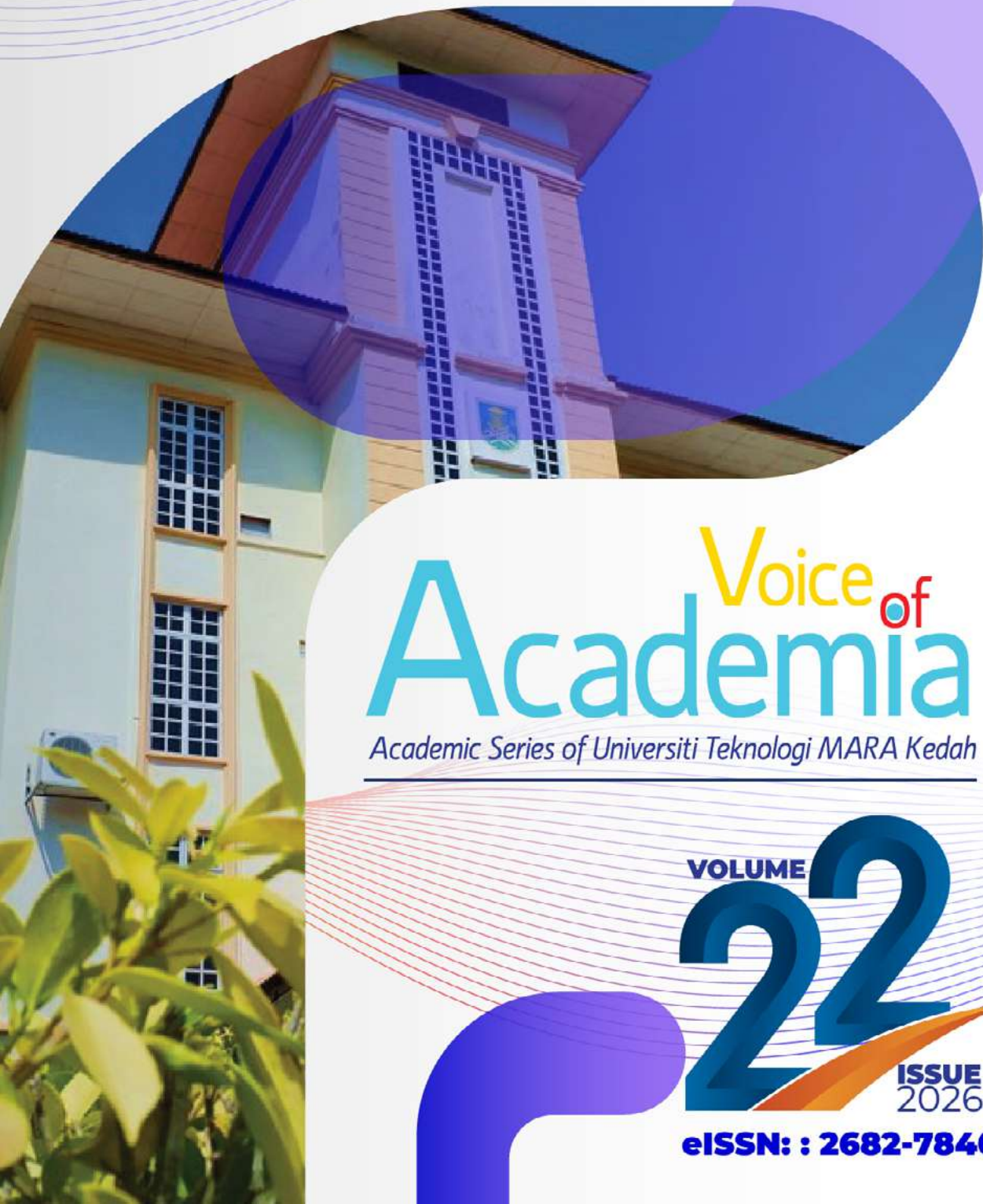




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INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN MASTERING THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the language proficiency benefits of two collaborative learning strategies in relation to student engagement. The quantitative design collected data through stratified random sampling from 200 Arabic students at UiTM Johor. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was implemented to assess collaborative learning strategies, student engagement, and Arabic language proficiency. Data were analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics, correlation, and Cronbach's Alpha reliability in SPSS. Collaborative learning strategies foster greater levels of Arabic Language proficiency in speaking, listening, and writing skills. In language tasks, the active participants in group activities such as discussion, peer assessment, and problem-solving outperform their counterparts. Collaborative learning enhances critical thinking, active participation, and self-motivation. Factors conducive to student engagement include peer interaction and learner autonomy. The results demonstrate the need for collaborative learning techniques while teaching Arabic to create more attractive and interesting learning environments. Although these strategies are certainly successful, further research needs to see how extraneous variables may influence their effectiveness and how long such success will last. Thus, this study emphasizes the possibility of cooperative learning working toward the attainment of better quality language education and student performance.

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1. Introduction

The teaching and learning of Arabic go beyond acquiring linguistic competence; they also promote cross-cultural learning in diverse geographical contexts. However, the traditional methodological approaches used in addressing this goal have not been adequate when faced with the diverse demands of modern learners causing respective drops in levels of motivation and achievements. Featuring in the current analysis is co-constructive learning as a radical solution that rest on the development of student–student and student–content interactions. This study critiques current instructional structures of intellectual arrangement of Arabic language teaching and suggests new directions of the field at a tertiary level.

Arabic language academic proficiency is imperative to students in various subject areas especially where the dominant language of instruction is Arabic. Arabic is a Semitic language with extensive correlation both in culture and history and has a vital official status in over two dozen nation-states thus requiring knowledgeability of the same to ensure competent communication, intercultural appreciation, and academic progression. However, in cases of higher-education, where students are often exposed to significant barriers on their way to acquiring the necessary proficiency mainly due to the increasing mass of academic requirements (Daud & Ghani, 2017).

