

Enhancing Arabic communication proficiency in Malaysian among Malaysian students: Barriers, pedagogical strategies, and environmental influences

 Mohammad Taufiq Abdul Ghani¹, Nor Hadisah Mohamed Shalikin²,  Saipolbarin Ramli³,  Zarima Mohd Zakaria⁴, Wan Ab Aziz Wan Daud^{5*}, Ahmad Zaki Amiruddin⁶,  Muhammad Anwar Ahmad⁷

^{1,2,3,4}Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia; taufiq@fbk.upsi.edu.my (M.T.A.G.) m20231000968@siswa.upsi.edu.my (N.H.M.S.) saipolbarin@fbk.upsi.edu.my (S.R.) zarima@fbk.upsi.edu.my (Z.M.Z.).

^{5,6}Faculty of Language Studies and Human Development, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia; abaziz.wd@umk.edu.my (W.A.A.W.D.) ahmadzaki@umk.edu.my (A.Z.A.).

⁷Abdulhamid Abu Sulayman Kuliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia; m_anwar@iiu.edu.my (M.A.).

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore the factors contributing to low proficiency in Arabic communication among students in government-assisted religious schools (SABK) in Malaysia, despite a structured curriculum that emphasizes communicative competence. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 experienced Arabic language teachers. The study identifies several key barriers, including low student motivation, negative attitudes, fear, and lack of self-confidence, which significantly reduce students' willingness to communicate in Arabic. Pedagogical challenges such as limited integration of Arabic in daily classroom interactions, teacher-centered instruction, inadequate use of interactive teaching tools, and insufficient time for speaking practice were also noted. Environmental factors—such as minimal parental involvement, peer ridicule, absence of extracurricular reinforcement, and lack of immersive Arabic-speaking environments—further hinder language development. The findings suggest that overcoming these challenges requires a holistic approach involving all stakeholders. The study concludes that enhanced parental engagement, student-centered and technology-based teaching methods, and school-wide Arabic initiatives are essential. Practical implications highlight the need for strategic interventions, including gamification, experiential learning, and mobile language applications, to support the development of Arabic communication skills in SABK settings.

Keywords: *Arabic communication proficiency, Arabic language environment, Government-assisted religious schools (SABK), Individual factor, Language acquisition barriers, Pedagogical strategies.*

1. Introduction

Arabic communication skills are a crucial component in enhancing the capabilities of students in Government-Assisted Religious Schools (SABK) in Malaysia. Arabic, as the language of the Quran and the common language in the Islamic world, is crucial in forming the religious and intellectual identity of pupils. Moreover, competency in Arabic facilitates students' exploration of Islamic knowledge. In the Malaysian educational framework, the SABK curriculum aims to enhance competency in Arabic, particularly as a medium of communication. Nonetheless, prior research has indicated that pupils' oral communication abilities remain inadequate [1].

SABK students encounter numerous hurdles in achieving proficiency in communication. Their limited exposure to the prevalent usage of the Arabic language beyond the classroom constrains their

prospects for practical application in real-world contexts. Nonetheless, educational elements, such as less interactive teaching methodologies, also contribute to this deficiency [2, 3]. Pedagogical methods emphasising language and rote memorisation, as opposed to verbal communication, frequently hinder progress. Moreover, environmental obstacles, like the scarcity of proficient Arabic language models and insufficient technological support, impede successful learning [4, 5].

Deficiencies in Arabic communication may be ascribed to individual characteristics, including motivation levels, attitudes towards the language, and pupils' cognitive capacities. There exist numerous negative perceptions on Arabic as a topic, often deemed challenging or less essential to life. Research indicates that diminished intrinsic motivation frequently correlates with insufficient student enthusiasm in actively participating in the learning of Arabic [6]. The phonological and syntactic features of the Arabic language present difficulties for pupils, particularly when acquired as a second language (L2) [7].

The effects of inadequate communication in Arabic transcend the individual sphere and may impact the overall educational framework. This may adversely affect students' academic performance in Arabic-taught topics and diminish SABK's role in cultivating a generation adept in Islamic knowledge and skilled in international communication. Moreover, it will establish a disparity between the educational goals of SABK and the actual accomplishments of students, therefore impacting the reputation of these institutions within the national education framework.

