results showed that students in tertiary Arabic Studies programmes in Malaysia report moderate to moderately high levels of enjoyment in learning Arabic and engagement in Arabic. Their international posture is in the moderate range but relatively low. Students need to capitalize on all these aspects which will directly and indirectly contribute to better achievement in learning Arabic.

Keywords: *International posture; Arabic studies; Enjoyment; Engagement*

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INTRODUCTION

Language learners with a strong motivation, cultural motive and enjoyment are generally more willing to interact with communities and resources of the target language. The need to communicate in Arabic across borders has increased, as Arabic is already being considered as a global language especially in Muslim countries such as Egypt and Jordan. The increase in the use of Arabic language is driven by the need for non-native speakers to communicate with native speakers. Recently, there are various things that need to be discussed where the Arabic language is actively used as a medium of communication between Muslim countries and communities outside their countries. The desire to communicate with outside communities is proven to be a useful motivation in English language learning have been positively linked, directly or indirectly, with some desirable outcomes in language learning motivation such as willingness to communicate (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004; Kormos & Csizér, 2008) and language acquisition.

Therefore, motivation can be seen as a positive construct that is beneficial for language learning students. In addition, the aspect of motivation in the study of language learning has been proven to encourage students to learn English as a foreign language. Several past studies have proven that the aspects of student motivation, cultural motive and enjoyment increase their involvement in the international community. Among other things, past studies are widely associated with motivational variables (Geoghegan, 2018; Alnajashi, 2020) and cultural motives (Soliman et al., 2016; Dweik & Abu-Irmies, 2015). However, the focus on the engagement of Arabic language students towards international posture received less attention from past researchers.

The lack of proficiency of Arabic language among public university students in Malaysia is a constraint on their engagement in international posture. Most past researchers also paid less attention to the aspect of student engagement in international posture, especially among students of Arabic studies programs. This is because students are less involved in the international community which causes them to be less able to strengthen their communication in Arabic. This lack of exposure causes students to feel anxious to communicate in Arabic with foreign students. Arabic is often considered as a challenging medium of communication, causing many students to have problems adapting to the environment, especially when interacting with Arab students. The results of the previous study found that the level of anxiety that exists to communicate in Arabic among 25 KUIS students has resulted in the poor use of Arabic among them.

MOTIVATION LEVEL

Motivation is an important aspect of the language learning process. Students will be more motivated to learn and pay full attention to the lessons whether learning in or out of the classroom (Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah, 2018). The higher the self-motivation of students, the higher their ability to engage in the international community.

The research by Aladdin (2013) found that non-Muslim Malaysian Arab students showed a very positive attitude towards learning Arabic. In that study, students expressed their interest in speaking fluently in Arabic. This finding is in line with the studies conducted by Karahan (2007) and Chalak and Kassaian (2010) which found that learning Arabic is interesting and makes them motivated to learn the language. In terms of their attitude towards Arabic, learning Arabic creates a positive attitude among the students to learn Arabic even though the language is difficult to learn because they are non-native speakers. Apart from that, the study also revealed that learning Arabic is an advantage for the students as they have a basis for communicating in Arabic with outside communities.

Other than that, the study by Schroth and McCormack (2000) on 400 US students who studied abroad mentioned that these students had higher motivation levels than their peers who did not study abroad. However, when they measured the level of motivation among students who studied abroad from different programmes, there was a difference in the level of motivation between the students due to the requirements of study, the selection of study programmes, and the results of study experience abroad. This difference in motivational levels makes it possible for students to meet the need to engage and indirectly improve their speaking skills with the international community.

CULTURAL MOTIVE

Cultural motives are also closely related to international posture. Abu-Dulbough (2005) study investigated the impact of cultural aspects on the ability of 56 United States Peace Corps Volunteers who learned Arabic as a foreign language. Among the cultural aspects highlighted are the attitude of students towards Jordanian Arab culture, the role of language instructors in learning languages, the role of techniques used to introduce cultural topics in language learning, and the relationship between Jordanian Arabic culture and Arabic. Based on 67 items of the questionnaire, the results showed that there is a positive attitude towards Arabic culture, traditions, customs, and values. The volunteers recognized the importance of having language and cultural experts who help them deal with the international community that represents Jordanian culture. Other than that, the study also found that diverse techniques are needed to acquire learning skills and there is a strong connection between Arabic and Jordanian Arabic culture.