A collaborative learning (CL) is a type of pedagogy where small groups of learners work together to attain some learning goals prioritized by the instructor, a design that has been shown to be capable of enhancing content knowledge as well as cognitive and social skills of learners (Eka Rizki Amalia, 2018). The current research thus aims to analyze how collaborative-learning scheme helps to attain Arabic in a university setup and the correlation that exist between the strategies and the achievement level and engagement of the Arabic learners. The research questions are proposed to answer the impact of CL on language learning and its possible contribution to improvement of the Arabic language performance of the students.

2. Literature Review

Arabic, spoken in more than twenty countries, is a language with cultural, historical, and education value. In artistic and academic performance, Arabic is both an intrinsic and indispensable part of the Arab culture and learning in the Arab world. However, sometimes the university students find it demanding to learn Arabic especially when academic pressure increases. Collaborative Learning (CL) has been identified as a pedagogical practice that develops student interest, promotes interaction with peers and collaborative problem-solving (Al-Huri, 2016). With CL being identified as the learning completed in groups with determination on solving of particular tasks, which offer measurable results in cognitive, social, and academic growth, CL is proven to aid in enhancement of development. The systematic use of CL techniques seems to be able to solve the barriers that hinder the acquisition of Arabic proficiency by students (Silva et al., 2021). Subsequently, it should be explored further in future research how much collaboration teaching strategies can raise the level of Arabic language proficiency among higher education students.

Literature has revealed that in countries where Arabic is used as the medium or instruction, mastering Arabic is a compulsory requirement among the learners. However, the majority of university learners do not achieve the target level of proficiency due to the accumulated academic pressure, along with the traditional delivery of instructions, most of which have been mostly content-based, rather than engaging in nature (Mohd et al., 2019). Such advancement-besides having a hampering effect on cognitive development- has a negative impact on

interpersonal relations, social competency, and cultural appreciation (Mohd et al., 2019). Introduction of cooperative learning, thus, can be a proper action. Empirical studies have shown collaborative learning to have significant impact on improved performance in a wide range of subject areas, however, the current study fails to answer the question of how collaborative learning evinces proficiency in Arabic and arouses the interest of learners in the institutional context. It remains unclear whether combining collaborative approaches and ensuring the uniform student input provides better results of learning the Arabic language, so additional studies are necessary.

