

# The Arabic Grammar Competence and Performance among Religious Stream Students at National Lower Secondary School, Terengganu, Malaysia

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**Abstract:** Some efforts and changes should be done to ensure the teaching of Arabic grammar is in line with its objectives and follows the current language teaching theories. This is to overcome problems related to students' inability to use the learned rules in writing and speaking accurately and fluently. This study aims to measure students' knowledge of Arabic grammar and their performance of Arabic grammar in writing and speaking in order to measure the gap between students' knowledge and performance of Arabic grammar. This quantitative study used 3 types of tests for collecting data that involved a writing test for measuring students' knowledge of Arabic grammar, a writing test for measuring students' performance of Arabic grammar in writing, and an oral test for measuring students' performance of Arabic grammar in speaking. This study found that students's knowledge of Arabic grammar is better than their performance of using Arabic grammar in their writing and speaking. This study also found that students's performance of Arabic grammar in writing is better than speaking. This study concludes that a balanced emphasis should be given to theory and practice, rules and usage, and competence and performance during the process of teaching and learning of Arabic grammar, so that the students can benefit optimum success in their learning.

**Keywords:** Competence, performance, Arabic grammar, Communicative Language Teaching.

## INTRODUCTION

The ever-growing need for learning Arabic especially for religious and communication purposes has created a huge demand for Arabic teaching among Malay community which represent the other half of Malaysia population. Enthusiasm and demand for Arabic as a second language learning have risen dramatically among them since the mid-1980s. Learning Arabic language is one of the top priorities for Muslims because the primary sources of Islamic jurisprudence are the Quran and Hadith which they are in Arabic. Furthermore, most of the primary references for Islam written by prominent Muslim scholars are in Arabic. International relations and business also become as another factors lead to the demand for Arabic learning in Malaysia since Arabic is spoken by more than two hundred sixty million people throughout the world, it is the main language of the most of the Middle East countries and become as a second language in almost Muslim countries. The obvious role of Arabic in Malaysia is to facilitate the understanding of Islam and producing Islamic education teachers. Arabic is always associated

with Islam and therefore, people acquiring Arabic are believed to have better knowledge and understanding of Islam compare to those who do not acquire it. Until today, Arabic remains to be a core or compulsory subject for religious stream either at the school level or higher education. The main components of Arabic taught in Malaysia are grammar, morphology, rhetoric, literature and language skills.

This study tried to evaluate grammatical competence among Religious Stream Class (*Kelas Aliran Agama*) students in Malaysia National Secondary Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan*). In recent years, Arabic grammar teaching has regained its rightful place in the Islamic Education Curriculum in school. People now agree that grammar is one of the most important components of Arabic and without a good knowledge of grammar, learner's language development and competence will be severely constrained. The misunderstanding towards communicative approach's view on the status of grammar in teaching language have affected Arabic teaching in Malaysia. In 1990s, the Arabic text book for form one to form three at secondary schools had ignored grammar. The grammar was not taught accordingly based on certain topics. It was said that the grammar should be taught indirectly when discussing the texts which mostly in dialogue form. As the result, the learners were lack of ability to produce correct and comprehensible sentences in Arabic. Some Arabic teacher have taken individual initiatives to provide grammar class to support the learners' language competency.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Teaching Arabic Grammar According to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a well established approach in language teaching and it is a dominant theoretical model in language teaching (Thompson, 1996). Since decades, many discussions have been made among language educators and theorists on second language teaching. From the communicative approach inception by Hymes (1970) until today, many suggestions were presented to improve the quality of second language teaching. CLT has served a major source of influence on second language teaching around the world. People now agree that language teaching must stress on language acquisition and developing communicative competence (Widdowson, 1978; Littlewood, 1981; Cunningsworth, 1984; Oxford, Lavine & Crookal, 1989; Rollmann, 1994).

There is no strong theoretical or empirical evidence for the view that grammatical competence is less crucial to successful communication. In fact, grammatical competence as affirmed by Canale & Swain (1980) and Swan (1990) is the main component of communicative competence besides the sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. Nassaji & Fotos (2011) not only affirm the importance of grammar in CLT but also try to integrate the form-focused instruction in communicative context through providing guides how grammar could be best taught in actual classrooms based on empirical and theoretical evidence. This is in line with what had been emphasized by Arabic linguists on the importance of grammar in Arabic teaching and learning (see Ibn Khaldun, n.d.; Muhammad Barakat, 1988; 'Abduh al-Rajih, 1988; al-Rikabi, 1996). Teaching grammar according to communicative approach as clarify by Richards (2006) should stress on knowing how to use the learned rules for a range of different purposes and functions, knowing how to vary our use of learned rules according to the setting and the participants, knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts and knowing how to maintain communication effectiveness.

