Abstract

The objective of this paper is to clarify the need for more systematic research on learning and teaching of Arabic as a second language in Malaysia, including the rest of Malaysian Arabic language programs. There is a need to review Arabic assessment procedures, students’ achievement, teaching and learning methods. It is suggested that scientific approach can help Malaysian Arabic teachers to understand the efficiency of Arabic programs. Hence, it is imperative for Malaysian Arabic teachers to learn from other successful educational experiences in order to improve on their programs of Arabic as a second language. Such comparative observations will help them to achieve better results in Arabic programs. The proper diagnoses of factors influencing acquisition of Arabic language skills should be one of leading steps for Arabic teachers to take before making conclusions on the their respective Arabic language programs. Since the hypothetical goal is to understand factors influencing productivity of Arabic language programs, it is suggested that Malaysian Arabic teacher should properly observe factors influencing the acquisition of Arabic language in their respective regions. This will provide them with both clear directions of Arabic programs, research and smooth running of well directed Arabic language developments.
Background of the Paper

The teaching of Arabic language in Malaysia call for more systematic observation so that goals of acquiring Arabic language in Malaysia can be consistently achievable. This will not only contribute towards enriching research in Malaysian educational perspectives, but it will also enhance the harmony and freedom of communication between Malaysia and the Arab world. Malaysian scholarship influences all social psychological aspects among which are Arabic languages-arts. Although it is referred to as Islamic language, Arabic language-arts influence cultures of non-Muslim Malaysian scholars and they participate in it’s construction. Some Arabic teachers in Malaysia suffer not only from the lack of a clear cut conception of Arabic content priorities but also from lack of information and professionalism with which they could handle the Arabic content in question. This is particularly evident in different programs of Arabic language they run.

It is important to mention that scientific observations today have influenced all intellectual activities where scientists from all over the world are active in the advancement of knowledge. So, it is possible that systematic observation can improve the understanding of Arabic language programs in Malaysia. Hence, Malaysian Arabic teachers need to learn from worldwide research experiences in order to enhance on the understanding of factors influencing the developments of Arabic language in Malaysia.

Definition of Terms

Achievement: Refers to immediate and long term academic outcomes of Arabic language as determined by the curricula of Arabic as a second language for Malaysia. They are the product the learning outcomes which result from learning activities. Among instances immediate learning achievements, such as: academic scores, mastery of social skills, development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. The product variables, on another hand, refer to long term achievements such as providing students with foundations and readiness to become good citizens. In most cases, Arabic language programs that are designed for immediate classroom learning objectives has a relationship with long term learning goals.

Arabic Language-Arts: The term language refers to the systematic symbols used to communicate knowledge, thoughts and feelings. Hence, language-arts in linguistic terms refers to the systematic symbols of communication. Whereas language-arts as a synonym of general knowledge and general literacy refers to the communicated thoughts, ideas and feelings. Basing on the above definitions, the term Language-Arts is dynamic and the content of Language-Arts includes everything in the surroundings of a mankind. Hence, the term Arabic language-arts in these contexts refers to the systematic symbols of expressing thoughts and feelings in Arabic language. It also implies the knowledge and general literacy; the communicated thoughts, ideas and feelings. It includes critical thinking skills, perception of beauties and values, demonstrating

social skills, attitudes and reactions to different ideas and situations. It also includes theoretical and religious interpretations and scientific descriptions.³

**Arabic Language Programs:** Curricula and co-curricula programs in Malaysia that intend to produce qualified personnel in: communication related disciplines such as linguistics, education communication, translation, diplomatic relations and journalism, education, social relations…⁴

**Arabic Spelling:** It refers to the correct formation of words from individual letters (Al-Hamlaawi, 1965; Muniir Alba'albakki, 1976). According to Hornby, Crowther, Kavanagh & Ashby (1995) the term spelling implies the ability and action of forming words from individual letters, as well as the way the word is spelt. As applied in this research, the term Arabic Spelling refers to students’ ability of writing Arabic words correctly. The term Arabic Spelling implies a correct application of rules that regulate the changing of letters’ shapes, doubling or adding other letters in a word. The application of the term Arabic Spelling in this research also comprises a correct use of other Arabic writing rules such as stressing, separating and joining Arabic letters. Finally, the term Arabic spelling, as applied in this research, includes the specific rules of dealing with unstable endings of Arabic words (Al-Haml aawi, 1965; Umar Sulayman Muhammad & Mahmud Is'mail Swini, 1991). Then, the term Arabic spelling as defined by different scholars reflects the knowledge of some rules of Arabic grammar and morphology that sometimes influence the writing of numerical figures in words and structures of Arabic written letters.