Survey of collaborative learning offers understanding on how collaborative study methods reinforce Arabic proficiency in undergraduate students. The research draws attention to the importance of understanding the means of development of collaborative practice in and through the target language. Its major findings can make educators improve the instructional strategies and increase the engagement of learners. The findings can be used by curriculum designers of curricula that will attract attendance, encourage communication among peers, and create a more efficient learning environment. By so doing, the study adds to the available body of literature in the ways described above since it gives collaborative learning in Arabic education a prominent position and explains its role in language acquisition. Finally, the study aims at redesigning the concepts and the uses of the collaborative practice in the teaching of the Arabic language by connecting theoretical explanations to practical results.

2.1 Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To examine the relationship between collaborative learning strategies and Arabic language proficiency.
2. To investigate the relationship between student engagement in collaborative learning and their Arabic language proficiency.

2.2 Research Hypothesis

1. Alternative Hypothesis - H_1 :
There is a significant positive relationship between the use of collaborative learning strategies and Arabic language proficiency among university students.

Null Hypothesis (H_01):

There is no significant relationship between the use of collaborative learning strategies and Arabic language proficiency among university students.

2. Alternative Hypothesis - H_2 :
There is a significant positive relationship between student engagement in collaborative learning and their Arabic language proficiency.

Null Hypothesis (H_02):

There is no significant relationship between student engagement in collaborative learning and Arabic language proficiency.

From the literature reviewed, the strengths and weaknesses of current pedagogical strategies in Arabic language teaching are revealed. This research shifts the focus of the debate to the role of these approaches, dismissing traditional models while promoting collaborative learning as a forward-thinking approach. Through integrating multiple voices, the review highlights the

importance of the educational strategies that allow students to become active agents in the learning process especially when learning is important and challenging.

2.3 Collaborative Learning Strategies in Improving Arabic Language Proficiency

Collaborative learning strategies are considered as valuable approaches to improve language acquisition. In language learning settings, peer interaction, group works, and cooperative activities help students to apply the language more effectively and enhance their own learning through social interaction (Salma, 2020). According to Almelhes (2024), students acquiring Arabic language skills in collaborative learning situations are more proficient in vocabulary, grammar and speaking than learners in the conventional classroom system. An important aspect of collaborative learning is the opportunity given for learners to apply their language learning in context and this can be particularly helpful for Arabic given its intricate structures. According to An and Hien (2024), university students who were engaged in group activities and peer discussions had higher scores in oral proficiency and comprehension exercises. In addition, the study found that collaborative activities enhance retention through repeated peer interaction with language concepts. Furthermore, Salih (2022) found out that collaborative learning increases the students' self-confidence in using Arabic especially in speaking and writing skills. This confidence is vital for proficiency as it is true that anxiety plays a crucial role in weakening performance. Collaborative learning also helps to decrease the level of anxiety since learners get support from peers.

2.4 Students' Perceptions of Collaborative Learning Strategies for Mastering the Arabic Language

The attitudes of students towards collaborative learning determine its effectiveness in improving the performance. Most students who hold positive attitudes towards learning tend to be more active, more motivated and perform better in class. According to Lu and Smiles (2022), the students find collaborative learning effective since they are able to learn from their peers, share knowledge and actively solve problems. More specifically, the concept of collaborative learning allows the students to interact and share ideas and information which is important especially for language learning like Arabic. For Arabic language learners, group work enables students to overcome language difficulties and understand difficult ideas through the help of their colleagues, which makes the learning process more equitable and easy. Classroom collaboration can help students improve their vocabulary acquisition, especially those at beginner levels. Group activities provide students with opportunities to practise speaking and listen to their peers in a setting free from assessment pressure, which helps reduce anxiety when using the language. When a psychologically safe learning environment is created, students tend to feel more confident participating in discussions, ultimately supporting their self-confidence and language development. In addition, group-based learning is more enjoyable and interactive, which boosts their motivation to continue learning the language. The social interaction that emerges from group work also fosters a sense of togetherness, further encouraging sustained interest and effort in language learning.