**Theory Versus Practice:** In teaching Arabic grammar, many teachers tend to emphasize mainly on theories. Lectures were presented to enable students to sit successfully for examinations but this procedure was unlikely to improve the language and communication skills of the students. In fact, it is very crucial to close the gap between theory and practice or rules and usage to assure the optimum achievement of the teaching. Students cannot apply the grammatical rules in their communication if they never really had much opportunity to practice it in certain circumstances which are similar to real life. Therefore, the activities that stress on usage and skills are obvious effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

During teaching Arabic grammar, teachers need to stress on both competence and performance. Competence refers to a student knowledge of the forms and meanings that exist in the grammar. According to Widowson (1978) and Crystal (2003), in language teaching, competence refers to a language user's knowledge of the learned language that includes the system of linguistic rules. Therefore, competence means the knowledge that accounts for our ability to produce sentences and how they are formed which includes tenses, phrases, clauses, patterns, part of speech. This knowledge is shaped by the rules found in the course books or references. Performance in the other hand, refers to the ability to apply or use the grammar correctly and appropriately in real life situation, where the students are exposed to all the psychological and physical environment that can accompany language use. If competence is what is in the head, performance is what actions comes out during the interaction.

It is no doubt, knowing the grammatical rules is important in mastering Arabic. But, the ability to use those rules is also crucial to communicate common types of meaning successfully. The combination between grammatical knowledge and the ability to use them can enable the students to make comprehensible sentences. Forms are important but they cannot run alone without functions. So, the status of grammar-focused instruction have to be modify and follow the principles of communicative approach in language teaching. As DeKeyser (1998) points out that teaching may attempt to address different stages in the learning process, instilling knowledge about rules, and turning this knowledge into something that qualitatively different through practice with fewer errors, faster and less mental effort. Some psychosocial factors such as motivation, confidence, resilience and attitude must be put under well planned and systematic actions as suggested by Light (2003) and Abdul Hakim Abdullah et. al. (2016). Arabic teachers need to encourage and motivate students to use the learned language rules by engaging them in meaningful interaction and maintain comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in their communicative competence. Arabic teachers should create classroom activities as well as supporting outdoor activities in which students have to negotiate meaningful use of communication strategies. Williams, Krezman & McNaughton (2008) emphasize that the teacher should not only rely on the demonstration of isolated skills through activities in classroom, language lab or clinic rooms, but they must also develop students' communication skills through actual communication performance within naturally occurring contexts. As teachers, we need to guide the students achieving harmony between functional interpretation and formal appropriacy.

**Problem Statement:** CLT is still not considered by many Arabic teachers in Malaysia as the current mainstream in teaching Arabic as a second language. In fact, the principle of CLT such as

competence and performance, fluency and accuracy, form and function, or knowledge and practice seem like to be ambiguities that need further clarification and training among Arabic teachers. Many implemented the teaching process as what they have gone through from their past experience during learning the language (Awang & Zailani, 2005). Even though, every teacher recognize that the teaching process must be student-centered and emphasizes on the application of knowledge, however, much more efforts should be done to improve the Arabic teaching in Malaysia or the students will still remain as communicatively incompetent, or they will remain interrupted by psychological disturbances as mentioned by Aladdin (2012) and Che Hat et. al. (2013) like anxiety, feeling shy and less motivation. Arabic teacher training agencies should pay more attention in improving Arabic teacher trainees knowledge and understanding on the CLT and how to implement the productive and efficient teaching of Arabic. They must be assisted to enhance a methodology appropriate to their specific teaching contexts. Many of them claim that they rely on eclectic strategy, but actually it is only an approach rather than a method as Richards & Rogers (2001) clarify that it has no design or procedure. An appropriate training for Arabic teacher trainee have to be initiated for a shift away from long established grammar-translation curriculum content and classroom practice, towards teaching Arabic for acquisition and developing communicative competence.