**Arabic Writing Skills:** Arabic writing skills have general and specific concepts. Writing skills, generally refer to specific abilities which help writers to put their thoughts into a meaningful written forms. These abilities help writers to gain comprehensibility independence, fluency and creativity in writing. Writing skills generally, are comprised of focusing on main point, elaborating written ideas and organizing written content. Other aspects of writing skills are the correct use of vocabularies, grammar, morphology, mechanics and punctuations, spelling and other language-arts (Sanacore, 1996; Kress, 1999). Whereas the specific concepts of Arabic writing skills are the ones implied in the term Arabic spelling which is referred to as (Al'im'la') that has been explained earlier.

**Social Skills:** It refers to the socially validated behaviors that affect student relationships and peer acceptance. The social skills in question are observable by using the adapted tool called Social Skills’ Rating Questionnaire. The sub-scales of the Social Skills Rating Questionnaire are categorized with: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control (Gresham & Elliott, 1990).

**Scientific Attention:** Empirical research pertaining to all Arabic related areas imposed by different types of research and specific research purposes. Scientific information is warranted on Arabic language programs for better developments. Among scientific research purposes that may yield systematic information are: a)- exploration and description; There is a need to become familiar with all Arabic language phenomena. There is also a need to portray accurately Arabic language programs. This can be done through descriptive, survey, normative, status, case studies

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³ Sanacore & Joseph 1996, Supporting Language Arts Innovations that Endure; Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, Newark Sep 1996; Vol. 40, Iss. 1; pg. 58, 5 pgs.
⁴ For instance Bachelor of Arabic and Communication with honors is the program offered by the faculty of major language studies in 2006 at USIM/KUIM. It is a double-major degree combining Arabic and Communication. It offers language proficiency, specifically in broadcasting career, technology, culture, technical areas and biotechnology, as well as Arabic and Communication core courses. See [http://www.kuim.edu.my/bm](http://www.kuim.edu.my/bm) retrieved on November 6, 2006.
and pre experimental research; b)- explanation and redetection; There is further a need to investigate relationships and interactions among Arabic language variables. This can be done through descriptive, pre experimental research also known as relational, correlational and ex post facto research; c)- There is also need to control Arabic language issues and test hypotheses on differences among variables of Arabic language through experimental or quasi experimental research.

**Significance of the Paper**

This paper is based upon the need for more scientific research on the acquisition of Arabic language at different educational levels. Specifically the present paper is about the need to understand practical aspects influencing the acquisition of Arabic as a second language. This is reflected in the need for more empirical research on Arabic assessment procedures, students’ achievement in Arabic language-arts, Arabic teaching and learning methods. This need is derived and based upon the fact that most researches on Arabic language-arts have been descriptive in nature rather than being empirical investigations. Yet other related studies are out dated, either chronologically or methodologically. Furthermore, a large number of issues in Arabic as a second language need scientific observations.\(^5\) Hence, this paper calls for more scientific research on Arabic language-arts in order to fulfill such an important need. We specifically need more information on how to help students in improving on their awareness of Arabic Language so that we will be able to: 1) properly help students to demonstrate their literacy in varieties of Arabic language–arts; 2) improve on our mastery of professional techniques used in teaching Arabic language; 3) enhance students’ readiness to achieve more advanced levels of Arabic language together with accuracy in more complex language-arts.

