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Arabic Language Communicative Level among Students from Arabic Language Co-curriculum Course in Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan, Johor, Malaysia

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to observe the usage level of Arabic Language among students from Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan, PasirGudang, Johor and the reasons that inhibit the usage of Arabic Language. The study was conducted on 130 students who took Arabic Language Co-curriculum course from five classes in Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan, PasirGudang, Johor (DEP 3C , DEV 3 A, DJK 3 A, DJK 4F and DRG 4B). The research findings illustrate that the usage of Arabic Language among students of Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan is low, be it inside or outside of the classroom. The poor level of Arabic Language usage is caused by extrinsic and intrinsic factor. Intrinsic factor refers to students' feeling towards the language learned such as timidity, lack of confidence, fear, lack of enthusiasm and so on. The findings of this research provide practical implication towards the techniques and methodology in Arabic Language teaching as an effort to encourage the usage of Arabic Language among students who enroll in Arabic Language Co-curriculum Course.
Keywords: Language Proficiency Level, Arabic Language, Methodology in Language Teaching

Introduction
Communication as defined by James A. F. Stoner is a process where one put in effort to convey meaning via the method of message transfer. Meanwhile, according to the definition by Professor Widjaya which stated that the meaning of communication is a contractual relationship between humans be it individually or in groups. The most accurate definition of communication is the relationship that exists between human beings through the medium of language as well as other mediums. In verbal communication, people communicate through conversation and also written language (Asmah, 1989). Communication between human beings is both an individual and group

activity. Individual activity starts with the transfer of idea from the speaker to the receiver via communicative approach and in the end leads to the process of communication in group (Ta'imah 1989).

Arabic language, on the other hand, is one of the languages used by human beings to communicate with each other. One who wishes to be proficient in Arabic language has to master four main basic skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Among all of the aforementioned skills above, writing is the last skill that should be mastered by a language learner. This is because, without this skill, one is considered far from fully acquiring the language learned. As is generally known, essay writing skill is a process that is interrelated with various main language skills. There are numerous opinions in regards to essay writing skills that are addressed by experts. Teachers usually teach their students by giving them the title and main points of essays. However, they forget to stay with the students till they manage to finish the task (Marohaini, Yusof and Manaf, 1997). In the meantime, on the students' side, they have to face various obstacles and hurdle to complete writing task given by their teacher such as motivational factors, environment and insufficient amount of textbooks and workbook in the market.

Communicative language competence is the highest level of mastery because it is the mastery in sentence formation (Asmah, 1989:61). The peak of linguistic competence is determined by the ability to form exemplary and perfect sentences in accordance to grammatical system (Chomsky, 1965). Communication skills is not measured solely on the ability to form sentence grammatically, but also on the capability to use the language in societal context, correct discourse and strategy (Tai'mah, 2006). Communication skills do not only require learners to be proficient in grammar and vocabulary, but also to be competent in the rules of speaking. For example, speaker knows the suitable time to start a conversation, which topic is appropriate and how to begin it (Nessa, 1983).

Communication is a process of transmission or transfer of message from an individual to another individual that manage to create the understanding of the latter on the conveyed message and both parties gain shared understanding. Communication is also the foundation to interpersonal relationship which is the association of an individual with another individual.

Interpersonal communication according to the Multiple Intelligence Theory is the ability to interact with other people and understands them. (Gardner, 1993). This interpersonal communication is categorized into six divisions which are the ability to accept feelings and idea, ask questions, convey information and clues as well as communication skills (Idris et. Al, 2008). Communication skill are the most important interpersonal skill in conveying information to others accurately and effectively.

Communication also needs linguistic competence called communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). The level of linguistic competence in a language is related to the level of language usage in the context of one's life (Tai'mah, 1989). In the context of Arabic language usage among the students of Arabic Language Co-curiculum in Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan, they were found to be facing problems in communicating and did not achieve satisfactory achievement in Arabic Language. There are complaints from public university's lecturers on the declining level of Arabic language proficiency among public university students (Osman, 1994, Ismail, 1994). Students' weakness in mastering Arabic Language is known by public and it is upsetting. They lack the ability to read and understand the language used in the newspaper (Pisol, 2005). This short coming is a real issue that cannot be denied. Their glaring incompetence was on vocabulary, morphology,

grammar (syntax) and language style (method) (Taib,2008). Zarima, Zakaria and Rizal (2008) considered that students lack proficiency in speaking and writing as well as feeling apprehensive in Arabic Language.