Many Arabic teaching researchers have expressed their dissatisfaction towards Arabic teaching in Malaysia according to the poor achievement among Arabic students in schools or higher institutions (Khalid, 1994; Ismail, 1994, Mohamad, 2002) either in term of motivation, knowledge or skills. The Arabic teaching has failed to increase students motivation in learning Arabic as some of them decided to shift from religious stream to conventional after form four at schools (Ismail, 1994; Abdul Hakim Abdullah, 2008). The studies done by Mohamad (2002), Abd. Rahman (2007), Abdul Karim (2008) found that one of the main causes that affect the student achievement of Arabic is their weakness in mastering Arabic grammar. This statement was clarified by some other researchers such as Ismail et. al. (2012) who found that the Arabic students failed to use correct grammar in constructing correct sentences. Ab. Kadir (2003) and Shahman (2012) clarify that the Arabic students failed to use correct grammatical items like tenses, subject, predicate, pronoun, morphology and others in sentence forming. Abdul Karim (2008) expressed that students face difficulties in mastering Arabic grammar and failed to use them in their speaking or writing, in addition with the nature of Arabic grammar complexity itself which could not be found in Malay language such as feminine or masculine (*al-mudhakkār* and *al-mu'annath*), number (*al-mufrad*, *al-muthanna* and *al-jam'*), tenses (*al-madi*, *al-mudari'* and *al-amr*) and so on.

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To measure the students' knowledge of Arabic Grammar.
2. To measure the students' performance of Arabic Grammar in writing.
3. To measure the students' performance of Arabic Grammar in Speaking.
4. To evaluate the gap between the students' knowledge and their performance in writing and speaking of Arabic

## Research Methodology

This study is a quantitative research which used test as the instrument for collecting data. Three kind of tests were implemented: writing test for measuring grammatical knowledge of the students (T1), writing test for measuring students grammatical performance in writing (T2), and oral test for measuring students grammatical performance in speaking (T3). The sample for T1 and T2 involved 100 form 3 students whereas the sample for T3 involved 50 form 3 students who study in religious stream at 5 selected out of 18 National Secondary Schools in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. The total population for form 3 students for this category of Arabic students is 445 students. The sampel for this research as in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Information about the sampel

| Type of Test           | Gender | n  | total | %    |
|------------------------|--------|----|-------|------|
| T1<br>(knowledge test) | Male   | 28 | 100   | 28.0 |
|                        | Female | 72 |       | 72.0 |
| T2<br>(writing test)   | Male   | 28 | 100   | 28.0 |
|                        | Female | 72 |       | 72.0 |
| T3<br>(speaking test)  | Male   | 12 | 50    | 24.0 |
|                        | Female | 38 |       | 76.0 |

The content for all tests were based on the Arabic Grammar Syllabus for form 1 to form 3 which covers 20 topics. The questions for these tests referred to The School Based Assessment (SBA) as practised by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. In T1, students had to choose the correct answers from multiple choice answers, and fill in the blanks with the correct answers related to the Arabic grammatical rules. In T2, students had to answer comprehension questions, writing correct sentences and writing short essay by using certain Arabic grammatical items. In sentence writing, the students had to construct sentences, change the given sentences and rearrange the given words. The duration for T1 and T2 was 1 hour and 20 minutes and monitored by Arabic teachers at the schools and the researchers. In T3, students had to answer the questions verbally which involve constructing correct sentences using appropriate Arabic grammar rules. Beside the correct grammatical items, the students were also evaluated in term of speaking skills such as pronunciation, intonation and fluency. The T3 duration for each student was 45 minutes. The researchers provided comfortable opportunities for the students to experiment and try out what they know to assure they can process input in a low anxiety context. Small and insignificant mistake was not considered as an error during T3. The 20 topics involved in these tests are as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: List of Arabic grammar topic for the tests

| Code | Title                          | Code | Title                                |
|------|--------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| T1   | الكلمات وأقسامها               | T11  | العدد والمعدود                       |
| T2   | الإسم المذكر والإسم المؤنث     | T12  | المعرفة والنكرة                      |
| T3   | الإسم المفرد والمثنى والجمع    | T13  | المبتدأ والخبر وأنواع الخبر          |
| T4   | الجمع وأنواعه                  | T14  | الفاعل والمفعول به                   |
| T5   | الفعل الماضي والمضارع والأمر   | T15  | الإسم الموصول                        |
| T6   | الضمائر: المتصلة والمنفصلة     | T16  | التعطف والعطف                        |
| T7   | الجملة الاسمية والجملة الفعلية | T17  | الفعل المبني للمعلوم والمبني للمجهول |
| T8   | إسم الإشارة                    | T18  | ظرف المكان وظرف الزمان               |
| T9   | حروف الجر                      | T19  | أدوات النفي والنصب والجرم            |
| T10  | أدوات الإستفهام                | T20  | كان وأخواتها / إن وأخواتها           |