**Assumptions**

It is assumed that different classroom learning strategies influence Arabic language-arts differently. Hence, it is meaningful to observe various effects of learning strategies in the classroom of Arabic language in order to lay more effective strategies of Arabic education. It is also assumed that models and theories of classroom learning in the world are applicable in Arabic classroom. Therefore, it is advisable to apply various theories of second language classroom and research findings from all over the world in the classroom of Arabic language for different purposes as can be described by the defined geographical and educational scope of Malaysian region.

Related to the above assumption is the possibility that the general techniques of acquiring other languages are applicable with the acquisition of Arabic language. Therefore, this paper addresses a the need to share our experiences with other scholars in order to improve on the observation of teaching and learning techniques in the classroom of Arabic as a second language. Finally, most of explicit classroom learning theories such as the model of classroom learning by Dunkin and Biddle 1974\(^6\) lead to the feeling that variables of learning contexts are related to one another. Hence, the investigation on Arabic language arts may include report on extent to which Arabic language-arts correlate with teaching-learning variables.


Current Issues on Arabic language in Malaysia

It is generally proposed that programs of Arabic language in Malaysia should produce the professionally qualified personnel in: linguistics, communication, translation, diplomatic relations and journalism, with foundations of teaching and social relations and ready to serve the nation. Suppose this dream comes true, what will Malaysian educators have done for Arabic language programs and how will they have done it in order to reach such productivity.⁷

An attempt to answer such questions is an automatic implication of conducting research and systematic observations on issues related to above proposals. The information is needed on how Arabic language variables related to Arabic curricula and co-curricula goals. This is effective right from procedures of Arabic curriculum designing and Arabic syllabus interpretations. It is rather the information on Malaysian Arabic classroom derived and based upon Arabic teachers observations and dictation of variety of Malaysian life aspects in general and learners’ specific needs in particular. Attempts to answer the above questions are also considered with information on skills and knowledge Arabic language teachers need in order to stand in the face of contemporary second language challenges. Continuing development of Arabic knowledge and skills is an other factor to be considered in attempt to answer the above question. The answer also reflects provision of solution on common problems with early Arabic learning levels inherited in the nature of Arabic language itself.

General Factors Influencing Arabic Language in Malaysia

There is a number of factors influence programs of Arabic languages and therefore they call for more information before decisions taken on the programs themselves. Dunkin and Biddle (1974) clarified that, there are various social psychological factors that influence the process of learning and academic achievements. They elaborated that teachers’ characteristics, social aspects and learners’ characteristics are important factors that influence learners’ achievements and learning system. Nevertheless, learning environments including school and classroom are also assumed to influence learners' achievements. Putting that in minds the following are factors influencing Arabic language programs in Malaysia: Teachers and students’ cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, and academic diversity, student’s reasons for learning Arabic languages and ways they do it, educational technology and increase in Arabic language enrollments and the shortage of qualified teachers.

- Cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, and academic diversity; the massive Malaysian population of Arabic learners is diverse and should be investigated. Arabic language teachers need to understand students properties that influence their proficiency and mastery of Arabic language. This includes students’ educational experiences, and native language skills that always influence students’ performance in Arabic language skills.

- Student’s reasons for learning Arabic languages and ways they approach this learning require more specific information on Arabic language curricula and instructions to address a range of student goals and learning styles.

- Educational technology, Arabic educators need more information on how to properly use: programmed learning and systems’ Approach, individualized instruction, projects; case studies; computers and online based instructions.

⁷ See the faculty of major language studies USIM/KUIM. http://www.kuim.edu.my/bm/ retrieved on November 6, 2006.
• Arabic teachers also need to understand the productivity of Arabic language programs in terms of objectives set for them. This can be done by use of either agricultural-botany and quasi experimental methods; using norm or criterion referenced tests; formative and summative methods Arabic educators can get information during and after programs. For the sake of obtaining deeper information on Arabic programs, Arabic teachers may deliberately aim to chance the face results obtained through quantitative procedures into qualitative perception by using an illuminative method. Increase in Arabic language enrollments and the shortage of qualified teachers may require Arabic language teachers to apply a great deal of technology for language learning and teaching. Arabic language teachers also need to information on how information technologies and language instructions are exploited for better results.⁸

Specific Arabic Aspects Need Attention

Arabic language educators need more information on the following specific aspects:

• Arabic language proficiency at all levels of basic skills of Arabic language-speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

• Ability to comprehend contemporary media in Arabic language, both oral and written.