In addition, Genc and Bada (2020) conducted study on Curukuva University's students in Turkey on the impact of the cultural classes they attended in the autumn semester. Data was collected three months after the end of the culture class. Researchers held a lecture-type session, as well as a presentation of the research project. And then, the students were asked to answer five questionnaire items. The findings of that study found that culture classes are very useful in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, and changing the attitudes of the students themselves. The study showed the importance of integrating cultural classes into the curriculum of language teaching departments as it is an important element of language learning and teaching. It has a great impact on the improvement of communication efficiency as well as other skills in teaching any language.

Next, Hammami (2012) conducted a study on the perception of American Arab high school teachers towards the development of cultural awareness of first-year Arabic language learners. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews of 5 Arabic teachers at the same secondary school. Qualitative data analysis methods and open coding followed by axial encoding were used in analyzing data. The results of the teacher's interview showed that the cultural awareness developed in the first-year Arabic language class requires a strong connection between Arabic and cultural elements. Cultural learning can be enhanced by combining various activities, practices, and culture focused as an evaluation tool. In addition, cultural learning and teaching can also be encouraged through effective communication with students and parents by addressing the ongoing cultural challenges faced in the classroom. Teachers can also encourage the students to adopt the best cultural practices to start Arabic language classes and support consistency in assessing the right cultural skills.

ENJOYMENT IN LEARNING ARABIC

Enjoyment is an important thing in learning no matter what field or language is studied. When students get the pleasure of studying, they will respond positively and improve the atmosphere of the classroom. Shahirah and Norazan (2020) conducted a study between learning Japanese and non-Japanese Arabic speakers at Yuai International Islamic School, Tokyo. The study focused on students' attitudes from affective and cognitive aspects, while motivational issues were instrumental and integrative. The study employed a case study approach using qualitative method. A total of 24 students were interviewed using semi-structural interview questions. The findings showed that the students like to learn Arabic and for them Arabic language is very fun and subjectives. The results of the interview stated that students are more likely to read Arabic language articles through Al-Jazeera website compared to Arabic textbooks and storybooks. All 24 students expressed their excitement in the Arabic language class.

According to that study, the effective approach to communicating and learning makes the learning atmosphere in the classroom more enjoyable. In addition, Nik Radhiah Nik Ali (2020) which conducted a study on language game methods in teaching and learning Arabic mentioned that the process of teaching and learning should always be dynamic in accordance with the reality of current needs. The study discussed the importance of conducting classes using language games that can explain the meaning, examples of language use and its advantages. According to that study, the game approach applied in learning can reduce boredom to communicate. By using such methods, students will give positive respond in learning Arabic.

Apart from that, the study by Syafawati Iliyas et al. (2020) highlighted that the method of learning through mobile apps affects pre-school pupils. The findings of that study showed that the level of student's mastery was still at a low level. However, learning using teaching aids can be fun in the classroom besides having a positive impact on the student's achievement.

ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

International skills can also be attributed to the involvement of Arabic learners. Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah (2018) mentioned that the involvement of students in learning the language creates a positive environment for Arabic. This involvement takes place formally or informally in or outside the classroom. The study which was conducted on 344 Arabic learners also measured the level of involvement of Arabic language learners in public universities. Two dimensions were analysed, namely in the classroom and outside the classroom. The results of that study showed that the involvement of students learning Arabic in the classroom was at a moderate level. Meanwhile, engagement outside the classroom was found to be at a low level. Students' engagement must be further enhanced to produce competent Arabic language graduates. There are various efforts that can increase students' engagement such as online quizzes, games, debates, and others. These efforts can be made to create a positive Arabic language atmosphere among the students.

In addition, the study of Norshida Hashim et al. (2019) on student involvement in vocabulary learning found that learning by mere memorization and heavy training bore the students. The research stated that fun activities should be carried out to attract motivation and increase the involvement of students with learning and language activities such as using playing cards called Ahsulu. The game card was used in the learning of Arabic vocabulary among students of Biology and Chemistry with a degree with middle level Arabic language skills at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kuala Pilah Campus situated in Negeri Sembilan. The data were collected through an online questionnaire and analysed with SPSS version 23. Study data showed that using Ahsulu as a teaching aid increases students' involvement in the classroom. Thus, it is proven that the method can improve communication and motivation of students in language learning.

