



PREFACE

THEME: Language, Communication, and Technology: Crossing Borders, Connecting Minds

It is with great honor and excitement that I introduce this Special Issue, which is published in conjunction with the International Conference on Multidisciplinary Approaches in Language (ICMAL2024) and the Language, Innovation, Invention, and Design (LIID2024) conference. These dynamic events, held under the overarching theme "*Language, Communication, and Technology: Crossing Borders, Connecting Minds*," serve as a vibrant platform for intellectual exchange and innovation in the rapidly evolving fields of language, communication, and technology. The thematic focus of this Special Issue reflects the core mission of ICMAL and LIID: fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and encouraging fresh perspectives in applied language studies and the integration of technology in language education. By bringing together language practitioners, educators, researchers, and postgraduate students from around the globe, this publication seeks to capture the diverse and forward-thinking contributions that were presented at these conferences.

The articles featured in this issue span a broad range of topics, grouped under two significant sub-themes; a) Applied Language Studies which explore various dimensions of language as a tool for professional and intercultural communication, alongside its role in teaching, learning, and assessment. They offer valuable insights into how language can bridge cultural divides, enhance professional practices, and foster global connections, as well as b) Innovation and Technology in Language Learning which reflects transformative potential of technology, this section highlights pioneering research and applications of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), mobile apps, gamification, and artificial intelligence (AI) in language education. These contributions illustrate how emerging technologies are reshaping the way languages are taught, learned, and experienced.

As a Guest Editor, I am deeply impressed by the diversity and quality of the submissions. The innovative research and creative solutions presented in this issue demonstrate the commitment of our global academic community to addressing the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of language and technology. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the authors for their outstanding contributions, to the reviewers for their meticulous feedback, and to the organizing committee for their tireless efforts in curating this conference and subsequent publication. I am confident that the articles in this Special Issue will inspire further dialogue, research, and innovation, contributing meaningfully to the advancement of language, communication, and technology.

Thank you for joining us on this intellectual journey.

Dr. Haida Umiera Hashim

Guest Chief Editor

Special Issue: *Language, Communication, and Technology: Crossing Borders, Connecting Minds*

ICMAL2024 & LIID2024

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Intrinsic Motivation Among Arabic Language Students

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Received: 11 November 2024

Accepted: 24 January 2025

Published: 27 July 2025

CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Yusri, G., Yusoff, M. S. A., Sardi, J., Abdul Majid, M. A., Muhammad Isa, A. A., & Puasa, B. (2025). Intrinsic motivation among Arabic language students. *Journal of Creative Practices in Language Learning and Teaching*, 13(2), 66-77.10.24191/cpl.v13i2.8163



ABSTRACT

Intrinsic motivation is one of the most important types of motivation in the learning process. Individuals with intrinsic motivation tend to engage in activities for their personal fulfillment, curiosity and self satisfaction. This study aimed to investigate students' intrinsic motivation in learning oral Arabic. It combined both methods of quantitative and qualitative study using a questionnaire adapted from *The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire* (MSLQ) and interviews. The stratified random sampling technique was used for quantitative data involving 455 samples while for qualitative data, 13 interviews with students were engaged. The selection of students took into consideration their prior experience in learning Arabic and the faculties they belonged to. The study found that the intrinsic motivation among students was high. It was also found that there were statistically significant differences in this motivation among some groups of students with different prior experience. This study had some classroom implications. It suggested that students in UiTM should be separated according to their prior experience. Otherwise, some additional Arabic classes should be carried out to less experienced students before they enroll in actual Arabic classrooms in order to narrow the gaps between them. Another alternative is to initiate activities involving students of mixed experience in one group in order to create a collaborative grouping environment and to bridge the motivation gaps between them.

Keywords: Intrinsic motivation; Arabic language learning; oral Arabic; self-regulated learning; MSLQ

INTRODUCTION

The concept of intrinsic motivation in this study is derived from self-regulated learning strategies. *The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire* (MSLQ) developed by Pintrich et al. (1991) is one of the self-regulated learning instruments. It is a self-report instrument and has been used in many studies (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005). In language research, Huang (2008) investigated the applicability and reliability of MSLQ in a foreign language context and in his case, learning speaking English at a university in Taiwan. He found that MSLQ was a feasible pedagogical and research tool in that particular learning context. Therefore, he strongly suggested MSLQ to be used in investigating the level of students' motivation and learning strategies in a foreign language learning context.