### Research Results

The findings of this research are presented based on grading system for lower secondary education under Malaysian Ministry of Education as follows:

Table 3: Grade and Interpretation

| Grade | Mark   | Interpretation             |
|-------|--------|----------------------------|
| A     | 80-100 | Excellent                  |
| B     | 65-79  | Good                       |
| C     | 50-64  | Average                    |
| D     | 40-49  | Minimum achievement        |
| E1    | 20-39  | Do not reach minimum level |
| E2    | 0-19   |                            |

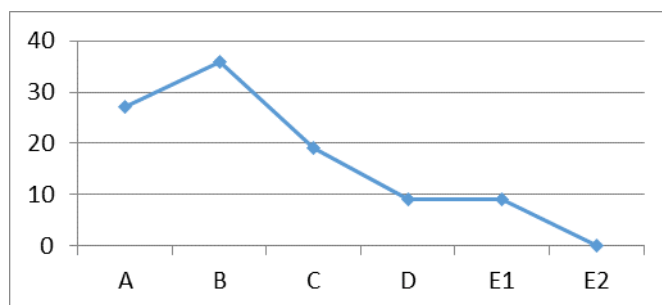
(Source : Management Book, Bukit Merchu National Secondary School, 2015)

### Student Achievement in Arabic Grammar Knowledge

The T1 result displayed in Table 4 below has shown that 27 students have scored A grade whereas 36 students scored B, 19 students with C, 9 students with D and 9 students failed in the T1 with E1 grade. This result indicated that about 63% students have scored a mark between A and B grades which can be considered as a good level or above. Meanwhile 9% of the students failed in the test.

Table 4: Arabic grammar knowledge test

| Gred  | n   | %   |
|-------|-----|-----|
| A     | 27  | 27  |
| B     | 36  | 36  |
| C     | 19  | 19  |
| D     | 9   | 9   |
| E1    | 9   | 9   |
| E2    | 0   | 0   |
| Total | 100 | 100 |



The T1 result also found that the top three topics based on the highest mean score by the students are “الجمع وأنواعه”, “الكلمات وأنواعها”, and “الاسم المذكر والمؤنث”. Meanwhile, the three topics at the lowest mean score are “أدوات النفي والنصب والجزم”, “العدد والمعدود”, and “كان/ إن وأخواتها” as shown in the Table 5 below:



Table 5: Ranking of the topic in T1 scores

| Code | Title   | Score mean: Grammar in knowledge (%) | Rank (1-20) |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| T1   | الكَلِمَاتُ وَأَقْسَامُهَا                                    | 87.2                                 | 2           |
| T2   | الإِسْمُ المَدَكَّرُ وَالإِسْمُ المَوْثُوثُ                   | 85.0                                 | 3           |
| T3   | الإِسْمُ المُمَرَّدُ وَالْمَعْتَى وَالْجَمْعُ                 | 82.6                                 | 4           |
| T4   | الْجَمْعُ وَأَنْوَاعُهُ                                       | 89.6                                 | 1           |
| T5   | الفِعْلُ المَاضِي وَالْمَضَارِعُ وَالْأَمْرُ                  | 63.4                                 | 13          |
| T6   | الضَّمَائِرُ : المَتَّصِلُ وَالْمُنْفَصِلُ                    | 69.8                                 | 7           |
| T7   | الْجُمْلَةُ الإِسْمِيَّةُ وَالْجُمْلَةُ الفِعْلِيَّةُ         | 68.4                                 | 9           |
| T8   | إِسْمُ الإِشَارَةِ  | 80.2                                 | 5           |
| T9   | حُرُوفُ الجَزْرِ  | 50.6                                 | 17          |
| T10  | أَدَوَاتُ الإِسْتِفْهَامِ                                     | 75.0                                 | 6           |
| T11  | العَدَدُ وَالْمَعْدُودُ                                       | 41.8                                 | 19          |
| T12  | المَعْرِفَةُ وَالنِّكَرَةُ                                    | 57.0                                 | 16          |
| T13  | المَبْتَدَأُ وَالْخَبَرُ وَأَنْوَاعُ الخَبَرِ                 | 63.8                                 | 12          |
| T14  | الْفَاعِلُ وَالْمَفْعُولُ بِهِ                                | 57.8                                 | 15          |
| T15  | الإِسْمُ المَوْصُولُ  | 69.6                                 | 8           |
| T16  | النَّعْتُ وَالْعَطْفُ   | 61.2                                 | 14          |
| T17  | الفِعْلُ المُنْبِئُ لِلْمَعْلُومِ وَالْمُنْبِئُ لِلْمَجْهُولِ | 66.6                                 | 11          |
| T18  | ظَرْفُ المَكَانِ وَظَرْفُ الزَّمَانِ                          | 68.0                                 | 10          |
| T19  | أَدَوَاتُ النِّعْيِ وَالنَّصْبِ وَالْجَزْمِ                   | 45.0                                 | 18          |
| T20  | كَانَ وَأَخْوَاتُهَا / إِنَّ وَأَخْوَاتُهَا                   | 40.6                                 | 20          |