This study seeks to examine the factors contributing to the deficiencies in Arabic communication among SABK students in Malaysia. It highlights educational, contextual, and individual elements intricately associated with the tactics employed to enhance the situation. This study aims to offer practical insights for policymakers and educators to cultivate a more comprehensive and effective strategy for Arabic language acquisition in Malaysia.

2. Background of Study

Arabic is integral to the Islamic education framework in Malaysia, particularly among Government-Aided Religious Schools (SABK). These educational institutions amalgamate the national and religious curricula, with Arabic as a primary topic. Mastery of the Arabic language is considered an important prerequisite for understanding religious texts, performing worship more effectively, and delving into Islamic knowledge based on the Arab-Islamic scholarly tradition. Moreover, Arabic functions as a conduit for international communication within the Islamic world, rendering it an invaluable resource for students to forge global connections and confront contemporary concerns.

Despite the SABK curriculum being effectively structured to address the requirements of Arabic language instruction, the challenge of inadequate oral communication proficiency in this language persists as a considerable concern. Research indicates that SABK students frequently have challenges in articulating thoughts in Arabic, despite their proficiency in grammar and the memorisation of Quranic verses. The substantial disparity between the acquisition of theoretical information and the actual application of the Arabic language adversely impacts students' linguistic development and their capacity for cross-cultural communication.

A primary factor leading to this deficiency is the pedagogical method that prioritises written skills above oral communication abilities [8, 9]. Numerous SABK institutions continue to employ conventional methods centred on rote memorisation and textual understanding, failing to offer adequate opportunity for students to actively engage in practicing the Arabic language. Furthermore, numerous educators encounter limitations in fostering a more communicative learning atmosphere, including excessive workload, inadequate resources, or insufficient pedagogical expertise [2]. This circumstance gets very difficult when pupils are not situated in an atmosphere conducive to significant usage of Arabic.

Environmental concerns further exacerbate this dilemma. Arabic, while significant for religious education, does not receive equivalent funding compared to English, which is extensively utilised as a second language in Malaysia [10, 11]. The absence of interaction with native speakers or authentic

communication contexts restricts students' chances to develop confidence and acclimatise to the language. The potential of technology and media to enhance active Arabic language learning has not been fully used, resulting in a less engaging experience for students [12, 13].

From an individual standpoint, the motivation, attitude, and self-confidence of pupils significantly influence their performance in Arabic communication [3]. Numerous students perceive Arabic as a challenging discipline, primarily pertinent to religious contexts, resulting in diminished intrinsic motivation. This perspective is intensified by a constrained comprehension of the advantages of the Arabic language in a wider context, including professional prospects and global interactions. In this situation, students tend to memorize for exams without truly mastering the language as a tool for communication.

This backdrop elucidates the intricacies of the deficiencies in Arabic communication among SABK students in Malaysia. This study is hoped to fill the existing knowledge gap, provide recommendations based on practical evidence, and assist policymakers and educators in formulating more effective strategies to enhance Arabic communication skills among SABK students.

3. Methodology

This study used a qualitative methodology to investigate the factors that contribute to the deficiencies in Arabic communication skills among students at Government-Assisted Religious Schools (SABK). This methodology was selected due to its focus on comprehensively comprehending the experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of SABK educators concerning the matter. Twenty (20) senior Arabic language teachers at SABK participated as primary respondents due to their direct experience in the teaching and learning of Arabic. To ensure adequate data saturation during the interviews, purposive sampling was employed, allowing for the selection of respondents with rich and relevant experience, as recommended by Saldana [14]. Additional interviews were conducted until thematic saturation was reached, ensuring that no new significant insights emerged from the data.

3.1. Research Design

This study utilises a qualitative case study design to explore the phenomena of deficiencies in Arabic communication from the teachers' viewpoint [14, 15]. The principal data collecting approach is semi-structured interviews, allowing the researcher to acquire comprehensive information while adhering to the study's objectives.

3.2. Respondent Selection

Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

1. Having at least five years of experience teaching Arabic at SABK.
2. Having at least Bachelor Degree in Education or Arabic language.
3. Ready to share views and experiences related to issues of weakness in Arabic communication.
4. Do not have any special interest towards stakeholders.

3.2. Interview Protocol

The interview process is conducted through the following steps [14, 15].

1. Preparation:

- The researcher prepares semi-structured questions based on the study objectives.
- A written consent document is also provided for the respondents to sign.

2. Data Collection:

- Interviews are conducted face-to-face or online, depending on the availability of the respondents.