However, there is not a universal positive view when it comes to collaborative learning. Some students feel frustration especially where some of the members in the group have different levels of skills which affects the group performance. According to Makewa et al. (2014) such students may face difficulty in working with other students who have lower language proficiency level as it may cause imbalance and hinder the achievement of the group objectives. This frustration can make it difficult for student teams to realize the potential of collaborative learning, particularly when the management of the learning process is not well done by instructors. These negative

experiences can reduce the level of effectiveness of collaborative learning and may reduce students' motivation as well. Therefore, it is important to appreciate student perception in order to facilitate collaborative learning approaches that are relevant for different students. To optimize the outcomes of collaborative learning, teachers have to address the skill gap in groups and establish effective conditions for active and equal group member interaction (Yang, 2023). To avoid possible sources of frustration and to help students and teachers, it is possible to recommend some guidelines for successful implementation of collaborative learning to improve students' language skills.

2.5 Relationship between Student Engagement in Collaborative Learning and Arabic Language Proficiency

Engagement is an important factor in collaborative learning as it has a direct impact on the academic achievement and the learning of language by the students. In the study conducted by Fuertes et al. (2023), student engagement which is the level of interest, participation, and commitment towards learning is positively related to academic performance. In language learning, engagement plays a crucial role because it helps to build deeper cognitive processes that are necessary for memorizing new words, new grammatical structures, and communication strategies. Thus, the active participation in the learning process improves memorization, increases the level of thinking and problem solving, which are necessary for mastering a language. According to Uslu and Durak (2022), the needs of students for relatedness and autonomy are fulfilled within the collaborative learning environment, which enhance students' motivation. When students are able to build relationships with their fellow students and have some degree of control over their academic experience, then they are likely to be motivated to succeed.

Bhandari (2022) similarly supports this claim where he pointed out that students in collaborative learning environments are likely to achieve and retain better language learning outcomes than those who learn individually. Students who are actively involved are likely to feel that they are part of the community and this leads to better commitment and performance in their studies. This feeling of belonging, to the topic and the group, is essential to ensure that learners remain engaged and motivated to work through the barriers that are commonly associated with language learning, including shame or confusion when making errors or when facing new ideas. In the area of language education especially Arabic language, the literature has shown that engagement influences language proficiency. Harianingsih and Jusoh (2022) noted that the level of the students' language achievement is positively related to their active participation in group tasks. The subject areas where the students received most of the active participation feedbacks and engagement in collaborative learning tools like group activities, group discussions, peer, and collaborative projects had a better-improved speaking, listening, and writing skills than other students who had less engagement. This raises the need to develop collaborative learning activities that foster participation, continuity and peer collaboration.

This study aims to fill the gap by quantifying the engagement levels of collaborative learning while assessing proficiency in the Arabic language. This kind of evidence will be useful for educators to create better learning environment which will meet the students' psychological needs and encourage them to put more effort into their language learning process. It could also aid in defining educational approaches that would lead to language learning through cooperation, interaction, and engagement.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This research is based on Vygotsky sociocultural theory, according to which the role of social processes in cognitive development and the learning process should be given the priority. Following Vygotsky, the process of learning is impossible without the efforts of other peers, teachers and other culturally anchored tools; thus, collaborative learning is a proper pedagogical technique in teaching languages (Gajdamaschko, 2011). Concerning the proficiency of the Arabic language, collaboration allows the students to perform in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which means that during group activities students can achieve much more than they do during individual activities. Through this framework, the roles of social interaction, support and dialogic exchange in learning the target language structures are brought to the fore. Besides, the premise, which states that linguistic competence is obtained by means of observing, imitating and modeling the speech of peers, is supported by Bandura, who proposed the Social Learning Theory (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012).

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The theoretical model of this study presents the potential interconnections between collaborative learning strategies, student engagement, and Arabic language efficiency.

1. Independent Variable (IV):

Collaborative Learning Strategies (IV):

These are the elements or instructional procedures (like peer contacts, group activities and cooperative learning strategies) that are either manipulated or measured in the study to find out their impact on the language learning process.

Student Engagement (IV):

Student engagement refers to levels of active participation among the learners in the course of instructional environment.