Next, Rumzan (2020) study on the use of video in classrooms concluded that the method gives students an interactive effect. According to that study, learning using video can increase the level of students' engagement and create active learning in the classroom. However, the aspect of enjoyment and students' engagement with international posture was very little conducted by previous studies. Therefore, the research question is as follows: What is the student level readiness from the aspect of engagement, and enjoyment of Malaysian learners in Arabic studies programme?

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach. Data collection in this study was conducted using a survey where questionnaires were distributed to respondents online. The respondents of this study consist of 180 final year students of bachelor's degree in Arabic Language from three universities, namely Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), and International Islamic University (UIA). The sampling technique used is simple sampling, as it considers the suitability of the selection of students to answer the questionnaire. This selection is also based on their maturity and experience in learning Arabic at the university level. The students have studied Arabic at the university for at least 3 years plus 11 years of school experience. Therefore, the factors of maturity and experience make their answers to be more consistent compared to pre-university students.

Questionnaire instruments were adapted and modified based on a review of the literature conducted by past researchers on enjoyment in learning Arabic (Bakar, Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah, Nor Fatini Aqilah Mohamad Soad & Mohd Farhan Ahmad, 2023; Pereira et al., 2017). As for instrument measurements, a 4-point Likert consent scale had been used, i.e., 1= 'strongly disagree', 2= 'disagree', 3 = 'agree', and 4 = 'strongly agree'. The use of midpoints is not involved in this instrument as it considers the biased response. While the 5-point Likert frequency scale had been used to measure engagement (Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah et al., 2020) in Arabic , with 1 = 'very not often', 2 = 'not often', 3 = 'frequently' and 4 = 'very often'.

This study uses Cronbach's alpha to test and check the validity and reliability of the instrument. The researchers used SPSS version 25 to analyze the percentage and frequency of the respondent's background. Using SPSS version 25 software as well, the construct reliability value reading of each aspect is reported as follows:

TABLE 1. Instrument Scale Measurement Content

No.	Construct	Reliability Value, α
1	Enjoying Learning Arabic	0.939
2	Engagement in Learning Arabic	0.970

DATA ANALYSIS: PART A

Based on the questionnaires distributed to the students, the study was able to collect accurate data and meet the requirements of the study. After that, the data were analyzed and discussed by percentage and frequency. The findings are arranged in order of question numbers. Part A is related to the background of the respondent. The findings of the Part A questionnaire are as per the following table:

TABLE 2. PART A. Background of Respondents

No.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
1	Gender	Male	87	48.3
		Female	93	51.7
2	University name	UKM	69	38.3
		USIM	73	40.6
		UIA	38	21.1
3	Total Arabic language allocation hours a week	0-1 hour	55	30.6
		1-2 hours	64	35.6
		More than 2 hours	61	33.9
4	Arabic mastery stage	Very weak	12	6.7
		Weak	8	4.4
		Moderate	103	57.2
		Good	42	23.3
		Excellent	15	8.3

Based on the background analysis of the respondents, the number of female students was 93 (51.7%), more than the number of male students, which is only 87 (48.3%). In addition, the survey found that 73 students (40.6%) were respondents from USIM, while 69 students (38.3%) were from UKM, and the remaining 38 students (21.1%) were from UIA. In addition, the study also found that the majority of 64 students (35.6%) allocated 1-2 hours to learn Arabic in a week while 61 students (33.9%) used more than 2 hours for Arabic and only 55 students (30.6%) used 0-1 hours for this subject. In addition, the results of the survey found that the majority of 103 students (57.2%) had a moderate level of Arabic language proficiency while 42 students (23.3%) mastered Arabic well, and 15 students (8.3%) had excellent levels of Arabic language proficiency. However, the study also found that 8 students (4.4%) in the final year were found to be weak in mastering Arabic subjects.

DATA ANALYSIS: PART B

To study the student readiness of Arabic studies programs in terms of enjoyment in learning Arabic and engagement in Arabic.

