Enhancing Arabic Communication Readiness: Overcoming Barriers for Effective Communication Among Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis Students

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Abstract
This study was conducted to identify the level of communication barriers in Arabic and the level of readiness to communicate in Arabic among students of Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis (KUIPs). The study involved 150 students from KUIPs and adopted a quantitative approach using a questionnaire to collect data on the levels of readiness to communicate and communication barriers. Correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationship between these two variables. The findings indicated that, on average, students' readiness to communicate in Arabic was at a moderate level (M = 3.5703). Similarly, the average level of communication barriers among students was also moderate (M = 3.3673). The correlation analysis showed a significant negative relationship between Arabic communication barriers and readiness to communicate in Arabic, supported by a correlation coefficient (r = -0.448, p < 0.01). Therefore, to enhance students' readiness to communicate in Arabic, it is crucial to address communication barriers, particularly those related to self-confidence. Overcoming these barriers can lead to an increase in students' readiness to communicate.
Keywords: Readiness, Barriers, Communication, Arabic, Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis.

Introduction
Effective communication hinges on clear understanding between communicators. This understanding is fostered by a willingness to engage in communication. For non-native speakers, readiness to communicate in a foreign language demands substantial effort. Factors such as vocabulary, grammar, and self-confidence play pivotal roles in cultivating this readiness. Internal attitudes and motivations, coupled with external encouragement from teachers, peers, and the environment, further support this process.

In Malaysia, the goal of teaching Arabic is to equip students with comprehensive language skills, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, Nik Mohd Rahimi (2000) highlights a curriculum emphasis on listening and speaking skills, potentially at the expense of reading and writing. While functional language use for communication is emphasized, it is imperative to recognize the equal importance of all four language skills. Mastery of these skills culminates in individuals who can communicate effectively and proficiently.

Communication Barriers

Aspects of speaking or communicating in Arabic that need to be emphasized include pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Mahmud, 1985). Non-native Arabic speakers are often influenced by the syntax of their mother tongue when speaking. Students can overcome communication barriers when they achieve proficiency in two skills, listening and reading, as these skills help them expand their vocabulary and guide them in using it in the correct sentence context. Among the constraints and barriers that hinder students from being willing to speak in Arabic are the lack of mastery in Nahw and Sarf, insufficient Arabic vocabulary, shyness, uninspiring environments, and lack of encouragement and motivation from others (Adnan & Firdaus, 2014).

Language mastery significantly affects communication. Failure to establish positive interactions is a primary cause of communication breakdowns (Buntat & Hassan, 2003). Graduates face communication issues not only in English but also in Malay (Nurul Salmi & Mohd Isha, 2014; Zainuddin & Ziadatul, 2006). Pronunciation hindrances can manifest implicitly and explicitly.

Communication problems among students are not a new phenomenon. Numerous studies have addressed this issue, conducted by both local and international researchers (Zulkifley et al., 2015). For instance, factors hindering students' focus and opportunities to develop listening skills at university affect students. Pedagogical advancements tend to stress the academic role and prescribe actions educators should take to enhance students' communication skills, especially listening (Stone et al., 2013). Gargalianou, Muehlfeld, Urbig, and Van Witteloostuijn (2015) found a low understanding of using foreign languages among students, leading to communication failures in public due to discomfort with foreign languages. Individuals prefer using their mother tongue as it enhances their confidence and fluency.

Common issues in communication include spelling errors, verb misuse, and disconnected words in sentences, posing challenges for educators when reviewing student responses. Additionally, semantic barriers are one of the obstacles to communication. It relates to how one interprets or translates a meaning. This is directly related to cultural differences and understanding, which can cause discomfort to the listener. It encompasses cultural differences such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and so on (Stewart, 2011).

Students' weaknesses in writing, including spelling, gender adjustments, verb usage, and idhofah usage Anuar (2019), often result from repeated mistakes. This may be due to a lack of foundation in Arabic compared to students who attended Arabic secondary schools. This aligns with a study conducted by Yusri (2006) which stated that the factors contributing to students' weakness in mastering Arabic writing can be seen from two dimensions, namely the technical factor of the writing itself and the attitude and motivation of the students.