Student

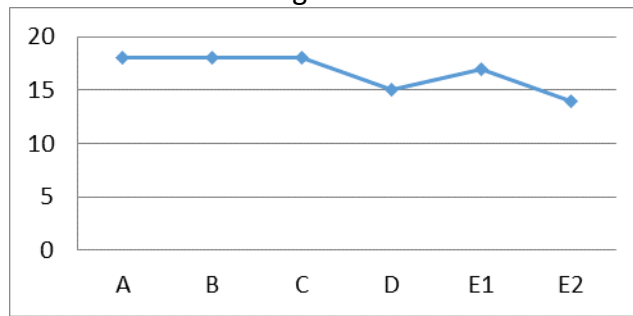
### Achievement of Arabic Grammar in Writing

The T2 result displayed in Table 6 below has shown that 18 students have scored A grade whereas 18 students scored B, 18 students with C, 15 students with D, 17 students failed in the T2 with E1 grade and 14 students have failed with E2 grade. This result indicated that only 36% students have scored a mark between A and B grades which can be considered as a good level or above. Meanwhile a big amount which about 31% of the students failed in the test.



Table 6: Arabic Grammar in writing test

| Gred  | n   | %   |
|-------|-----|-----|
| A     | 18  | 18  |
| B     | 18  | 18  |
| C     | 18  | 18  |
| D     | 15  | 15  |
| E1    | 17  | 17  |
| E2    | 14  | 14  |
| Total | 100 | 100 |



The T2 result also found that the top three topics based on the highest mean score by the students are “اسم الإشارة”, “الكلمات وأقسامها”, “المفرد والمتن والجمع”. Meanwhile, the three topic at the lowest mean score are “الفعل المبني للمعلوم والمجهول”, “العدد والمعدود”, “الفاعل والمفعول به” as shown in the Table 7 below:

Table 7: Ranking of the topic in T2 scores

| Code | Title  | Score mean: Grammar in writing (%) | Rank (1-20) |
|------|--|------------------------------------|-------------|
| T1   | الكَلِمَاتُ وَأَقْسَامُهَا                                 | 74.0                               | 2           |
| T2   | الإِسْمُ المَدَكَّرُ وَالإِسْمُ المَوْثُوثُ                | 65.0                               | 3           |
| T3   | الإِسْمُ المَفْرُودُ وَالمَتَنِيُّ وَالمَجْمُوعُ           | 64.0                               | 4           |
| T4   | الجَمْعُ وَأَنْوَاعُهُ                                     | 47.0                               | 9           |
| T5   | الفِعْلُ المَاضِي وَالمُضَارِعُ وَالأَمْرُ                 | 51.0                               | 7           |
| T6   | الصِّمَاتُ: المَتَّصِلُ وَالمُنْقَطِعُ                     | 53.0                               | 6           |
| T7   | الجُمْلَةُ الإِسْمِيَّةُ وَالجُمْلَةُ الفِعْلِيَّةُ        | 50.0                               | 8           |
| T8   | إِسْمُ الإِشَارَةِ   | 78.0                               | 1           |
| T9   | حُرُوفُ الجَرِّ  | 55.0                               | 5           |
| T10  | أَدَوَاتُ الإِسْتِفْهَامِ                                  | 32.0                               | 15          |
| T11  | العَدَدُ وَالمَعْدُودُ                                     | 19.0                               | 19          |
| T12  | المَعْرِفَةُ وَالنَّكْرَةُ                                 | 41.0                               | 11          |
| T13  | المَبْتَدَأُ وَالجَزْبُ وَأَنْوَاعُ الخَبَرِ               | 35.0                               | 13          |
| T14  | الفَاعِلُ وَالمَفْعُولُ بِهِ                               | 26.0                               | 18          |
| T15  | الإِسْمُ المَوْصُولُ                                       | 34.0                               | 14          |
| T16  | التَّعْطُفُ وَالعَطْفُ                                     | 28.0                               | 17          |
| T17  | الفِعْلُ المَبْنِيُّ للمَعْلُومِ وَالمَبْنِيُّ للمَجْهُولِ | 18.0                               | 20          |
| T18  | ظَرْفُ المَكَانِ وَظَرْفُ الزَّمَانِ                       | 44.0                               | 10          |