There are 20 question items that describe the enjoyment in learning Arabic involving 180 students. The findings of the Part B questionnaire are as per the following table:

TABLE 3. PART B. Enjoyment in Learning Arabic

Item	Statement	VSD	D	A	VSA	Mean	Standard Deviation
B1	I feel creative.	0.6% (1)	5.0% (9)	42.8% (77)	51.7% (93)	3.45	.619
B2	I can accept mistakes while learning Arabic.	0	2.2% (4)	31.7% (57)	66.1% (119)	3.63	.526
B3	I don't feel bored.	0.6% (1)	8.3% (15)	41.1% (74)	50.0% (90)	3.40	.665

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B4	I enjoy learning.	0	3.9%	41.1%	55.0%	3.51	.574
			(7)	(74)	(99)		
B5	I feel like I'm a different person when I'm in Arabic class.	2.8%	11.1%	39.4%	46.7%	3.30	.776
		(5)	(20)	(71)	(84)		
B6	I learned to express myself better in Arabic.	0	7.2%	40.0%	52.8%	3.45	.628
			(13)	(72)	(95)		
B7	I contribute to my Arabic class.	3.3%	14.4%	41.1%	41.1%	3.20	.807
		(6)	(26)	(74)	(74)		
B8	I learn interesting things.	0	5.0%	36.1%	58.9%	3.53	.591
			(9)	(65)	(106)		
B9	I feel proud of my achievement in class.	1.1%	10.0%	40.0%	48.9%	3.36	.708
		(2)	(18)	(72)	(88)		
B10	I am in a positive mood.	0	5.6%	35.6%	58.9%	3.53	.601
			(10)	(64)	(106)		
B11	I feel cool in learning Arabic.	0	5.0%	36.1%	58.9%	3.53	.591
			(9)	(65)	(106)		
B12	I feel entertained when learning arabic.	0.6%	7.2%	35.0%	57.2%	3.48	.655
		(1)	(13)	(63)	(103)		
B13	I still enjoy learning Arabic even though I make language mistakes.	0	3.9%	40.6%	55.6%	3.51	.573
			(7)	(73)	(100)		
B14	I feel comfortable in Arabic class.	0.6%	6.7%	35.0%	57.8%	3.50	.647
		(1)	(12)	(63)	(104)		
B15	I have good classmates.	0	1.1%	36.1%	62.8%	3.61	.509
			(2)	(65)	(113)		
B16	I have good group members.	0	3.3%	37.2%	59.4%	3.56	.560
			(6)	(67)	(107)		
B17	I have friends who don't laugh at my mistakes in class.	0.6%	3.9%	40.6%	55.0%	3.50	.602
		(1)	(7)	(73)	(99)		
B18	I have an encouraging teacher.	0	3.9%	27.2%	68.9%	3.65	.554
			(7)	(49)	(124)		

(Source: Kaseh Abu Bakar, Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah, Nor Fatini Aqilah Mohamad Soad & Mohd Farhan Ahmad, 2023; adapted from Pereira et al., 2017)

Based on item B1, the study found that the majority of 93 students (51.7%) strongly agree they feel creative. In addition, there are 77 students (42.8%) who agree. The remaining 9 students (5.0%) disagreed and only one student (0.6%) very strongly disagreed with this statement. Based on item B2, the study found that the majority of 119 students (66.1%) strongly agree that they can accept mistakes while learning Arabic. In addition, 57 students (31.7%) answered agree in response. The rest of the 4 respondents (2.2%) disagree with the item's statement. Based on item B3, the study found that the majority of 90 students (50.0%) strongly agree that they don't feel bored in learning Arabic. In addition, 74 students (41.1%) agree, and 15 students (8.3%) disagree. Only one student (0.6%) very strongly disagrees with the statement of the item. Based on item B4, the study found that the majority of 99 students (55.0%) answered very strongly that they enjoy learning Arabic. In addition, 74 students (41.1%) answered agree. The rest of the 7 students (3.9%) responded disagreed with the statement of the item.

Based on item B5, the study found that the majority of 84 students (46.7%) strongly agree that they felt like they were different people when they were in Arabic classes. In addition, 71 students (39.4%) agree, and 20 students (11.1%) disagree of this statement. The rest of the 5 students (2.8%) responded very strongly and disagreed to the item. Based on item B6, the study found that the majority of 95 students (52.8%) answered very strongly agree that they learned to express themselves better in Arabic. In addition, 72 students (40.0%) agree and only 13 students (7.2%) responded disagree to the statement of the item. Based on item B7, the study found that the majority of 74 students (41.1%) very strongly agree that they contribute to Arabic classes. In addition, 26 students (14.4%) disagree, and 6 students (3.3%) very strongly disagree with the statement of the item. Based on item B8, the study found that the majority of 106 students (58.9%) very strongly agree that they learn interesting things. In addition, 65 students (36.1%) respond agree to this statement and only 9 students (5.0%) respond disagree to the statement. Based on item B9, the study found that the majority of 88 students (48.9%) very strongly agree that they feel proud of their achievements in class. In addition, 72 students (40.0%) agreed, and 18 students (10.0%) answered disagree. The rest of the 2 students (1.1%) responded very strongly disagreed to the statement of the item.