Previous research about motivation had been using many different theories, from behavioral theory into cognitive theory which the latter theory has led to socio-cognitive psychology theory which concluded that motivation consists of three components namely value, expectancy and affect (Duncan & McKeachie, 2005; Lynch, 2006; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich et al., 1991; Williams et al., 2002). According to MSLQ, self-regulated learning strategies are divided into two main components namely motivation and learning strategies. Motivation component comprises three sub scales, namely value, expectancy and effect. Value component is associated with intrinsic goal orientation which focuses on learning and mastery (Artelt, 2005; Dickinson, 1995; Dornyei, 2001; Hsu, 1997; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Lynch, 2006; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Pintrich et al., 1991), extrinsic goal orientation which focuses on grades achievement and recognition from others (Hsu, 1997; Lynch, 2006; Pintrich et al., 1991) and task value which



focuses on students' judgements of how useful and important the content of the course is to them (Hsu, 1997; Lynch, 2006; Pintrich et al., 1991).

Pintrich et al. (1991) explained further about intrinsic motivation:

“It concerns the degree to which the student perceives himself to be participating in a task for reasons such as challenge, curiosity and mastery. Having an intrinsic goal orientation towards an academic task indicates that the student’s participation in the task is an end all to itself, rather than participation being a means to an end (p. 9)”.

Previous studies (see Olaussen & Bråten, 1999; Ray et al., 2003) had shown that one of the main indicators of success in learning is the use of self-regulated learning strategies which consist of two main components, namely motivation and learning strategies. In addition, according to the Causal Attribution Theory, individual factors such as prior experience and knowledge are expected to influence the level of self-efficacy for learning and students' perceptions to succeed in their learning (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Therefore, this study intended to investigate intrinsic motivation level among UiTM students and also the differences between students with different prior experience. It had some classroom implications that might be considered to improve the Arabic language instructional practices in UiTM.

Oral skills consist of listening and speaking. Generally, research in oral skills has been carried out widely at the international level (see: Brown & Yule, 1983; Buck, 2001; Bygate, 1987; Elkhafafi, 2005; Finnochiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Fulcher, 2003; Haycraft, 1984; Hughes, 2002; James, 1998; Rost, 2002). At UiTM level, previous research (Abdullah & Aziz, 2005; Mohamad et al., 2004; Salleh, 2003) generally concluded that UiTM students were still weak in oral skills.

The Arabic course as a third language in UiTM is an elective offered to first degree students. However, the students' learning background is different in terms of their prior experience in learning Arabic and the faculties they belong to. Some of them have years of experience in learning Arabic at school while some of them do not have any experience at all. For them, learning Arabic at UiTM is the first step. During formal teaching, all these students are gathered in the same classroom consisting of mixed ability and experienced learners. The mixture of the classes has some negative effects towards some students (Yusri & Rahimi, 2009; Yusri et al., 2010).

Research Questions

There are three main research questions:

- 1) To what extent students have intrinsic motivation in learning oral Arabic at UiTM ?
- 2) How do students perceive themselves in having intrinsic motivation in learning oral Arabic at UiTM ?
- 3) Is there any significant difference in intrinsic motivation among students who have different prior experience? ?



METHODOLOGY

This study was a cross sectional study aimed to investigate the intrinsic motivation level in learning oral Arabic among students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Malaysia. It was a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative study using a set of questionnaires and interviews. The students responded to a self-report questionnaire - *The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire* (MSLQ) - developed by Pintrich et al. (1991). These scales could be used together or individually. In this study, only intrinsic motivation scales had been used. Before distributing the questionnaire to students, permission had been sought from the authors. It was then translated into Malay Language because all students were Malays. All items were also modified according to the research objectives. A study had been carried out to determine the internal consistency between items. The alpha value for intrinsic motivation component was .75 which was accepted by scholars (Sekaran, 2003).

Students' population for the third level of the Arabic course as a third language at UiTM was approximately 2600. Therefore, 455 samples were selected according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The samples were chosen based on a stratified random sampling basis because students came from different faculties. The students were also categorized into 4 groups based on their previous experience in learning oral Arabic. Group 1 is for students with no previous experience in learning oral Arabic, group 2 for those who have learnt oral Arabic until standard 6 primary school, group 3 for those who have learnt oral Arabic until form 3 secondary school, and group 4 for students who have learnt oral Arabic until form 5 secondary school and above.

The collected quantitative data were analysed using SPSS. In order to analyze means of the scales descriptively, the interpretation of the means is as follow (Table 1):

Table 1. Categories of means for seven Likert scales
(Adapted from Nik Mohd Rahimi, 2004)

Mean score	Category
5.01 to 7.00	High
3.01 to 5.00	Moderate
1.00 to 3.00	Low

On the other hand, the study also engaged with 13 series of interviews with students. The selection of students was based on purposeful sampling using maximal variation sampling technique. It also took into consideration their prior experience in learning Arabic and the faculty clusters they belong to. All students were from the third level of the Arabic course at UiTM which was the highest level of the three semester course. The acquired interview data were transcribed verbatim and analysed using NVIVO7 software in order to establish the relevant themes which then referred to experts for *Cohen Kappa* agreement. Before the interview, all respondents have been informed that the interview scope was only on oral Arabic context and not other language skills.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows that the level of intrinsic motivation among UiTM students is high ($M=5.17$, $SD=.901$). Further investigation shows that the level of curiosity reason is also high ($M=5.26$, $SD=1.151$) as well as mastery reason ($M=5.46$, $SD=.923$). However the level of challenge is moderate ($M=4.51$, $SD=1.415$). The finding also shows that mastery reason is the highest component in intrinsic motivation followed by curiosity reason and challenge reason.