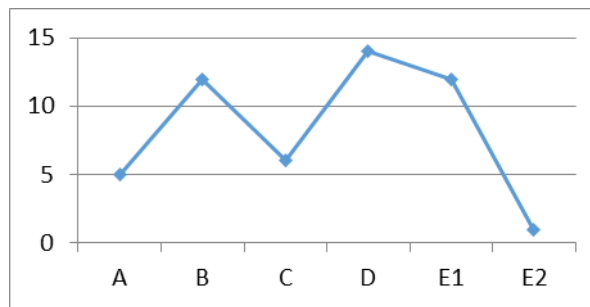
|     |   |      |    |
|-----|---|------|----|
| T19 | أَدَوَاتُ النَّفْيِ وَالنَّصْبِ وَالْجَزْمِ | 30.0 | 16 |
| T20 | كَانَ وَأَخْوَاتُهَا / إِنَّ وَأَخْوَاتُهَا | 40.0 | 12 |

### Student Achievement of Arabic Grammar in Speaking

The T3 result displayed in Table 8 below has shown that only 5 students have scored A grade whereas 12 students scored B, 6 students with C, 14 students with D, 12 students failed in the T2 with E1 grade and 1 student has failed with E2 grade. This result indicated that only 34% students have scored a mark between A and B grades which can be considered as a good level or above. Meanwhile about 26% of the students failed in the test.

Table 8: Arabic Grammar in oral test

| Gred  | n  | %   |
|-------|----|-----|
| A     | 5  | 10  |
| B     | 12 | 24  |
| C     | 6  | 12  |
| D     | 14 | 28  |
| E1    | 12 | 24  |
| E2    | 1  | 2   |
| Total | 50 | 100 |



The T3 result also found that the top three based on highest mean score by the students are “أَدَوَاتُ الْإِسْتِفْهَامِ”, “الكلمات وأقسامها”, “الصَّمَاوِيُّرُ : الْمُتَّصِلُ وَالْمُنْفَصِلُ”. Meanwhile, the three topic at the lowest mean score are “الْعَدَدُ وَالْمَعْدُودُ”, “كَانَ وَأَخْوَاتُهَا / إِنَّ وَأَخْوَاتُهَا”, “النَّعْتُ وَالْعَطْفُ” as shown in the Table 9 below:

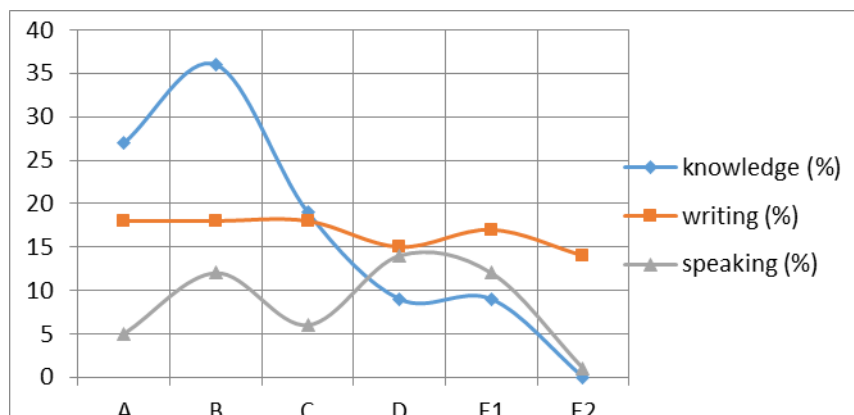
Table 9: Ranking of the topic in T3 scores