Based on item B10, the study found that the majority of 106 students (58.9%) answered very strongly that they are in a positive mood. In addition, 64 students (35.6%) responded and only 10 students (5.6%) responded disagreed with the statement. Based on item B11, the study found that the majority of 106 students (58.9%) strongly agree that they feel cool in learning Arabic. In addition, 65 students (36.1%) agreed and only 9 students (5.0%) responded, disagreeing with the statement of the item. Based on item B12, the study found that the majority of 103 students (57.2%) answered very strongly agree that they feel entertained when learning Arabic. In addition, 63 students (35.0%) answered agree and 13 students (7.2%) answered disagree. Only one student (0.6%) very strongly disagrees with the statement. Based on item B13, the study found that the majority of 100 students (55.6%) answered very strongly that they still enjoy learning Arabic even though they make language mistakes. In addition, 73 students (40.6%) responded agreed and only 7 students (3.9%) responded disagreed. Based on item B14, the study found that the majority of 104 students (57.8%) answered very strongly that they feel comfortable in Arabic classes. In addition, 63 students (35.0%) responded agree, and 12 students (6.7%) responded disagree to this statement. Only one student (0.6%) responded very strongly to the statement.

Based on item B15, the study found that the majority of 113 students (62.8%) answered very strongly agree that they have good classmates. In addition, 65 students (36.1%) responded and only 2 students (1.1%) disagreed with the statement. Based on item B16, the study found that a majority of 107 students (59.4%) answered very strongly agree that they have good group members. In addition, 67 students (37.2%) responded agree and only 6 students (3.3%) disagreed with the statement. Based on item B17, the study found that the majority of 99 students (55.0%) answered very strongly that they have friends who don't laugh at their mistakes in class. In addition, 73 students (40.6%) responded agree and 7 students (3.9%) respond disagreed. Only one student (0.6%) responded very strongly disagree with the statement. Based on item B18, the study found that the majority of 124 students (68.9%) strongly agree that they have encouraging teachers. In addition, 49 students (27.2%) agree and only 7 students (3.9%) responded disagree to the statement. Based on item B19, the study found that the majority of 118 students (65.6%) very strongly agree that they have a teacher who is friendly with students. In addition, 54 students (30.0%) responded to agree and only 8 students (4.4%) respond disagreed to the statement. Based on item B20, the study found that the majority of 113 students (62.8%) answered very strongly disagree that they have teachers who help students a lot. In addition, 61 students (33.9%) respond agree and only 6 students (3.3%) respond disagree to the statement.

There are 19 items of questions that describe the engagement of students in Arabic involving 180 students. The findings of the Part C questionnaire are as per the following table:

TABLE 4. PART C. Student Engagement in Learning Arabic

Item	Statement	VI	NO	QO	F	VO	Mean	Standard Deviation
C1	I listen to my lecturer speak entirely in Arabic every day.	2.2% (4)	3.9% (7)	15.6% (28)	38.3% (69)	40.0% (72)	4.10	.951
C2	I speak Arabic in lectures with my friends.	7.2% (13)	23.3% (42)	23.3% (42)	22.2% (40)	23.9% (43)	3.32	1.266
C3	I heard my classmates speaking in Arabic.	6.1% (11)	11.7% (21)	27.8% (50)	32.2% (58)	22.2% (40)	3.52	1.140
C4	I read a journal article in Arabic.	4.4% (8)	18.9% (34)	31.1% (56)	24.4% (44)	21.1% (38)	3.38	1.145
C5	I am looking for information in Arabic on the internet.	3.3% (6)	8.3% (15)	25.6% (46)	33.9% (61)	28.9% (52)	3.76	1.062
C6	I read the Arabic slides that my lecturer displayed.	2.2% (4)	4.4% (8)	20.6% (37)	38.9% (70)	33.9% (61)	3.97	.962
C7	I have a group discussion in Arabic.	9.4% (17)	22.8% (41)	25.6% (46)	22.8% (41)	19.4% (35)	3.20	1.256
C8	I asked the lecturer a question in Arabic.	5.6% (10)	16.7% (30)	25.6% (46)	26.1% (47)	26.1% (47)	3.50	1.202
C9	I presented in front of the class using Arabic entirely.	7.8% (14)	11.1% (20)	22.8% (41)	28.3% (51)	30.0% (54)	3.61	1.238
C10	I speak Arabic with my friends.	10.0% (18)	22.8% (41)	26.1% (47)	21.1% (38)	20.0% (36)	3.18	1.270
C11	I speak Arabic with the lecturer.	5.0% (9)	13.9% (25)	27.8% (50)	25.6% (46)	27.8% (50)	3.57	1.177
C12	I speak with a native Arabic speaker.	14.4% (26)	20.6% (37)	21.1% (38)	22.8% (41)	21.1% (38)	3.15	1.357
C13	I read Arabic books.	5.0% (9)	10.6% (19)	25.6% (46)	33.3% (60)	25.6% (46)	3.63	1.122
C14	I read an advertisement in Arabic.	4.4% (8)	15.6% (28)	32.2% (58)	26.1% (47)	21.7% (39)	3.45	1.125
C15	I read the sign in Arabic.	8.9% (16)	15.6% (28)	30.0% (54)	25.6% (46)	20.0% (36)	3.32	1.212
C16	I watched a video in Arabic.	5.6% (10)	10.0% (18)	28.9% (52)	30.6% (55)	25.0% (45)	3.59	1.132

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C17	I listened to a radio broadcast in Arabic.	13.3% (24)	20.0% (36)	22.8% (41)	20.0% (36)	23.9% (43)	3.21	1.361
C18	I spent myself with activities organized by the Arabic language association.	10.0% (18)	22.2% (40)	20.0% (36)	25.0% (45)	22.8% (41)	3.28	1.308
C19	I participated in the competition in Arabic.	11.1% (20)	16.1% (29)	20.6% (37)	25.6% (46)	26.7% (48)	3.40	1.331

(Source: adapted from Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah et al., 2020)

Based on item C1, the study found that the majority of 72 students (40.0%) very often listen to lecturers speak entirely in Arabic every day. In addition, 69 students (38.3%) answered frequently, and 28 students (15.6%) responded quite often to this statement. The rest of the students (3.9%) answered not often and only 4 students (2.2%) answered very infrequently with the statement of the item. Based on item C2, the study found that the majority of 43 students (23.9%) speak Arabic in lectures with their friends. In addition, there were 40 students (22.2%) who answered frequently, and 42 students (23.3%) answered quite often to this statement. The remaining 42 students (23.3%) answered not often, and 13 students (7.2%) answered very infrequently about the statement of the item. Based on item C3, the study found that a majority of 58 students (32.2%) frequently heard their classmates speaking in Arabic. In addition, there were 50 students (27.8%) who answered quite often, and 40 students (22.2%) answered very often. The rest of the 21 students (11.7%) answered not often and 11 students (6.1%) answered very infrequently with the statement of the item. Based on item C4, the study found that the majority of 56 students (31.1%) quite often read a journal article in Arabic. In addition, 44 students (24.4%) answered frequently, and 38 students (21.1%) answered very often to this statement. The remaining 34 students (18.9%) answered not often and only 8 students (4.4%) answered very infrequently to the statement of the item.

Based on item C5, the study found that the majority of 61 students (33.9%) frequently looked for information in Arabic on the internet. In addition, 52 students (28.9%) answered very often, and 46 students (25.6%) answered quite often to this statement. The remaining 15 students (8.3%) answered not often and only 6 students (3.3%) answered very infrequently to the statement. Based on item C6, the study found that the majority of 70 students (38.9%) frequently read the Arabic slides that my lecturer displayed. In addition, 61 students (33.9%) answered very often, and 37 students (20.6%) answered quite often about this statement. The remaining 8 students (4.4%) answered not often and only 4 students (2.2%) answered very infrequently to the statement of the item. Based on item C7, the study found that the majority of 46 students (25.6%) quite often have group discussions in Arabic. In addition, 41 students (22.8%) did not answer often, and 35 students (19.4%) answered very often to this statement. The remaining 41 students (22.8%) answered not often, and 17 students (9.4%) answered very infrequently with the statement. Based on item C8, the study found that the majority of 47 students (26.1%) very often and frequently asked the lecturer a question in Arabic. In addition, 46 students (25.6%) answered quite often, and 30 students (16.7%) answered not often to this statement. The rest of the 10 students (5.6%) answered very infrequently with the statement. Based on item C9, the study found that the majority of 54 students (30.0%) were very often presented in front of the class using Arabic entirely. In addition, 51 students (28.3%) answered frequently, and 41 students (22.8%) answered quite often to the statement. The remaining 20 students (11.1%) answered not often, and 14 students (7.8%) answered very infrequently with the statement.