While technical issues can be addressed through appropriate exercises, attitudinal and motivational factors require a more holistic approach, as they are fundamental to learning. Habibah (2016) found that students' issues in learning 'Insya' are linked to their negative attitudes, leading to procrastination and non-submission of assignments. The main factor contributing to errors is the lack of proficiency in understanding the methods of nahw and sarf and the lack of essay practice (Azlan & Rosni, 2015).

Research Methodology
This research is a survey-based study involving 150 students from Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis. Questionnaires were distributed to collect data on the level of Arabic communication barriers and readiness to communicate among students. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between Arabic communication barriers and readiness to communicate among these students.

Findings and Discussion
Level of Readiness to Communicate in Arabic
The study on the level of readiness to communicate in Arabic among students of Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis is presented in Table 1. The results indicate that 50.7% or 76 respondents feel a high level of readiness to communicate in Arabic. Meanwhile, 57 respondents or 38.0% believe that their readiness to communicate in Arabic is moderate. Additionally, 17 respondents or 11.3% feel that their readiness to communicate in Arabic is low. This was measured using a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The study found that, on average, respondents' scores for readiness to communicate in Arabic were at a moderate level (M = 3.5703, SD 0.8747).

Table 1
Distribution Of Respondents According to The Level Of Readiness To Communicate In Arabic

Level of Readiness	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Min (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	17	11.3	3.5703	0.8747
Moderate (2.34 – 3.67)	57	38.0		
High (3.68 – 5.00)	76	50.7		
Total	150	100.0		

Barriers to Communicating in Arabic
The study on the level of barriers to communicating in Arabic among students of the Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis is presented in Table 2. The results indicate that the majority, 72 respondents or 48%, perceive that the barriers to communicating in Arabic are moderate. Meanwhile, 59 respondents or 39.3% believe that the level of barriers to communicating in Arabic is high. Additionally, 19 respondents or 12.7% feel that the level of barriers to communicating in Arabic is low. The study found that, on average, respondents' scores for this study were at a moderate level (M = 3.3673, SD 0.8782).

Table 2

Distribution Of Respondents According to The Level Of Barriers To Communicate In Arabic

Level of Barriers	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Min (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Low (1.00 – 2.33)	19	12.7	3.3673	0.8782
Moderate (2.34 – 3.67)	72	48.0		
High (3.68 – 5.00)	59	39.3		
Total	150	100.0		

Based on the findings in Tables 1 and 2, it is evident that the average levels of readiness to communicate and communication barriers are moderate. Students' readiness to communicate could be enhanced by addressing these communication barriers. Internal barriers such as shyness, fear of mistakes, attachment to their native language, and reluctance to communicate should be tackled by students to improve their readiness to communicate in Arabic.

Correlation Analysis Between Arabic Communication Barriers and Readiness to Communicate in Arabic

Table 3 presents the findings of the correlation analysis. There is a significant negative relationship between Arabic communication barriers and readiness to communicate in Arabic, supported by a correlation coefficient ($r = -0.448$, $p < 0.01$). According to Davis's (1971) strength of relationship criteria, the relationship between Arabic communication barriers and readiness to communicate in Arabic is considered moderate. The negative correlation indicates that as students feel less confident to communicate, fear speaking in Arabic, and fear being laughed at by others, their readiness to communicate in Arabic decreases.

Table 3

Analysis of Variable Correlation and Student Readiness

Variable	*r*	*p*
Barriers	- 0.448**	.000

Therefore, the findings presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 suggest that students' readiness to communicate in Arabic can be enhanced and strengthened further if they overcome communication barriers, whether internal or external. Classmates who are mutually committed to communication are instrumental in overcoming internal barriers to communication. Conversely, if these barriers are not addressed, students will remain unwilling to communicate and may even become more reluctant to use the language.

Conclusion

Effective communication hinges on an individual's possession of a diverse and contextually appropriate vocabulary, a firm grasp of grammar, confidence in expression, and a willingness to articulate ideas when prompted. These elements collectively facilitate smooth and cohesive information exchange. While readiness to communicate in Arabic predominantly stems from internal motivation, various barriers must be overcome. These barriers, including shyness, fear of making mistakes, and limited vocabulary, can impede effective communication. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure that individuals, particularly students, are consistently prepared to communicate proficiently in Arabic.

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