- Each session lasts between 45 to 60 minutes and is recorded with the respondent's consent to ensure data accuracy.

The researcher ensures a comfortable and conducive interview atmosphere to encourage respondents to share their views openly.

3. Data Management:

- The audio data from the interview will be fully transcribed.
- The transcription will be reviewed for accuracy, and respondents will be given the opportunity to review their answers if necessary (member validation).

4. Data Analysis:

- Thematic analysis is used to identify the main themes from interview data. The three main steps of this analysis are data coding, theme grouping, and theme interpretation.
- Data analysis software Atlas.ti is used to facilitate the process of data management and analysis.

5. Research Ethics:

This study adheres to strict ethical guidelines, including maintaining the confidentiality of respondents' identities, obtaining written consent, and providing respondents the freedom to withdraw without any implications.

4. Result

4.1. Theme 1: Individual

4.1.1. Subtopic 1: Interest

Students overall show low interest in learning Arabic, indicating a lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Respondents stated that students easily get bored and do not actively engage in learning, unless there is a new approach that can capture their attention. One of the respondents stated:

"Students nowadays are less interested in that, even if there are any, there are only 2 or 3 people in the class when we teach" (G10).

Furthermore, students often express boredom with this subject, as mentioned by another respondent,

"Like they can't, oh, it's like they get bored too quickly" (G9).

This lack of interest is closely related to the traditional teaching approach, which is considered less engaging by the younger generation. Low interest is also seen as a lack of learning experiences that are relevant to the needs of today's students, who prefer innovative activities. One of the respondents explained,

"Because these students, right now they want something new, they don't want the old stuff. These students need to have an interest in Arabic" (G10).

4.2. Subtheme 2: Attitude

Negative attitudes of students, including laziness and lack of initiative, are major obstacles in mastering Arabic communication. Individual attitudes themselves are the main factor in the lack of proficiency in Arabic communication skills. A respondent stated,

"Yourself, mainly, it's just laziness, right?" (G2).

Additionally, the social stigma against the use of the Arabic language also discourages students from trying to speak it. One of the respondents explained,

"The attitude of the students is actually the same. When they feel that anyone who tries to speak Arabic is somewhat, they seem strange" (G5).

This shows that students face social pressure that makes them feel uncomfortable or afraid to speak Arabic. Furthermore, the students' attitude of being overly dependent on the teacher without making an effort themselves is another factor that worsens the situation, as stated by one respondent,

"So these students feel like the teacher is there, the teacher can provide. So if we ask for a dictionary, there are some students who cannot provide it " (G25).

4.3. Subtheme 3: Self-Confidence

The lack of self-confidence among students has also been identified as a critical factor contributing to the low level of Arabic communication among students. The fear of making mistakes, especially in grammar, prevents them from using Arabic in daily conversation. Respondents stated,

"If even in class they want to speak Arabic, they are embarrassed. Because they are afraid of making mistakes" (G17).

This shows that the feeling of shame is more dominant than the desire to learn from mistakes. Another respondent also explained,

"Another factor is that they are shy. They are shy to speak. But I noticed that when they speak, for me, even if their grammar is 'hentam keromo' (a Malay idiom meaning very poor or incorrect), it's okay. The important thing is to first have the desire to speak" (G4).

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the basic need to overcome fear and embarrassment is more important than emphasizing grammatical accuracy.

4.4. Subtheme 4: Perception and Anxiety

Negative perceptions of the difficulty of the Arabic language reinforce students' reluctance to try speaking in Arabic. Respondents stated,

"It means, for example, it's difficult, Ustazah (female teacher), to speak Arabic. Haa, yes. Because most of the viral posts say that Arabic is difficult" (G2).

This perception is further exacerbated by the pressure to achieve grammatical accuracy, which causes students to be afraid of making mistakes, as stated by a teacher,

"They are afraid of making mistakes, what if they do?" Because they are afraid of making mistakes with the rules" (G16).

Therefore, this perception prevents them from starting conversations even in informal contexts, which reduces their exposure to the Arabic language.

4.5. Theme 2: Teaching and Learning

4.5.1. Subtheme 1: Consistency in Language Use

The inconsistent and sporadic use of Arabic in the classroom undermines students' mastery of communication in Arabic. Teachers often do not use Arabic consistently, which reduces students' opportunities to hear and practice it. One of the respondents stated,

"Sometimes we feel like speaking Arabic... then we speak less" (G7).