• Ability to use the Arabic language-arts in real-life contexts, for both social and professional purposes.

• Social, political, historical, and economic realities of the regions where Arabic language they teach is spoken.

• Pedagogical skills, including general learning theories and specific Arabic language acquisition theories for developing Arabic proficiency and cultural effects on students’ understanding of Arabic language-arts.¹⁰

• Various technologies and how to integrate them into their instruction.¹¹

Problems with Early Arabic Levels

Kirembwe (2000) conducted a pre-experimental diagnostic investigation in Malaysian secondary schools for three weeks, using a nonrandom sample "n=57, cooperative learning and a method of pre-test post-test control. The Malaysian syllabus of Arabic as a second language was used for lessons and weekly tests from text book for assessment. The purpose of this diagnostic study was to figure out the specific area of students' weakness that leads the students to low achievement levels on the national papers of Arabic as a second language.¹²

It was found that the common problem with students of Arabic as a second language in Malaysia secondary schools is that students find difficulties in applying Arabic language rules in various


⁹ Curtain and Pesola (1994) and Tedick and Walker (1996)

¹⁰ Guntermann, 1992

¹¹ (Met, 1989, p. 177),

tasks of Arabic language skills. Yet the syllabus of Arabic as a second language for Malaysian secondary schools emphasizes the integration of Arabic grammar, morphology and orthographic systems within all Arabic language skills.

However, scholars of Arabic as a second language found that the system of Arabic orthography, grammar, morphology is different from the rest of modern languages. These differences cause difficulties in the acquisition of Arabic writing skills in Malaysian secondary schools. Kirembwé (1997) and Su’aïdi Safei (1997) indicated that Malaysian pre-university students face difficulties in transferring their oral expressions into the correct written forms. Although they might express themselves orally, they could hardly do so in writing without committing orthographic errors.

These difficulties originate from unique factors of Arabic language skills that call for different attention. Among the factors of Arabic language are the orthographic rules that influence the formation of Arabic words, spelling and sentence construction. It is observed that many students of Arabic as a second language find difficulties in applying Arabic language rules in their correct forms. Consequently, these students achieve low scores on their papers of Arabic as a second language.

Another cause of students’ low scores on the papers of Arabic as a second language is an unsystematic application of general academic language-arts. It is observed that when some students carry out Arabic language assignments they rarely apply general rules of academic writing. This is manifested in improper organization of ideas and lack of focus on main ideas. Difficulties in applying general rules of academic writing among students are further noticed through insufficient elaboration of ideas and incorrect use of grammar and morphology. Other indicators of students' problems in the application of the general rules of academic writing are improper use vocabularies, proverbs, rhetoric and incorrect application of Arabic writing mechanics. Such difficulties are found with the majority of students who achieved inadequate academic achievements in their examinations of Arabic as a second language. A number of scholars proposed that, to solve the difficulties of Arabic education teachers have to use instructional technology.


Unfortunately, some of their proposals have not been scientifically investigated; yet others related studies were not administered to answer questions about variables influencing Arabic language. Therefore, apart from the language analyses provided by those scholars, they contain a little information to describe a particular perspective of Arabic language for the sake of furthering investigations and understanding of Arabic language in Malaysia. Thus the learning of Arabic as a second language warrants more researches to supplement on the available information on the acquisition of Arabic language. This notwithstanding the previous contributions provided very few information on Arabic education. Some of this information is no longer sufficient to answer today’s questions on acquisition of Arabic as a second language.\textsuperscript{16} This is evident in the following instances of literature review on Arabic language.