Based on item C10, the study found that the majority of 47 students (26.1%) speak Arabic quite often with their friends. In addition, 41 students (22.8%) answered not often, and 38 students (21.1%) answered frequently for the statement. The rest of the 36 students (20.0%) answered very often, and 18 students (10.0%) answered very infrequently about the statement. Based on item C11, the study found that the majority of 50 students (27.8%) quite often speak Arabic with the lecturer. In addition, 46 students (25.6%) answered frequently, and 25 students (13.9%) answered not often to this. The rest of the 9 students (5.0%) answered very infrequently with the statement.

Based on item C12, the study found that the majority of 38 students (21.1%) answered very often to speak with a native Arabic speaker. In addition, there were 41 students (22.8%) who answered frequently, and 37 students answered non-exceptionally about this statement. The rest of the 26 students (14.4%) responded very infrequently to the statement. Based on item C13, the study found that a majority of 46 students (25.6%) very often read Arabic books. In addition, 60 students (33.3%) answered frequently, and 19 students (10.6%) answered not often about the statement. The rest of the 9 students (5.0%) answered very infrequently with the statement.

Based on item C14, the study found that the majority of 58 students (32.2%) read an advertisement in Arabic regularly. In addition, there were 47 students (26.1%) who answered frequently, and 39 students (21.7%) answered very often about the statement. The rest of the 28 students (15.6%) answered not often, and 8 students (4.4%) answered very infrequently about the statement. Based on item C15, the study found that the majority of 54 students (30.0%) quite often read the sign in Arabic. In addition, there were 46 students (25.6%) who answered regularly, and 36 students (20.0%) answered very often about it. The remaining 28 students (15.6%) answered not often, and 16 students (8.9%) answered very infrequently about the statement.

Based on item C16, the study found that a majority of 55 students (30.6%) frequently watch videos in Arabic. In addition, there were 52 students (28.9%) answering quite often and 45 students (25.0%) answered very often about it. The remaining 18 students (10.0%) answered not often, and 10 students (5.6%) answered very infrequently to the statement. Based on item C17, the study found that the majority of 43 students (23.9%) very often listen to a radio broadcast in Arabic. In addition, there were 41 students (22.8%) answering quite often and only 24 students (13.3%) answered very infrequently about it. However, there were also 36 students (20.0%) who answered frequently, and the rest answer not often to the statement.

Based on item C18, the study found that a majority of 45 students (25.0%) frequently spend themselves with activities organized by the Arabic language association. In addition, 41 students (22.8%) answered very often, and 40 students (22.2%) answered not often about it. The rest of the 36 students (20.0%) answered quite often and 18 students (10.0%) answered very infrequently about the statement. Based on item C19, the study found that the majority of 48 students (26.7%) participated in the competition in Arabic. In addition, there were 46 students (25.6%) who answered frequently, and 37 students (20.6%) answered quite often about it. The remaining 29 students (16.1%) answered not often, and 20 students (11.1%) answered very infrequently to the statement.

DISCUSSION

STUDENTS OF ARABIC STUDIES PROGRAMMES BASED ON ENGAGEMENT FACTORS IN ARABIC

This study shows that the level of student engagement in the Arab studies programme is at a moderate level. This is evidenced by the fact that the current level of engagement in the classroom is at a moderate level while out-of-class engagement is good. While in the classroom, students rely a lot on slides that are used throughout the learning process. This is because students rely only on the material given to them while in class. Therefore, students' reliance on teachers is so high that they often ask lecturers to translate all expressions. This shows that most of the students lack their own initiative while studying Arabic at the public university level. In this class situation, students' engagement is at a moderate level. Among them is the ability of students to conduct a presentation in front of the class and ask questions in Arabic to the teacher. Items used at this stage are seen as part of the tasks that students need to perform while in the classroom at a public university.