In truth, the low level of proficiency in writing essay among students of religious secondary school is caused by various factors such as student's behaviour (Mohamad, 2009), teaching methodology and references (Mustofa, 2011). Besides, teaching aid used in teaching and learning activities must suits students' level and arranged in smart and orderly manner in order to achieve the learning objective that has been set (Mohammad, 2007). Most students admitted that they were weak in the aspects of Arabic grammar and paragraph arrangement.

Most studies on the level of competency in Arabic Language previously were more focused on teaching strategy and researches on textbooks and modules. However, researches on speaking skills has yet to be given much deserved attention. Therefore, studies on this skill has to be conducted so that there will be balance between all the other skills (Arshad, 2012).

Halim and Radiah (2007) in their research regarding the aspect of collocation on 155 Malaysian public university students found that majority of them were still incompetent. The aspects of collocation that were tested are the usage of alphabets, noun and verbs. The results showed that 45.2% students were of poor level and 54.2 percent were intermediate level. Ab. Halim (2005) in his research with 30 students from Semester 4 and 6 of Arabic Language course in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) discovered that majority of the students did not understand Arabic sentence well. This can be seen through their translation of Arabic language structure that contains al-maf'ul al-mutlaq (absolute object), al-maf'ulal'fih (details on time and place), al-hal (situation), al-maf''ulli'ahjlih (explanation of reasons), al-tamyiz (explanation), al-istithna' (omission), al-nat' (trait), al-tanazu' (struggle), and affixes of verb.

Non-Arab students' weakness in communicating in Arabic Language is a common issue. This is because even Arab students were said to be weak in Arabic Language, especially in terms of reading and writing. According to Nihad (1990), Arabic Language lecturers expressed their concern on the poor command of Arabic Language among their students. Students' weakness can be detected through grammatical mistakes, morphology and dictation (imla'). Nihad (2003) also described students' weakness when they were asked to read text was as if he is riding a car manoeuvred by a driver who lost control until it crash into a cliff because there are too many grammatical mistakes in their reading.

Research Purpose

This research is intended to identify Arabic Language communication problem among students who took Arabic Language Co-curriculum course in Politeknik Sultan Ibrahim. Specifically, the objectives of this research is to study:

1. How far is the Arabic Language communicative level among students who took Arabic Language Co-curriculum course in Politeknik Sultan Ibrahim, Pasir Gudang, Johor?
2. What is the factor that inhibit them from using Arabic Language as communicative language?

Methodology
The research is conducted among 130 students who took Arabic Language Co-curriculum course from 5 classes in Politeknik Sultan Ibrahim. The classes include DEP 3C, DEV 3A, DJK 3A, DJK 4F and DRG 4B. A total of 130 survey forms were distributed to the students who took Arabic Language course. Student's selection were done randomly among students from first, second and third year. From all the survey forms distributed, all of the forms were returned.

Research Aspect
The research is focused on two things which are the level of Arabic language usage in student's life and internal aspect or their feelings towards Arabic language. Students were asked about the level of Arabic language usage in the classroom. For internal aspect, students were asked about negative attitudes that usually become the inhibitor towards Arabic language usage in their life such as shyness, low self-esteem, low confidence, fear of being laughed at by their friends, fear of being ridiculed, fear of being insinuated, lack of enthusiasm and fear of making mistakes.

Research Findings
The following are the research findings of the level of Arabic language usage among students who took Arabic Language Co-curriculum course that was conducted in the classroom.
1. Communicative Level of Arabic Language in Classroom

The table shows that the percentage of students who use between 0 - 29% of Arabic language when communicating with friends in classroom is 58.5%. A total of 27.7% used between 30-49%, while those who used more than 49% are 12.3% which comprises of 16 people only. Majority of the students (86.2%) used less than 49% of Arabic Language when communicating with friends in the classroom. The number of students who used less than 30% of Arabic Language is 76 people (58.5%).

Table 1: Student's Communicative Level in Arabic Language with Friends in the Classroom

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
70% to 100%	1	0.8	0.8	0.8
50% to 69%	15	11.5	11.5	12.3
30% to 49%	36	27.7	27.7	40.0
10% to 29%	39	30.0	30.0	70.0
00% to 09%	37	28.5	28.5	98.5
No Response	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	**130**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The research findings in the internal aspects are discussed in 4 aspects, which are shyness, low self-esteem, low confidence and the fear of being ridiculed by friends.