**Instances of Literature Related to Arabic language**

The contemporary literature on language research show that different researchers selected different language-arts for different purposes of research.\textsuperscript{17} They also indicated that proper language instruction motivates students to love and use the acquired language.\textsuperscript{18} Such instances create a feeling that if the acquisition of Arabic language in the classroom is well understood, it can enhance the mastery of all Arabic related disciplines. Unfortunately, there is very little amount of systematic research findings reported on Arabic language in Malaysia. Yet some of these findings are not reliable enough to answer contemporary questions about the acquisition of Arabic language. There are many Arabic language issues in Malaysia that need more clarification including curricula development assessment procedures, academic achievement and teaching and learning methods. Since the information available on variables influencing the learning of Arabic language is not sufficient to clearly understand the acquisition of Arabic language for different purposes, more research is warranted to observe variables influencing the productivity of Arabic language programs in Malaysia. This will help us to take more meaningful steps towards the understanding of Arabic language developments in Malaysia for different purposes. The following is a summary of a little scientific information available on Arabic language.

**Effects of Cooperative Learning on Achievements in Arabic Writing Skills**

This is an experimental research investigated the problem among students of Arabic as a second. Besides this problem he also investigated the relationship between learners’ social skills and their achievements in Arabic writing papers. The Solomon Randomized Four Group Design was used.

\textsuperscript{16} For instance, the development of Arabic writing foundations were confined with Arabic spelling and calligraphic aspects. Although there are many other writing skills these two aspects were the major concerns of Arabic writing skills in the history of Arabic language development. Probably, other modern aspects of language-arts were not the priority because either they did not exist at that time or they were considered as common issues for all languages and therefore, they were not parts of problem during the developments of Arabic writing skills. Along with the provided descriptions of such Arabic writing variables, however, very few of them included practical instances and pedagogical information on how different people experience the acquisition Arabic writing skills.

\textsuperscript{17} For instance, Russell and Haney 1997 examined the relationship of language-arts with different variables of writing skills. Other linguistic researchers investigated the influence of language-arts in the communication they indicated that the teaching and evaluation of language-arts should be done by language professionals. Michael Russell, Walt Haney 1997, Testing Writing on Computers: An Experiment Comparing Student Performance on Tests Conducted via Computer and via Paper-and-Pencil \textit{Education Policy Analysis Archives, A peer-reviewed scholarly electronic journal} Volume 5 Number 3 January 15, 1997, Arizona State University, Tempe AZ 85287-2411, ISSN 1068-2341\textsuperscript{“http://olam.ed.asu.edu/epaa”}


Schuster & Nancy J. 1997, Integrated Language Arts in A College Communications Course; \textit{Journal of Adolescent &; Adult Literacy}, Newark; Mar 1997; Vol. 40, Iss. 6; pg. 483, 3 pgs.
The learning methods Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition versus Teacher-Centered Instructions were also used. On one hand, the results of this study showed significant differences in mean scores on Arabic writing skills $a=2$, $0.05$, $ES=2.972$. On another hand, none of the hypothesized ($r$) was found to be significant between the means scores on Arabic writing skills and means scores on students' social skills.\footnote{Kirembwe Rashid Abdul- Hamed (2004). \textit{Effects of Cooperative Learning on Achievements in Arabic Writing and Social Skills for Form Two Students in Selangor, Malaysia.} Ph.D Dissertation Universiti Putra Malaysia}

**Teaching Arabic Writing Skills to Adult Non-Native Speakers**

Further information about the usage of instructional technology in the second language classroom of Arabic writing skills might be obtained from Kirembwe (1997) who investigated the teaching of Arabic writing skills to adult non-native speakers of Arabic language. He also provided samples of lesson plans with an application of visual aids for elementary level. Such studies provided the researcher with some information about the academic achievements in writing skills in general and academic achievements in Arabic writing skills in particular. The detailed analyses of such studies were provided in the later discussions of this chapter. Some of the selected studies for analyses in this review of literature were introduced according to their leading titles where necessary.

**Computer Assisted Arabic Writing**

In Ph.D experimental dissertation titled “Computer Assisted Arabic Writing” at the University of Leeds UK, Su'aïdi Safei (1997) specifically investigated the problem of Malaysian learners of Arabic at the intermediate level (group L2) of the diploma pre-university level who needed to improve their Arabic writing skills. There was severe shortage of instructional material for Arabic as foreign language. Hence, it was difficult for students to improve on mechanics of Arabic writing skills and characteristics of Arabic writing style.