2. Dependent Variable (DV):

Arabic Language Proficiency (DV):

The current research tends to estimate or predict the dependent variable that can be regarded as the competency in the Arabic language along all domains of vocabulary, grammar, spoken, written and understanding.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Data and Methodology

This research uses methodology that would provide maximum reliability and relevance. In this context, the positivist research philosophy was adopted, and stratified random sampling was employed to conduct a rigorous examination of the impacts of collaborative learning. The design of the study allows the possibility of practical and empirically effective results, especially in regard to the level of engagement and the proficiency attainments in language affairs.

The positivist theory is the basic structure of studies which are based on facts, which can be measured, as well as be tested empirically. The application of the positivist principles to collaborative learning interventions can be employed to determine efficacy as well as deliver quantifiable results in Arabic language learning. Following these standards, the research is logically stable, unbiased, and replicable thus making it easy to extrapolate the findings to another learning setting.

The research followed a quantitative paradigm to establish the effectiveness of collaborative methods. Using statistical software and questionnaires, the researchers had the possibility to analyze and collect data in various variables (Kabir, 2016). The thematic focus, defined by the specific research question of the study, namely the effectiveness of collaborative learning in the acquisition of skills in the Arabic Language, informed the enquiry of collaborative learning in regard to its impact on student interest, perception, and language development. The findings indicate that collaborative learning is an effective approach of improving competency on Arabic language. At the same time, the results identified the constructive course along which the students developed increased confidence and competence in cooperative contexts. On balance, the use of integrated method in the present study produced a measure of the quantitative reliability but, at the same time, incorporated a richness and complexity involved in qualitative inquiry, thus serving the scholarly literature and guided pedagogical thought simultaneously.

3.1 Population and Sampling

The proposed research sample for this research work consisted of university students who were taking Arabic language courses at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Johor. The study selected 200 students using stratified random sampling to include different levels of study and backgrounds in learning the Arabic language. For this reason, the study only included students

who were enrolled in Arabic language courses and had participated in collaborative learning-related activities. Those who did not take Arabic classes or preferred to learn on their own were not included in the study. The aim of this sampling procedure was to gain a general understanding of the students' collaborative learning through their interactions with Arabic language skills.

3.2 Data Collection

The main data collection tool in the current research was a questionnaire that was submitted to participants in three different blocks, and the authors of the research could pose the questions about the concept of the competence of Arabic language, the attitude to a collaborative learning strategy, and the level of engagement in collaborative activities among the participants. All the items were arranged in form of closed-ended questions and were scored using a 5-point likert scale (5-point ordering scale with values ranging between strongly disagree (1) position to strongly agree (5) position). The demographic part of the questionnaire required data about gender, phase of study, and prior experience of learning Arabic, which provided necessary background to the data obtained (Khalifeh et al., 2022).

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive and inferential analysis was used to analyze the data using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Demographic information was presented using frequencies and percentages, and measures of central tendency such as means and standard deviations of responses to each of the questionnaire items were calculated to analyze the data. Correlation analysis was conducted to test the relationship between the level of student engagement in collaborative learning and Arabic language proficiency. Moreover, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. These statistical tools facilitated the analysis of the data to address the research questions (Cooksey, 2020).

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The current study was ethical-oriented and a set of precautionary measures was established. purposive sampling was used in the recruitment, whereby the contributors were made aware of the intentions of the study and requested to cooperate. The information was kept on anonymous terms during data collection and all data kept was under research purposes. The respondents were also provided with the option of exiting the study at any time without any consequences (Kang and Hwang, 2023). Such protective measures were to guarantee the right and privacy of those who took part in the project.

4. Results

The study included a total of 200 university students enrolled in Arabic language courses at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Johor. Demographic data (Table 1) shows that the gender distribution was evenly split, with 100 female students (50.0%) and 100 male students (50.0%). The participants' ages ranged from 18-20 years, with the largest group being 18 years (49.0%), other groups were 19 years (33.0%), and 20 years (18.0%). The students' academic levels varied, with 41 students (20.5%) in Year 1, 64 students (32.0%) in Year 2, and 95 students (47.5%) in Year 3. Regarding previous Arabic learning experience, 105 students (52.5%) reported having prior experience, while 95 students (47.5%) did not.