Furthermore, there are teachers who use their native language more in teaching, as stated by another respondent,

"The teacher uses the mother tongue more in class" (G18).

This makes students unaccustomed to the spontaneous use of Arabic in daily communication.

4.6. Subtheme 2: Teaching Techniques and Strategies

An overly syllabus-oriented teaching approach leads to a reduced focus on communication skills in Arabic. One of the teachers stated that,

"His teaching approach still follows the syllabus-based instruction... without emphasizing speaking proficiency" (G19).

Teachers often have to rush through the syllabus to meet exam requirements, which leads to speaking skills being neglected. This is supported by another quote,

"Teacher factor; maybe he is only focused on completing the syllabus, he even forgets to help students speak in Arabic in class" (G23).

4.7. Subtheme 3: Teaching Aids

Additionally, the lack of interactive and engaging teaching aids also contributes to the weakness in Arabic communication proficiency. Respondents stated,

"If it's digital, it's less useful. Much better with textbooks" (G7).

Teachers who do not use relevant teaching aids such as digital technology tend to lose students' attention, who are more interested in modern approaches like educational games.

4.8. Subtheme 4: Duration of Teaching

The time allocated for speaking instruction is too short and insufficient to improve students' skills. One of the respondents stated,

"Limited time, extensive syllabus. We want to be quick, so we pack our focus on written work" (G15).

This results in the aspect of communication in Arabic receiving very minimal attention, especially at the lower secondary level.

4.9. Theme 3: Support

4.9.1. Subtheme 1: Parents

This study found that parental support plays a significant role in the process of learning Arabic, but the level of this support is low. Most parents do not have a sufficient understanding of their children's needs in learning Arabic, including in selecting appropriate aids such as dictionaries. One of the respondents stated,

"Parents might not understand the use of an appropriate dictionary. Sometimes they bring the dictionary from primary school, which is not suitable" (G25).

This lack of knowledge causes students to not have access to quality learning resources at home and to be unable to practice effective communication outside the classroom. In addition, there is no active effort from parents to encourage the use of Arabic in daily interactions at home, which could help students practice the language. This indicates the need for awareness programs for parents so that they better understand their role in supporting the process of enhancing Arabic communication skills with their children.

4.10. Subtheme 2: Peers

Peers play an important role in shaping students' attitudes and motivation towards the process of communicating in Arabic. The study shows that the culture of mocking among students is a major barrier to their confidence in communicating in Arabic. One of the respondents stated,

"Culture of mocking... other students laugh" (G3).

This mockery usually occurs when students make grammatical or pronunciation mistakes, causing them to be afraid to try again. Other respondents added,

"Sometimes people say this Arab, and then his friend suddenly mocks him. Like acting smart" (G18).

In certain cases, students who dare to try are considered to stand out, which further worsens the atmosphere of social support. This indicates the need to transform the classroom culture into a more positive environment, where students are encouraged to try and are rewarded for their efforts.

4.11. Subtheme 3: School Authorities

Support from the school in the form of programs and extracurricular activities that promote the use of the Arabic language is important but often poorly implemented. One of the respondents stated,

"The school authorities are lacking in organizing programs that encourage the use of the Arabic language." (G21).

Programs such as Arabic Language Week, communication activities in the canteen, or in the school office can be effective initiatives to increase the use of this language. However, time constraints and the focus on other programs such as sports often become the main reasons for the lack of these activities. Other respondents also mentioned,

"Our school has a lot of programs, and we can't keep up with everything, right?" (G23).

Therefore, the school authorities need to prioritize programs that strengthen the Arabic environment among students and the school community.

4.12. Theme 4: Environment

4.12.1. Subtheme 1: Atmosphere and Environment

The social and cultural environment plays a significant role in influencing the mastery of the Arabic language among students. This study found that the students' environment does not provide sufficient support for them to communicate in Arabic extensively. One of the teachers stated,

"The environment doesn't help him in wanting to speak" (G1).

The absence of a strong Arabic language environment at home, school, and community causes students to lack opportunities to hear and actively use this language. Other respondents mentioned,

"The environment is still not conducive for speaking in Arabic" (G17).

Outside the classroom, most students tend to communicate in their native language, which is more comfortable and natural for them. This makes mastering Arabic communication more challenging, especially since it is not widely used outside of academic contexts.