The aim of Su’aïdi Safei (1997) was to enhance the writing proficiency in Arabic as foreign language and to pay attention to the writing process itself. The approach emphasized that writing involves continual reflection and revision in drafting and requires use of grammatical, semantic and rhetorical knowledge. Su’aïdi Safei (1997) in conjunction with Uk’tub’li Foundation at the University of Leeds hypothesized that computer application could improve students’ achievement levels in Arabic clauses, sentences and styles. Su’aïdi Safei (1997) commented that it was easy for students to use and modify the learning aids in question so that they could suit the students’ particular requirements.

To test the capabilities of the selected writing aids small validation was undertaken involving six pairs of final year British undergraduate students (Level 3, Year 4) in the Department of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Leeds. The objective was to gauge the validity of selected writing facilities with students like Malaysian learners, at the intermediate level of Arabic as second language. Diagnostic assessments of the students' writings during the experiment were recorded based on orthographical, morphological, syntactical, semantic and rhetorical errors, and described in individual record sheets.

These results showed that students made extensive application of the computer facilities and references which were used as aids for improving their performance. This included instances like changing patterns of using these facilities in the drafting and in the presentations during training courses of Arabic writing. Eventually the recorded interviews indicated that five of the six pairs of students were satisfied with their writing improvement at the end of the activity. Therefore, his
experimental findings supported the positive alternative hypothesis (Ha) that computer-assisted Arabic writing improves students’ achievements in Arabic clauses, sentences and styles.

**Teaching Arabic Writing Skills to Adult Non-Arab Speakers**

In an unpublished MA. thesis by Kirembwe (1997) entitled "Teaching Arabic Writing Skills to Adults Non-Arab Speakers, Samples of Lesson Plans With an Application of Visual Aids for Elementary Level", Kirembwe (1997) aimed at investigating the acquisition of pre-university Arabic writing skills for adult non-Arab speakers at the International Islamic University Malaysia by the use of visual aids. The research problem by Kirembwe (1997) was based on the fact that, the ways of writing Arabic language-are different from other languages. Therefore, the students of the International Islamic University Malaysia were finding difficulties in transferring their oral expressions into the correct written forms. Although they might express themselves orally, they could hardly do so in writing without committing grammatical and other errors.

Kirembwe (1997) assumed that elementary writing instruction could depend on different statements about visible items and practices. He suggested the use of visual aids in order to improve students’ performance in the program of acquiring the Arabic writing skills for elementary levels. Therefore, Kirembwe (1997) hypothesized that: (i) the application of the techniques that present the elementary Arabic writing materials to adult non-Arab students by integrated visual aids and elementary writing skills might reduce Arabic writing mistakes, (ii) the selection of writing content from students’ contemporary life situations could improve students' learning activities in the elementary classes of Arabic writing skills.

Kirembwe (1997) used the method of exploiting the merits of the visual aids in the classroom of elementary writing skills for Arabic as second language, so that the selected visual aids could influence the acquisition of the elementary Arabic writing skills in question. At the end of the research he concluded that if the schemes of work, lesson plans, classroom and home exercises were derived from and based upon the daily experiences encountered by students they could positively influence the acquisition of elementary Arabic writing skills for adult non-Arab speakers.

Hence, Kirembwe (1997) supported the theory that learners should be the target of all instructional procedures. When the visual aids are applied in the acquisition of elementary Arabic writing skills for adult non-Arab speakers, the learners should be encouraged to be creative and self-taught when acquiring the selected Arabic writing skills.

**Discussion of the Literature**

The findings of Arabic writing skills by Su’aidi Safiei (1997) should also, be treated with caution for the reasons that, Su’aidi’s sample did not appear to be representative. This alert was based on the doubt that the sample of British undergraduate students could hardly form representative sample to the Malaysian population of pre-university students as claimed by Su’aidi Safiei (1997). Moreover, Su’aidi Safiei (1997) did not describe the extent to which the sample of six pairs of Level 3 the Year 4 final year British undergraduate students in the department of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Leeds could represent the population parameters of Malaysians who learn Arabic as second language at the diploma pre-university level.