Table 1
Demographic Data

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	100	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Male	100	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age	18	98	49.0	49.0	49.0
	19	66	33.0	33.0	82.0
	20	36	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	100.0
Level of Study	Year 1	41	20.5	20.5	20.5
	Year 2	64	32.0	32.0	52.5
	Year 3	95	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	100.0
Previous Arabic Learning Experience	No	95	47.5	47.5	47.5
	Yes	105	52.5	52.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	100.0

The frequency distributions (Table 2) of the 15 items of the questionnaire reveal that the participants generally have positive perceptions towards the subject. The questions that received the highest mean scores are Q13 (My Arabic vocabulary has improved through collaborative activities) with a mean of 4.18, and standard deviation of 0.779 and Q10 (I review my group's work to ensure understanding of Arabic material) with a mean of 4.14, and standard deviation of 0.88. Similarly, Q7 (I contribute ideas during collaborative Arabic learning activities) and Q9 (I stay focused during collaborative Arabic learning sessions) had an average score of 4.08 with standard deviation of 0.810. The least mean score was observed for Q11 (I can write Arabic sentences with minimal errors) with mean 3.59 and standard deviation 1.131. The mean scores of all items were between 3.59 and 4.17 which indicate that students have positive attitude towards collaborative learning strategies. The standard deviations of the findings on the other hand ranged from 0.720 to 1.155, thus suggesting that there was some variation in the responses obtained from the participants due to differences in perception and experience.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Group discussions help me understand Arabic concepts better.	2	5	3.75	1.026

2. Working in pairs helps me improve my Arabic writing skills.	2	5	3.79	.954
3. Peer feedback helps me recognize my mistakes in Arabic.	2	5	3.93	.845
4. Collaborative activities make learning Arabic more enjoyable.	2	5	3.85	.996
5. I feel more confident speaking Arabic after group activities.	3	5	3.96	.782
6. I actively participate in group discussions during Arabic classes.	3	5	3.97	.743
7. I contribute ideas during collaborative Arabic learning activities.	3	5	4.08	.810
8. I ask questions during group tasks to clarify Arabic language concepts.	2	5	3.76	.909
9. I stay focused during collaborative Arabic learning sessions.	3	5	4.08	.810
10. I review my group's work to ensure understanding of Arabic material.	2	5	4.14	.880
11. I can write Arabic sentences with minimal errors.	2	5	3.59	1.131
12. I can understand spoken Arabic during group conversations.	3	5	3.93	.720
13. My Arabic vocabulary has improved through collaborative activities.	3	5	4.18	.779
14. I can confidently speak Arabic in front of my peers.	2	5	3.73	1.031
15. My reading comprehension in Arabic has improved through peer learning.	2	5	3.85	1.155

The result of the reliability analysis gave a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.982 for the 15-item questionnaire. This result shows a high level of internal consistency, which means that the questionnaire has the ability to measure the constructs related to collaborative learning and Arabic language skill.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.982	15

4.1 Hypothesis 1: "There is a significant positive relationship between the use of collaborative learning strategies and Arabic language proficiency among university students"

The findings of Table 4 endorse Hypothesis 1 that there is a positive relationship between the use of collaborative learning strategies and Arabic language achievement among university students. All the correlation coefficients between the variables of the questionnaire have been found to be positive and statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. The results reveal that Q1 (I enjoy working with peers in collaborative Arabic activities) has high coefficients with Q4 (I work well with my group during collaborative tasks) at 0.897, Q15 (I feel more confident learning Arabic through group work) at 0.897, and Q13 (My Arabic vocabulary has improved through collaborative activities) at 0.884. Likewise, Q11 (I can write Arabic sentences with minimal errors) is strongly associated with Q15 at 0.925, and Q13 at 0.892. These correlations suggest that the students who are more likely to participate actively in collaborative learning are likely to perform better in different aspects of the Arabic language, including increased vocabulary and writing. The results of the correlations which ranged from 0.371 to 0.949 indicate that the engaged collaborative learning activities enhance Arabic language proficiency in several aspects. The significance of all correlations ($p = 0.000$) strengthens the validity of this relationship, it is clear that the students' perceptions of collaborative learning are remarkably related to their language achievement.