4.13. Subtopic 2: The Passage of Time

Changes in culture and modern lifestyles also pose a challenge to efforts to promote the use of the Arabic language. The younger generation is more inclined to follow modern trends and technology, which are heavily influenced by English and their native language. One of the respondents stated,

"Maybe they have already followed their own times, right?" (G10).

Arabic is often seen as a traditional language and less relevant to the demands of modern times. Other respondents added,

"Students nowadays, because of their environment. Our environment doesn't allow us to really like Arabic" (G9).

This attitude reflects the need to make the Arabic language more engaging and relevant to the younger generation by integrating technological elements and creative approaches in teaching.

4.14. Subtheme 3: Learning Media

One of the main factors contributing to the lack of exposure of students to the Arabic language is the lack of suitable learning media. Media such as videos, songs, or educational applications mostly use Ammi Arabic (colloquial), which is different from *Fusha* Arabic (formal) taught in schools. A respondent stated,

"If we rely on Arabic story videos, they use Ammi language, colloquial language, which is not suitable for them and usually fast-paced" (G1).

Teachers also face constraints in mastering relevant technology to create engaging teaching materials. The lack of these learning media makes the teaching process more reliant on textbooks, which are less engaging for modern students. As stated,

"Not everyone can master technology now" (G1).

5. Discussion

5.1. Theme 1: Individual

The students' lack of motivation in learning Arabic is a critical issue that impacts their performance. This diminished attention is frequently linked to conventional pedagogical methods that lack engagement. Educators employing a static methodology, such as relying solely on textbooks devoid of interactive components, do not engage the attention of the technologically adept younger generation. Prior studies indicate that student engagement can be augmented through project-based learning initiatives and the incorporation of interactive technologies [4, 16]. Students without motivation often exhibit inattentiveness in class, resulting in inadequate proficiency in the Arabic language. This deficiency in motivation results in a lack of initiative to engage in communication, which is crucial for acquiring Arabic [3]. Consequently, educators must include contemporary instructional methods, such as language acquisition applications and gamified exercises, to enhance student engagement. Experiential education methods, such as role-playing games, can significantly augment intrinsic motivation [12].

The negative attitudes of students, such as apathy and reliance on instructors, impede the advancement of Arabic language proficiency. Social pressure stemming from stigma associated with Arabic usage among peers diminishes students' willingness to engage in communication in Arabic. Research indicates that social stigma can impede pupils' intrinsic motivation and cultivate a tendency to evade language use [17, 18]. This detrimental disposition obstructs active engagement in learning. Students apprehensive of ridicule may refrain from speaking Arabic, impeding the cultivation of confidence and linguistic proficiency. Ensuring a secure educational atmosphere and psychological assistance for pupils is essential [19, 20]. Educators can cultivate a collaborative atmosphere and design activities that promote peer assistance in the utilisation of the Arabic language.

The apprehension of committing grammatical errors frequently diminishes students' confidence in articulating in Arabic. Research indicates that diminished self-confidence is a primary factor influencing students' proficiency in communicating in a second language [21]. Students without self-confidence will refrain from speaking, although possessing fundamental knowledge. This results in their language proficiency remaining at a diminished level. Engaging in activities like non-pressurized speaking exercises or offering constructive criticism can enhance pupils' self-assurance. Educators should also reduce the focus on grammatical precision during the initial phases of language acquisition.

Moreover, the belief that Arabic is a challenging language to acquire exacerbates students' apprehension regarding their attempts. Anxiety associated with language acquisition can significantly impede language proficiency [22]. This impression results in the avoidance of the Arabic language, hence diminishing pupils' exposure and practice in it. Motivational programs centred on a "growth mindset" can be implemented to alter students' impressions of the Arabic language. Engaging and uncomplicated activities can establish a constructive basis for language acquisition.

5.2. Theme 2: Teaching and Learning

The irregular application of Arabic in the classroom impedes pupils' acquisition of robust speaking skills. Overreliance on the mother tongue diminishes students' exposure to Arabic. Research indicates that sustained exposure to a second language is crucial for enhancing linguistic skills [23]. Students possess limited familiarity with the Arabic language, resulting in challenges in achieving fluency in speaking. Educators must implement a coherent policy for the utilisation of Arabic in the classroom and consistently apply it in daily interactions.