Another weakness with Su’aidi Safei’s (1997) study was in the design used. The design of pre-test/post-test that Su’aidi Safei used was not reliable enough to control the suspected intervening variables that might influence the findings. For instance, it was not convincing to generalize
Su’aidi’s findings to the unpre-tested Malaysian population. Also, it was not fair to generalize
Su’aidi’s findings without considering the possibility that some of the selected samples were
exposed to the treatment materials in non-experimental situations. Finally, the findings were
reported without referring to any statistical power used in the analysis of the data. Hence there was
little benefit from the reported findings by Su’aidi Safei, (1997) in terms of the power of analysis
and generalizability of the findings.

On the issue of generalization, Su’aidi Safei (1997) did not mention whether the findings were
generalizable to all writing skills or they were generalizable with respect to specific aspects of
Arabic writing skills. This would be important information given the fact that, different processes
and products of writing skills can be influenced differently by different teaching methods.

It is clear from the above summary of literature that very little scientific information available on
Arabic education. On top of that it is clear that a big percentage of Arabic research findings was
betrayed by poor research design, small sample size as well as inadequate power of statistical
analysis and assessment techniques. Below is a detailed discussion of the findings presented the
related literature

Kirembwe (1997) lacked systematic sampling procedure. There was no indication whether the
sample he used was adequate to justify the significance of his findings. He was also criticized that
he lacked systematic observation of writing skills. It was not clear whether or not Kirembwe
(1997) was investigating the Arabic writing skills in general terms which might be comprised of
skills like: focusing, elaboration, organization, the use of vocabularies, grammar, morphology,
mechanics and spelling (Margie, 1987). Also, it was not clear whether or not Kirembwe (1997)
was investigating the Arabic writing skills in specific terms which might be comprised of the
specific concepts of Arabic writing skills that are normally implied by Arabic orthography.

The findings by Kirembwe (1997) did not mention the position of other writing skills against or in
relation to particular dependent variables. It was not clear in Kirembwe's research whether or not
he was investigating Arabic writing skills in comparison to particular aspect of counterbalancing
variables. Hence, the lack of clarity in the sampling procedures and in the scope of investigated
language-arts hinders the generalization of Kirembwe's findings.

Furthermore, the claim by Kirembwe (1997) that he applied method of exploiting the merits of the
visual aids in the acquisition of the Arabic writing skills at elementary level was not clear.
Therefore, it was not easy to specify the type of Kirembwe's research. It was difficult to tell
whether the research by Kirembwe (1997) was using descriptive, causal comparative or
experimental methods. Finally, there was no clear demarcation between his dependent and
independent variables. Hence, it was difficult to figure out which variable was influencing, related
to or caused another.

In most of the cited research about Arabic writing skills the form of assessment techniques for the
written products was not mentioned yet the fact was that scholars like Zemelman and Daniels
(1988) explained that the kind of assessment needs to vary according to the variation of writing
processes and writing products in question. As students engage in various writing activities,
researchers should select different writing aspects and assess them differently. There are different
holistic techniques of assessing written products such as general impression marking, essay scale
assessment and dichotomous scales or checklists. The assessment of writing skills can be done by
using the analytic scales and primary trait scoring procedures. The assessment of Arabic writing
skills can also use feature analysis and Atomistic Assessment. Yet different techniques of assessment result into different scores (Zemelman and Daniels, 1988).

A number of studies suggested different methods, techniques and approaches for understanding the difficulties of Arabic writing skills. Unfortunately, some of these studies were outdated and call for further verifications, other current studies are methodologically questionable. For instance Su’aidi Safei (1997) and Kirembwe (1997) had serious methodological problems that call for different researches to investigate the problems in Arabic writing achievements by using different research methods and procedures.

Remarks on Literature
Related to Arabic language

Weak Points

While some results of studies cited on Arabic language did not show significant effects, other results were not reliable. The studies were too few to allow one to draw meaningful conclusion on Arabic language arts. The present author is not convinced with some studies which reported the findings on students’ differences in Arabic learning variables with methodological loopholes.