Table 4
Use of Collaborative Learning Strategies and Arabic Language Proficiency Among University Students

Variables	Collaborative Learning Strategies (Q1–Q5)	Arabic Language Proficiency (Q11–Q15)
Collaborative Learning Strategies (Q1–Q5)	1	.897**
Arabic Language Proficiency (Q11–Q15)	.897**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

4.2 Hypothesis 2: "There is a significant positive relationship between student engagement in collaborative learning and their Arabic language proficiency"

The correlation findings provide confirmation of Hypothesis 2 in which, the coefficient of inter-correlation between the engagement-related questions (Q6-Q10) and proficiency-related questions (Q11-Q15) range from 0.655 to 0.956 which is significant at 0.000 level. Importantly, the correlation coefficients of Q7 and Q9 ($r=0.864$), Q11 and Q15 ($r=0.925$), and Q13 and Q15 ($r=0.956$) are significant. These findings suggest that the level of student participation in collaborative learning is positively correlated with the increase in the Arabic language performance. The relevance of these correlations underscores the need to encourage the development of group learning contexts to improve language competencies effectively.

Table 5
Student Engagement in Collaborative Learning and Their Arabic Language Proficiency

Variables	Student Engagement (Q6-Q10)	Arabic Language Proficiency (Q11-Q15)
Student Engagement (Q6-Q10)	1	.872**
Arabic Language Proficiency (Q11-Q15)	.872**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

4.3 Correlation Analysis

A comprehensive correlation analysis was conducted to deepen the interpretation of the relationships between collaborative learning strategies, student engagement, and Arabic language proficiency. The correlation coefficients reveal a consistently strong and statistically significant association among the three major constructs ($p < 0.01$).

The correlation between collaborative learning strategies (Q1-Q5) and Arabic language proficiency (Q11-Q15) was notably high ($r = 0.897$), indicating that students who frequently engage in collaborative tasks demonstrate greater linguistic competence. Item-level analysis further shows that enjoyment of group activities (Q1) is strongly related to improvement in vocabulary (Q13; $r = 0.884$), confidence in learning (Q15; $r = 0.897$), and group-task performance (Q4; $r = 0.897$). Similarly, writing accuracy (Q11) exhibits strong correlations with confidence in learning Arabic (Q15; $r = 0.925$) and vocabulary acquisition (Q13; $r = 0.892$), suggesting that collaborative writing discussions and peer feedback play a central role in improving written proficiency.

Student engagement (Q6-Q10) also demonstrates robust correlations with proficiency outcomes ($r = 0.872$). High coefficients such as those between focused participation (Q9) and speaking confidence (Q15; $r = 0.864$) indicate that sustained involvement in collaborative environments enhances both communicative competence and learner self-assurance. Furthermore, the strongest correlation in the dataset is observed between vocabulary development (Q13) and

confidence in speaking (Q15) at $r = 0.956$, highlighting the interconnected nature of lexical mastery and oral performance in collaborative settings.

Collectively, these correlations suggest that collaborative learning strategies and active student engagement are strong predictors of Arabic language proficiency. The consistent presence of high correlation values across constructs supports the study's hypotheses and underscores the pedagogical relevance of structured group-based activities in fostering vocabulary growth, writing accuracy, speaking confidence, and broader linguistic development.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study show that the use of collaborative learning strategies is positively associated with Arabic language achievement among university students. This pattern is seen in different aspects of language proficiency such as in vocabulary, sentence formation and language fluency. These findings indicate that most students have a positive attitude towards collaborative learning as a tool for improving their Arabic language skills as indicated by the high mean scores on most of the items of the questionnaire. The reliability analysis with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.982 strengthens the findings' validity which shows that the questionnaire is a good measure of the constructs of interest.