This situation shows that students have not yet used Arabic as an intermediate language widely among themselves. However, the classroom environment that adopts a communicative approach is forced to speak in front of the classroom, and asking questions is seen as causing discomfort among some students. This is because the students are already too comfortable with teacher-centered learning, where all learning activities are set by lecturers without involving students. Therefore, some students see this change as a challenge and cause concern among them (Higgins & Baumfield, 2004).

For students to engage in Arabic with their peers, they are seen to be at a high level of engagement among public university students especially when they are outside the classroom. Students' involvement in university activities and through print media (reading books) and electronic media (watching Arabic videos) is also expected to be the most preferred approach for students. However, the findings showed that students' involvement in such activities is at a moderate level. This is supported by Dweik & Abu-Irmies (2015) which mentioned that the chances of student engagement with media resources in Arabic is limited only to reading books and listening to Arabic songs.

This is because the activities are an opportunity and a way for students to take advantage of and practice what they learn while in the classroom. However, these findings showed that students are still trying to find alternative activities outside the classroom with Arabic reading materials, such as reading books, watching videos in Arabic, and attending activities organised by the Arab community even at a moderate level. This is supported by Zawawi (2001) which reported significant differences in co-curricular activities conducted at IIUM and UKM. Therefore, various activities need to be structured and planned by the authorities to enable students to develop and improve their language learning.

Furthermore, Macis and Schmitt (2017) mentioned that students' engagement outside the classroom can help students in the process of gaining language proficiency while learning a foreign language, but the findings showed otherwise when almost 60% of students' involvement in Arabic at public university level is low. This is supported by Ab.Halim Mohamad (2009) who stated that the use of Arabic language by public university's students outside the classroom especially for Arabic language learners and Islamic studies is still low. The fact is that listening and speaking are the key to interacting and communicating. Therefore, a good speaker is someone who is able to make his/her listeners understand the words they speaks (Yaakob Hasan et al., 2018). However, students are seen as having high ability to engage and communicate with the outside community. Thus, in this way, students can improve their communication skills and confidence in themselves

STUDENTS OF ARAB STUDIES PROGRAMMES BASED ON THE ENJOYMENT FACTOR IN LEARNING ARABIC

Learning pleasure is an important component in providing an effective learning experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2015). A fun learning experience can motivate students. This is because a fun learning experience can encourage students to engage in the international community. Yet in past studies, the study of relationships on international pleasure and skills was not explicitly explained in terms of Arabic language learning in specific but was mentioned as the pleasure of learning a foreign language. Studies have found that students experience pleasure in English classes as well as being associated with achievement. Previous study proved that a high level of excitement is associated with high English achievements (Boudreau et al., 2018). Another finding of previous study was that those with high attainment felt low levels of language anxiety. The findings of this current study support past studies (Siridetkoon, 2015). This is because higher levels of excitement and lower levels of anxiety can improve students' performance. Boudreau et al. (2018) stated that positive emotions also have a role in controlling anxiety to learn a language. In general, studies have found that students with high academic performance feel a low level of anxiety in language classes. This may be due to the exam-oriented education system, for example in Turkey. Since high school, students need to do an English test to pass the high school entrance exam, so the students may feel pressure to do their best. This stress can cause students' performance in academic achievement to deteriorate. Therefore, in the presence of teaching materials, the help of teachers and friends, this concern can be overcome when learning a language. By so doing, students will enjoy learning a foreign language and be able to communicate with the outside community.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that in tertiary Arabic Studies programmes in Malaysia report moderate to moderately high levels of enjoyment in learning Arabic and engagement in Arabic learning. Most students of Arabic studies programmes in public universities only use Arabic during their classroom learning. Accordingly, if students are required to learn Arabic in a foreign language environment and their classroom learning time is very limited, they need to capitalize on language learning resources, activities, and media. This is because if students take advantage of all the facilities and opportunities available around them, it will indirectly help them learn the Arabic language as well as motivate them to learn the language. Thus, students can maximize their involvement in and out of the classroom, which will indirectly contribute to a good achievement in learning Arabic skills. Therefore, students should take advantage of the opportunities they have by maximizing their involvement in and out of the classroom and engage with the international community. It is hoped that this study will provide benefits to the teaching and learning of Arabic language in our country.

As a recommendation, further research should employ multivariate statistical tools to investigate the relationship between international posture towards engagement and enjoyment, and other possibly related construction.

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