An excessively syllabus-centric pedagogical method inadequately addresses students' practical requirements for Arabic speaking proficiency. Speaking skills must be prioritised in language acquisition to guarantee effective communication capabilities. Students lack the practical communication skills necessary for interaction in Arabic. Educators must implement a student-centered pedagogical strategy that emphasises oral and interactive competencies. Situational training, including dialogues and group discussions, can improve students' communication abilities [1].

The absence of interactive instructional resources, including software and digital media, renders Arabic learning less stimulating [3, 12]. Contemporary technology has demonstrated its capacity to improve the efficacy of language instruction. Students become disengaged in repetitive learning environments. The incorporation of technology, including educational software, interactive films, and gamification, can improve the efficacy of Arabic language instruction.

The duration designated for instructing speaking skills is inadequate, resulting in limited possibilities for students to engage in practice. Research indicates that the duration designated for speaking practice significantly influences language proficiency [24]. Students exhibit diminished proficiency in speaking owing to insufficient exposure and practice. The learning schedule requires reorganisation to allow more time for speaking activities. Emphasis on integrative teaching that combines speaking, reading, and writing is also necessary.

5.3. Theme 3: Support

Parental support is crucial in pupils's acquisition of the Arabic language; nonetheless, this study's findings reveal that such assistance remains insufficient. The deficiency of parental awareness concerning the requirements of Arabic language acquisition leads to pupils lacking access to adequate educational resources at home. Furthermore, parents are not actively promoting the use of Arabic in everyday home activities. This indicates that parents often perceive the acquisition of Arabic as exclusively the school's duty, failing to acknowledge their position as main facilitators in their children's educational journey. Prior research indicates that parental engagement in their children's acquisition of a second language significantly influences their motivation and performance. Parental assistance can reinforce learning beyond school hours, augmenting the practice and repetition essential for developing language fluency. Students lacking parental support sometimes exhibit diminished desire and involvement in their educational pursuits. In the absence of supplementary support at home, pupils' possibilities to engage with Arabic are severely restricted, which eventually detrimentally impacts their proficiency in the language. To augment parental support, the school may implement specialised educational programs for parents, including workshops or seminars that elucidate the significance of learning Arabic and strategies for assistance. Parents may be motivated to incorporate Arabic into regular interactions at home, utilising language games or family activities that engage with the language [1].

Peers significantly influence students' attitudes and motivation towards the acquisition of Arabic. Nevertheless, research indicates that the culture of ridicule among students significantly undermines their confidence in speaking this language. This culture frequently fosters a detrimental environment in the classroom, because pupils attempting to utilise Arabic are perceived as 'showing off.' Research indicates that peer support serves as a significant motivational element in second language acquisition. Conversely, detrimental cultures like mockery can induce language anxiety, which directly impairs pupils' capacity to learn and communicate [11]. The culture of derision diminishes pupils' self-assurance, leading them to evade circumstances requiring Arabic communication. This hinders their development of communication skills and thus impacts their overall language ability. To mitigate this detrimental culture, educators must cultivate a secure and nurturing learning atmosphere. Collaborative activities that foster peer cooperation, such as group work or simulations of real-life scenarios, might facilitate a more favourable shift in classroom dynamics. Furthermore, enhancing recognition of students' attempts to communicate, despite errors, is essential for fostering their confidence.

The school's support through programs and co-curricular activities that encourage the use of the Arabic language is significant but frequently inadequately executed. Initiatives like Arabic Language Week, communication activities in the canteen and speaking sessions in the school office can provide pupils with opportunities to practise the language in a comfortable setting. Nonetheless, time limitations and the emphasis on alternative programs, such as athletics, frequently serve as the primary reasons for the absence of these activities [11, 25]. Co-curricular activities related to language can augment students' enthusiasm to acquire and practise a second language. Extracurricular activities enable

students to utilise the language in authentic circumstances, which is essential for enhancing fluency. In the absence of programs that promote the practical application of the Arabic language, students forfeit significant possibilities to engage in informal speaking practice. This renders Arabic more akin to an academic discipline than a functional means of communication. Educational institutions must enhance the Arabic environment by implementing initiatives that promote the use of this language beyond the classroom setting. Initiatives like Arabic theatre, debating contests, and Arabic communication days might be implemented to improve student involvement. Furthermore, educational institutions might partner with the external community to expose students to a wider communication landscape.