The analysis of the participants' characteristics indicates that gender and age distribution are relatively even, with more than half of the participants being students (52.5%), who reported previous exposure to the Arabic language. This is because prior experiences might increase the level of language learning and it is relevant to this study. The division of students by the academic year provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of group learning methods at every level of linguistic development. The findings therefore raise important questions about the use of collaboration in today's education systems. This study extends previous research that focused on the effectiveness of collaborative learning examines how such learning transforms classroom dynamics and shapes student engagement with their teachers as well as peers. It recognizes problems like skill variation within groups and provides specific recommendations on how to address them while promoting collaborative learning as the key to efficient and inclusive language teaching and learning.

5.1 Key Findings and Implication

The present study finds out that students' language skills are positively correlated with their enjoyment and confidence in collaborative learning activities. Q1 (I enjoy working with peers in collaborative Arabic activities) was highly correlated with Q4 (I work well with my group during collaborative tasks), Q15 (I feel more confident learning Arabic through group work) and Q13 (My Arabic vocabulary has improved through collaborative activities). These results are in line with the research preceding it on the benefits of collaborative learning, as students that engage themselves more thoroughly in group learning often achieve deeper levels of learning and also better language capacities (Le et al., 2017). The cooperative tools also found out that it strengthened some of the language competencies but especially improved writing and vocabulary.

The relationship between Q11 (I can write Arabic sentences with few errors) and Q15 (I feel more confident learning Arabic by group work) was incredibly strong with a coefficient of 0.925. It indicates that students that are highly interested in collaborative activities are also confident to write Arabic less frequently making mistakes. However, as with prior studies (Shaddad & Jember, 2024), which emphasize the significance of cooperative learning, in increasing language development, learners are able to get feedback from their peers to raise their language performance. Hypothesis 2 stating that student engagement is associated with language

proficiency, is confirmed with the high correlation between student engagement in collaborative activities (Q6 – Q10) and Arabic proficiency. The high correlation coefficients found for multiple questions that are related to engagement, for example Q6 (I stay focused during collaborative Arabic learning sessions) and Q9 (I stay focused during collaborative Arabic learning sessions) also supports this claim.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

Despite the findings of the study, there are some limitations that need to be mentioned. First, the research sample was selected from a single university, which can be a potential limitation in terms of the external validity of the research findings for other educational settings or organizations. It is possible that future research could extend the study to students from other universities in order to check the generalizability of the results observed in this study. However, since the study had targeted exclusively on the perception of the students about their language skill, to include measurable aspects of the language skill such as language tests scores.

Another limitation is related to the lack of control of other variables that may affect language learning like the motivation of the learner, the quality of the instructor, or the use of other materials and resources to learn language outside of the classroom. Subsequent research could explore the interconnection between these variables and aspects of collaborative learning, in order to develop a clearer view of the language learning processes.

6. Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of collaborative learning strategies in improving Arabic language proficiency among university students. The research aimed to examine the relationship between collaborative learning strategies, student engagement, and language proficiency. The findings reveal that enhanced language skills, particularly in writing and vocabulary, are closely linked to collaborative learning activities and active student participation.

Key insights include a strong correlation between enjoyment and confidence in collaborative tasks, such as Q1 ("I enjoy working with peers in collaborative Arabic activities") and Q15 ("I feel more confident learning Arabic through group work"). These results suggest that social collaboration positively influences students' attitudes toward learning Arabic. Similarly, the connection between Q11 ("I can write Arabic sentences with minimal errors") and Q15 highlights that students engaged in group activities demonstrate greater confidence and competence in writing. Collaborative tasks like group discussions, peer feedback, and cooperative problem-solving were found to strengthen language competencies significantly. The study validates Hypothesis 2, which links student engagement with language proficiency, supported by high correlations in questions such as Q6 and Q9. These findings align with prior research indicating that collaborative learning promotes deeper understanding and better language development through active language use and peer feedback.

Educators and program developers should prioritize creating engaging, participative learning environments that foster intrinsic motivation and autonomy. Collaborative activities should be integrated into Arabic instruction to enhance proficiency and confidence. Further research is needed to explore external factors influencing the effectiveness of collaborative learning and its long-term impacts. Understanding how to scaffold collaborative learning effectively will ensure sustained language development, reinforcing its role in improving Arabic language proficiency.

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