| Code | Title   | Mean score Speaking | Ranking |
|------|---|---------------------|---------|
| T1   | الكَلِمَاتُ وَأَقْسَامُهَا                                      | 89.0                | 2       |
| T2   | الإِسْمُ المَدَكُّرُ وَالِإِسْمُ المَوْثُوثُ                    | 71.0                | 4       |
| T3   | الإِسْمُ المَفْرَدُ وَالْمِثْلِيُّ وَالْجَمْعُ                  | 65.0                | 5       |
| T4   | أَجْمَعُ وَأَنْوَعُهُ   | 44.0                | 12      |
| T5   | الفِعْلُ المَاضِي وَالْمُضَارِعُ وَالْأَمْرُ                    | 52.4                | 9       |
| T6   | الصَّمَاوِيُّ : المُنْفَصِلُ وَالْمُنْفَصِلُ                    | 90.4                | 1       |
| T7   | أَجْمَلُهُ الإِسْمِيَّةُ وَالْجَمْلَةُ الفِعْلِيَّةُ            | 53.0                | 8       |
| T8   | إِسْمُ الإِشَارَةِ  | 39.0                | 14      |
| T9   | حُرُوفُ الحِرِّ   | 40.9                | 13      |
| T10  | أَدَوَاتُ الإِسْتِفْهَامِ                                       | 72.5                | 3       |
| T11  | العَدَدُ وَالْمَعْدُودُ   | 8                   | 20      |
| T12  | المَعْرِفَةُ وَالنِّكْرَةُ                                      | 44.9                | 11      |
| T13  | المَبْتَدَأُ وَالْحَبْرُ وَأَنْوَاعُ الخَبْرِ                   | 64.0                | 6       |
| T14  | الفَاعِلُ وَالْمَفْعُولُ بِهِ                                   | 32.0                | 15      |
| T15  | الإِسْمُ المَوْصُولُ  | 25.0                | 17      |
| T16  | التَّعْتُ وَالْعَطْفُ   | 21.5                | 18      |
| T17  | الفِعْلُ المَبْنِيُّ لِلْمَعْلُومِ وَالْمَبْنِيُّ لِلْمَجْهُولِ | 52.0                | 10      |
| T18  | ظَرْفُ المَكَانِ وَظَرْفُ الزَّمَانِ                            | 54.0                | 7       |
| T19  | أَدَوَاتُ التَّنْفِيهِ وَالنَّصْبِ وَالْحَزْمِ                  | 30.3                | 16      |
| T20  | كَانَ وَأَخْوَانُهَا / إِنَّ وَأَخْوَانُهَا                     | 21.0                | 19      |

### The Overall Tests Result

The overall results displayed in Table 10 indicate that the students knowledge of grammar is better than their Arabic grammar achievement in writing and speaking. Whereas the arabic achievement of the student in writing is better than speaking.