1. Feeling Shy to Speak in Arabic Language

The study shows that a number of 41 students or 32.2% strongly agree and agree that feeling shy is the main inhibitor for communicating in Arabic Language. A more detailed disparity can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Feeling Shy to Speak in Arabic Language

Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	9	6.9	6.9	6.9
Agree	33	25.4	25.4	32.3
Slightly Disagree	55	42.3	42.3	74.6
Disagree	28	21.5	21.5	96.2
Not Sure	3	2.3	2.3	98.5
No Response	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	**130**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

2. Having Low Self-Esteem

The study illustrates that 41 students or 32.2% strongly agree and agree that having low self-esteem is the major deterrent for communicating in Arabic Language. A further in depth discrepancy can be observed.

Table 3: Having Low Self-Esteem

Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	4	3.1	3.1	3.1
Agree	37	28.5	28.5	31.5
Slightly Disagree	42	32.3	32.3	63.8
Disagree	40	30.8	30.8	94.6
Not Sure	4	3.1	3.1	97.7
No Response	3	2.3	2.3	100
Total	**130**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

3. Lack of Self-Confidence
It is shown from the findings that 73 students or 65.2% responded strongly agree and agree that the lack of confidence in one's ability has been the major restrain for them to communicate in Arabic Language. Table 4 shows a more detailed discrepancy.

Table 4: Lack of Self-Confidence

Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	11	8.5	8.5	8.5
Agree	62	47.7	74.7	56.2
Slightly Disagree	40	30.8	30.8	86.9
Disagree	14	10.8	10.8	97.7
Not Sure	1	0.8	0.8	98.5
No Response	2	1.5	1.5	100
Total	**130**	**100.0**	**100**	

4. Fear of Being Ridiculed by Friends
The research findings displays 48 students or 36.9% responded strongly agree and agree that fear of being ridiculed by course mates is one of the main inhibitor for them to speak in Arabic Language

Table 4: Fear of Being Ridiculed by Friends

Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	8	6.2	6.2	6.2
Agree	40	30.8	30.8	36.9
Slightly Disagree	45	34.6	34.6	71.5
Disagree	32	24.6	24.6	96.2
Not Sure	3	2.3	2.3	98.5
No Response	2	1.5	1.5	100
Total	**130**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Research Implication
The research findings strengthen a statement made by Mahmud Kamil al-Naqah (1985) that the accomplishment of speaking skills depends on the students and it will only be accomplished if the students are totally take part in it. Most students who did not take part because of the fear to make

mistakes, feeling dim-witted when facing intelligent friends, feeling timid from being teased and ridiculed as well as being afraid to start a conversation

Usually, students who are highly motivated will be more confident to speak in Arabic Language because they can confront any difficulty while speaking with their own way. High level of confidence can help speakers to convey message smoothly. Even though students have the keenness to improve their speaking skills in second language, they do not have the confidence to do so and are unaware of how to deliver ideas, therefore, the listeners are unable to understand what is being said (Songsiri, 2007).

In contrast, negative attitude of some students who give up easily and feel embarrassed with their own weakness will cause them to lose self-confidence and end up feeling apprehensive to speak in Arabic Language compared to the other friends (Ghazali, Rahimi and Parilah, 2010). Besides that, the poor level of Arabic Language usage among public university students is also related with this internal problem that is low self-confidence in which students feels afraid and timid to do mistakes, having low self-esteem, lack of enthusiasm and fear of being ridiculed by friends (Halim, 2009)

Therefore, several mechanism on how to produce students who are brave and competent when communicating in Arabic Language. The findings also has a direct implication on the techniques and methods of Arabic Language teaching in Malaysia. A few implications that can be synthesize is when it is implemented in organized and orderly manner, a higher level of Arabic Language usage among students who took Arabic language co-curricular course will be able to be achieved. Among the practical implications are as follow:

a. Include more speaking activities in the teaching and learning of Arabic language such as having conversation, singing, storytelling, acting, discussing, giving report, conveying speech, reciting poem, debating, playing language games, interviewing as well as increasing the number of varieties for exercises and activities.

b. Encourage exchange between lecturer and teacher with students. This is because teaching is a process of transmission and communication between both parties and it affect one another. Thus, as what Atan (1980) stated, good teaching principles is when students are actively involved in the teaching process.

Conclusion

The usage of Arabic Language in daily life among students who took the co-curriculum course of Arabic Language in Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan, Pasir Gudang, Johor is very poor. Some of them were found to only use Arabic language that they have learned in their conversation when they are in the library, classroom and lecturer's office, other than putting in effort to speak on their own. Internal factors such as shyness, humility, lack of confidence, fear of being insinuated, fear of being ridiculed by friends, lack of enthusiasm and fear of making mistakes become inhibitors for them to speak in Arabic Language. Hence, in order to be proficient in Arabic Language, they should speak and communicate in this language and turn it into their practice and culture instead of only aiming to pass the examination.

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