Table 2. Overall Mean and Standard Deviation of Intrinsic Motivation

Scales	M	SD
Challenge reason	4.51	1.415
Curiosity reason	5.26	1.151
Mastery reason	5.46	.923
Overall Intrinsic Motivation	5.17	.901

Meanwhile, a one way between groups analysis of variance (one way ANOVA) was conducted to explore the impact of prior experience on students' level of intrinsic motivation. Students were divided into four groups according to their prior experience. The first group ($N=110$) contains students without any experience, the second group ($N=122$) consists of students with six year experience in primary school, the third group ($N=96$) is students with nine years of experience (six years in primary school and three years in secondary school) and the fourth group ($N=127$) is students with 11 year experience (six years in primary school and five years in secondary school). The different number of groups does not exceed the ratio of 1:1.5, which is crucial to compare means between groups (Coakes & Steed, 2001; Hair et al., 2006). Levene's test for homogeneity of variances for the data is $p=.505$ ($p > .05$), showing that the homogeneity of variance assumption is not violated.

Table 3. One way ANOVA - Tests of between-subjects effect

Effect	Dependent Variable	F value	df1	df2	Sig.*
Prior experience	Control of Learning Beliefs	9.948	3	451	.000*

*significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 4. Post hoc analysis: Multiple comparison between group

Groups I	Groups J	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1	2	-.2350	.115	.174
	3	-.4655*	.122	.001*
	4	-.5815*	.114	.000*
2	3	-.2305	.119	.217
	4	-.3465*	.111	.010*
3	4	-.1160	.118	.761

*significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 3 shows that there is a statistically significant different effect for prior experience: $F(3, 451)=9.948$, $p=.000$. A post hoc analysis (as shown in Table 4) had been carried out to determine the differences between groups to reach statistical significance using Tukey. It was found that group 4 ($M=5.43$, $SD=.834$) and group 3 ($M=5.31$, $SD=.878$) were significantly higher than group



1 (M= 4.85, SD=.955) while group 4 (M=5.43, SD=.834) was significantly higher than group 2 (M=5.08, SD=.839) (as shown in Table 5).

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of effect (prior experience) for Intrinsic motivation

Effect	Dependent Variables	Groups	N	M	SD
Prior experience	Intrinsic motivation	1	110	4.85	.955
		2	122	5.08	.839
		3	96	5.31	.878
		4	127	5.43	.834

According to interviews, students admitted that they learned Arabic because of their curiosity and mastery reasons. They wanted to master this language for religious reasons such as to perform prayers, to understand the Holy al-Quran and to perform pilgrimage.

“I learn Arabic because I want to understand the meaning of al-Quran when I recite it during prayers (RP13)”

“when I learn Arabic, I understand a little bit of al-Quran verses. (RP11)”

“it is easy if we want to perform prayers... that day I went for pilgrimage (RP3)”

On the other hand, some students learned oral Arabic because of self interest, to enrich their knowledge, to improve their Arabic foundation and their mastery of the language.

“the reasons why I took this language ... it comes from myself... firstly I am interested in Arabic.. secondly.. because Arabic among other languages.. I am very interested.. I don't know why...mmm.. (RP12) ”

“to complete ourselves as knowledgeable graduates(RP5) ”

“if I learn other languages, I need to start from the beginning, but Arabic, I already have some basic knowledge .. so it is easier for me (RP10)”

“I think that I took Arabic just to improve my language.. that's the most important.. even though I may just pass with C (grade).. (RP11)”

Some of them learn Arabic because they felt that Arabic is a beautiful language.

“For me, Arabic is a wonderful language .. a wonderful language for me (RP3)”

This study shows that intrinsic motivation level among UiTM students is high, similar to Zubairi and Sarudin (2009) as well as Nik Yusof et al. (2008) and Nik Yusof (2004). However, it is in contrast with Mat Teh et al. (2009a) who found that the level of motivation in learning Arabic among religious school students was moderate. Intrinsic motivation has been proven to be the most important type of motivation to ensure students' perseverance and resilience in learning as compared to extrinsic motivation (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). In addition, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) revealed that students with high motivation and high task



value will use more metacognitive and cognitive strategies, as well as use effort management effectively. Dörnyei (2001) also warned that one of the factors that demotivated students to participate in learning tasks was performing activities which did not have any meaningful value in their life at least from their perception.