5.4. Theme 4: Environment

A lack of an atmosphere conducive to the use of the Arabic language has emerged as a primary obstacle to enhancing pupils' proficiency in this language. Research indicates that an optimal environment for second language acquisition is essential for providing students with sufficient exposure and practice opportunities [26]. Conversely, the absence of a Arabic language environment at home, school, and in the community impedes pupils' endeavours to utilise this language. Students lack sufficient opportunity to practise spoken Arabic, resulting in diminished confidence and a subsequent decline in proficiency. In this context, Arabic is utilised solely for academic objectives, lacking significance in everyday life. To foster a more receptive environment, schools may implement specialised programs such as "Arabic Language Week" or daily interactive activities in the cafeteria, library, and other venues. The community can contribute through initiatives like Arabic language forums or groups. This method is efficacious, as prior research indicates that an active and collaborative learning environment enhances second language acquisition [11].

Cultural shifts and contemporary technologies have diminished the relevance of the Arabic language among the younger generation, who are increasingly drawn to global languages such as English [27]. Arabic is frequently regarded as traditional, although students are increasingly drawn to contemporary trends that emphasise technology and amusement in other languages. The younger generation's preference for modern languages diminishes their focus on acquiring proficiency in Arabic. This alteration obstructs endeavours to render Arabic a pertinent language in their quotidian existence. Integrating contemporary components into Arabic language instruction is essential to tackle this difficulty. Educators may utilise technology, including language learning applications, interactive films, and social media, that aligns with students' contemporary lifestyles [28]. Research indicates that this method enhances students' interest and involvement in language acquisition.

The absence of appropriate instructional materials, particularly those utilising *Fusha* Arabic (formal), has emerged as a significant barrier. Most media, including movies and songs, utilise the *Ammi* Arabic dialect (colloquial), which is less conducive to academic instruction. Moreover, educators encounter limitations in acquiring technological proficiency to create captivating instructional resources. Unsuitable educational materials hinder students' comprehension and application of formal Arabic. This lack further engenders repetitious learning, diminishing pupils' engagement. To improve learning efficacy, it is essential to create pertinent and stimulating teaching aids. Educators can partner with educational technology specialists to provide digital curriculum centred on formal Arabic. Furthermore, outlets like YouTube channels dedicated to the instruction of formal Arabic may also be developed.

6. Conclusion

This study identified that deficiencies in Arabic language competency among pupils arise from multiple interrelated elements, encompassing individual characteristics, pedagogical methods, and support from parents, peers, and the surrounding environment. Insufficient interest, adverse attitudes, and a deficiency of self-confidence among pupils hinder the enhancement of their Arabic speaking skills. Adverse perceptions of the complexity of the Arabic language further exacerbate anxiety, hence complicating the acquisition of this language. The irregularity in Arabic language usage, the excessively

syllabus-driven teaching methodology, the absence of interesting instructional materials, and the constrained teaching duration have impeded the efficacy of the learning process. Moreover, insufficient parental support, a culture of peer taunting, and the school's inadequacy in organising extracurricular programs adversely affect initiatives to enhance Arabic language competency. An unsupportive atmosphere, characterised by the absence of Arabic environment in educational institutions and communities, together with limitations in the use of modern technologies, presents considerable challenges.

This study underscores the necessity for a comprehensive and strategic methodology to tackle these challenges. The school authorities must enhance the Arabic language learning environment by implementing participatory events, including Arabic language week, debates, and communication competitions. Educators must incorporate contemporary technologies and student-centric pedagogical approaches to augment engagement and efficacy in education. Parental support must be enhanced by awareness initiatives that underscore their significance in their children's education. The community and other stakeholders should actively facilitate chances for students to engage in practical applications of Arabic in real-life contexts. This study presents opportunity for future researchers to investigate the efficacy of interventions such as gamification, language learning software, and experiential techniques in improving Arabic language competency. Moreover, investigating the influence of peer support and the external classroom environment might yield profound insights into initiatives aimed at enhancing Arabic language acquisition comprehensively. By adopting a comprehensive and collaborative strategy, it is anticipated that students' proficiency in the Arabic language will be improved, consequently increasing its relevance and use in their daily lives.

Institutional Review Board:

This study involving human participants was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Sultan Idris Education University (Ref. No. 2024-0268-01, Date of Approval: 10 Jan 2024 – 9 Jan 2025)

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Acknowledgement:

This research was supported by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) Malaysia through the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS/1/2023/SSI10/UPSI/02/01). The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris for its support throughout the research process. Special thanks are also extended to all participants who generously contributed their time and insights to this study.

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