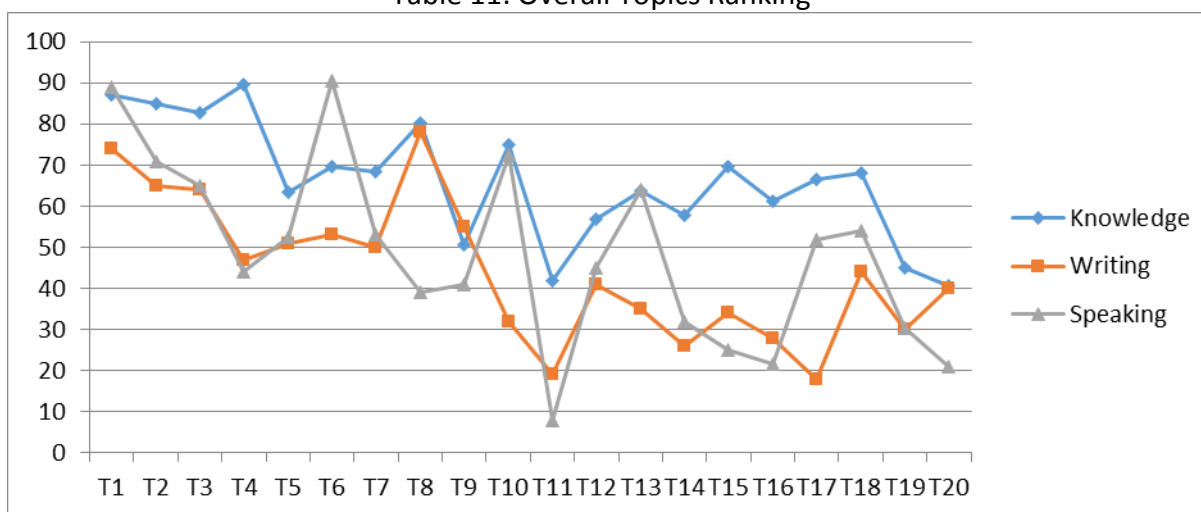
Table 10: Overall Tests Results



### The Overall Ranking of the Topics

This result displayed in Table 11 can help the teacher to give more emphasize on certain topic for certain focus either knowledge of Arabic grammar, writing skill or speaking skill. This results also show that among the topics with an obvious gap between competency and performance are T2, T3, T4, T7, T14, T15 and T16. Whereas the topics that students face difficulty either in knowledge, writing and speaking are T9, T11, T19 and T20.

Table 11: Overall Topics Ranking



### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From the tests, this study found that students’ knowledge of Arabic grammar is better than their performance in writing or speaking. Whereas, students’ performance of Arabic grammar in writing is better than speaking. Many students still cannot communicate effectively using Arabic grammar in their speaking and writing. It also can be concluded that after years we are still facing a prolong dilemma, a failure to improve the poor Arabic achievement among Malaysian students as what has been claimed by Khalid (1994), Ismail (1994), Mohamad (2007), Abd. Rahman (2007) and Abdul Karim (2008). The students still remain as communicative

incompetent and interrupted by psychological disturbances as mentioned by Aladdin (2012) and Che Hat (2013) like anxiety, feeling shy and less motivation.

Grammar as affirmed by Canale & Swain (1980), Swan (1990) and Nassaji & Fotos (2011) is the main component of communicative competence. Thus, Arabic teachers have to reassess their focus and their teaching methodology to ensure the competent students can demonstrate accuracy in using grammatical aspects and use such linguistic knowledge appropriately. They should stress more on knowing how to use the learned rules for a range of different purposes and functions, according to different settings or participants, and maintain communication effectiveness as suggested by Richards (2006).

The teaching and learning styles of the teachers and learners should be improved by both so they can obtain optimum teaching and learning achievement and success. An appropriate balance must be realized between competence and performance of Arabic grammar. By mastering the knowledge of Arabic grammar and be able to use it in speaking and writing, the students can produce correct as well as appropriate sentences within different contexts, and be able to communicate types of meaning successfully for different purposes or functions. On the other hand, the teachers and students have to avoid too much priority on knowing the rules but lack of practice on the usage in different contexts and situations. The teaching and learning process should take a step to shift away from grammar-translation curriculum content and classroom activities to teaching Arabic grammar for acquisition and developing communicative competence. Therefore, more activities engaged with actual communication performance should be implemented and within naturally occurring contexts rather than rely on classroom, language lab or clinic room activities that usually emphasize only on the demonstration of isolated communication skills. Balanced emphasis should seriously be given between theory and practice, rules and usage, competence and performance. This is to ensure students' optimum achievement in learning Arabic.

It should be a central discussion in Arabic grammar teaching today especially in Malaysian schools. According to my experience as a practitioner in teaching Arabic and supervising Arabic teacher trainees, I notice that some efforts and changes must be done to ensure the Arabic grammar teaching implemented in this country is in line with its objectives and follows the current language teaching theories. This is to overcome our prolonged preoccupation with inefficient, unproductive and misguided implementation of the teaching and learning of Arabic. The type of classroom activities should imply new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners.

Learners have to be given wide opportunities in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Students have to become comfortable with listening to their peers in group work or pair task rather than relying on the teacher for a model. They must take on a greater degree of responsibilities for their own learning whereby the teacher assist them as facilitator and monitor. Therefore, Arabic grammar teachers in Malaysia have to reassess their teaching process. The grammar-translation method which is still implemented by many teachers in teaching grammar should be changed to assure the successful teaching and learning Arabic grammar. The centrality of grammar in teaching and learning process is inadequate and was argued since language ability involved much more than grammatical competence. Where grammar is given too much priority, the result is predictable, the students do not learn Arabic but they learn grammar. They will know the rules and they can

pass the test, but when it comes to using the language in practice, students will discover that they are lack with vocabulary and fluency. They are unable to use the rules especially in speaking and writing accurately and fluently. This approach has also made students nervous of making mistakes, undermining their confidence and destroying their motivation.

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