This study also investigated three components in intrinsic motivation namely mastery, challenge and curiosity reasons. From these three components, it was found that mastery reason was the highest followed by curiosity reason. On the other hand, challenge reasons were found at a moderate level. Therefore, it was proven that students had high intrinsic motivation to know and to master oral Arabic, but they were moderately motivated to face challenges in learning. This finding was supported by previous qualitative study about UiTM students' attitude (Yusri et al., 2010).

Among factors that probably contribute to high intrinsic motivation level among students is the status of Arabic itself, where it is the official language of Islam and all students involved in this study were Muslims. Islam as one of the most influential motivations in learning Arabic in Malaysia had been discussed by scholars (Abu Bakar et al., 2010) and it also became one of the most effective strategies used by students in learning Arabic (Mat Teh et al., 2009b). Hence, the status of a language in a society will determine the level of students' attitude and motivation as proven by previous studies (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Norizah, 2005; Rueda & Chen, 2005).

Interviews with students also gave some insight and views about Arabic language status in Malaysia. As Muslims, students have been used to this language since their childhood, basically from their religious practices and their environments. Therefore, from interviews, students showed their enthusiasm in learning oral Arabic, similar to previous studies (Yusri et al., 2010). Students were also found to be self motivated in learning oral Arabic. Among reasons that caused them to learn oral Arabic were self interest, to gain knowledge and to improve their oral Arabic mastery even though they have learnt it before. Therefore, it could be concluded that Islam has contributed to generate high intrinsic motivation among UiTM students.

This study also found that more experienced students had higher intrinsic motivation towards oral Arabic learning, similar to previous study (Yusri et al., 2012). It seemed that students' experience had contributed in nurturing their motivation towards learning Arabic. From experience, they knew the value of learning oral Arabic and its level had been increasing due after years of learning. This value has grown into certain levels when they continue their study in UiTM. Meanwhile, less experienced students seemed to start nurturing their motivation from the day they start their formal learning of Arabic in UiTM. By that time, most of these less experienced students were about 18 to 20 years old, therefore it was relatively late as compared to experienced students. As a result, their level of intrinsic motivation was significantly lower. From this study, it can be concluded that the longer the experience of a student in learning Arabic, the higher intrinsic motivation level he will possess towards learning. Thus, while teaching a class which was of mixed prior experience in UiTM, it seemed that students would be expected to react differently towards the learning process according to their different level of intrinsic motivation. Students with higher motivation were expected to actively participate in the learning process as compared to their counterparts.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study had some classroom implications. Overall students had a high intrinsic motivation level in learning oral Arabic. However, students with longer prior experience seemed to have a higher level of intrinsic motivation as compared to their counterparts. Therefore, teachers are expected to get different participation and reaction towards learning from students (Boggiano et al., 1987; Brophy, 1998; Dornyei, 2001; Hsu, 1997; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; VanZile-Tamsen, 2001; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 2004). Most probably teachers will also find a different level of achievement among students based on their prior experience. Previous study proved that different levels of motivation will contribute to different levels of achievement (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). To overcome this ‘unbalanced’ situation, this study would like to suggest that students should be placed and separated in different classes according to their prior experience. A survey should be carried out at the beginning of the class to determine the students’ level of experience. Therefore, teachers will find that it will be easier to manage a class of students which are at the same level of motivation. Otherwise, less experienced students might be placed in preparatory classes before they enroll in the actual classes. These additional classes would bridge the motivational gaps between these two groups of students as well as to separate students into different classes according to their prior experience.

It is also important to teach students with different backgrounds and achievements using different stimuli (Cajkler & Addelman, 2000) and different support (Dabbagh, 2003). If the classes can not be separated for some reasons, this study recommended that any activities in the classroom should be in the mix of prior experience learners. In other word, a collaborative grouping activity between them should be implemented in order to nurture positive motivation towards learning (Ames, 1981; Brophy, 1998; Cajkler & Addelman, 2000; Dornyei, 2001; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996) and to emphasize peer learning interactions between them (Fan et al., 2009; Holmes, 2003; Newman, 2002; Van Meter & Stevens, 2000; Yoshida, 2008).

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the students who agreed to participate in this study as well as our Head of the Academy of Language Studies, Academic Affairs Department and REC, UiTM Sabah and REC UiTM Shah Alam for approving this study.



Authors' Contributions

The authors confirm their contribution to the paper as follows: study conception and design: Jenna Desiree Robert; Literature Review—Aries Henry Joseph, data collection: all authors; analysis and interpretation of results: Lindey Easter Apolonius and Jenna Desiree Robert; draft manuscript preparation: All the authors. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.