For instance, some researchers reported their findings without mentioning the levels at which language-arts influence the investigated variables of second language classroom. The studies were too few to allow one to draw meaningful conclusion on Arabic language arts. Some studies reported their findings with methodological loopholes. Many researchers on the Arabic as a second language ignored the influence of unstructured language-arts and students’ general knowledge in their findings. Hence, on one hand, there has always been unanswered questions about the influence of unstructured language-arts in their findings. On another hand, questions are found about the influence of research administration modes in the integrated language-arts. However, some information from other related classroom learning literatures show that learning strategies do not only influence academic achievement, but they also influence learners' attributes and social skills (Slavin, 1994; Kavale,1996). Other studies such as the one by Schuster and Nancy (1997) show that learners' differences in the general literacy are related to their differences in the academic achievements in communication skills. Such information provide us with clue about what can be observable on Arabic language in Malaysian contexts.

Although some researchers reported relationships between some learning strategies and students' attribute variables such as: social skills, self-esteem and attitudes, the methods they used were not convincing enough to rely upon. Therefore, most of their conclusions are still questionable. Hence, more research is necessary to describe the nature of the relationship among such attribute variables and selected learning variables in the classroom learning contexts.

In other cases, the cited findings of cooperative learning effects on Arabic were not comprehensive enough to understand all about peer orientation and the achievement in Arabic Language-arts. Hence, more research is necessary to investigate the relationships between peer orientation and achievement through different Arabic disciplines by using the cooperative learning techniques. The researcher also feels the necessity for the investigations of learning methods to simultaneously use combination of descriptive, quantitative and qualitative techniques. The researcher observed through the above literature that mixed research designs and procedures are more informative than single designs.
In the case of scopes and generalization of Arabic writing skills, the author observed that most of the findings cited about Arabic writing skills were reported without mentioning the scope of writing content to which their findings would be generalizable. Although it has been common for the researchers to mention the level of investigated subjects, that is not sufficient evidence to describe the scope of the investigated writing skills. Yet, the scope and limits are critically sensitive in the field of Arabic writing skills which have wider perspectives including levels imposed by different Arabic curricula goals, syllabi aims and objectives.

For instance, the interpretation of Arabic language syllabus for communication purposes in Malaysian secondary schools is logically and practically different from Arabic language syllabus for specialization purposes even if both of them are used in the same geographical area. The differences in effect sizes are even more critical when results are reported from different geographical areas. That is because different states and states have different philosophies of education. Therefore, the goals, aims and objectives of Arabic programs differ from one state to another due to their differences in the applied philosophy of education. Then, these differences manifest themselves in different curricula. The differences in the philosophy of education are also, reflected in different syllabi interpretations.

Consequently, it is necessity for different research findings on Arabic language to be reported with respect to their respective syllabi interpretations and procedures of data collection. Otherwise the findings of Arabic language remain unclear without mentioning the specific aspects of content area dealt with. This might enhance the clarity in the scope of generalization of Arabic findings. It is reasonable therefore to assume that, if the proposed experiment was properly executed, the effect of learning strategies on the achievement in Arabic language skills could be observable in Malaysia.

Implications

It is believed that proper application of the four Arabic language skills is one of leading short term goals in the programs of Arabic as a second language. Unfortunately, the scripts of Arabic language seem to be complicated for early Arabic learners. They are alphabets in which vowels and consonants are represented by visible or hidden symbols. These symbols have always been the common problem in Arabic as a second language influencing both writing and reading skills. Consequently, they retard some of learners interests in learning Arabic language. It is common that the standard syllabi of Arabic as a second language encourage students to correctly apply the techniques of Arabic communication in all Arabic language skills. It is also observable that the largest amount of Arabic language examinations worldwide are carried out in written form whereby the assessment of Arabic as a second language is in terms of writing irrespective of what skill is tested.

For instance, the syllabus of Arabic language in Malaysian secondary schools emphasize proper application of Arabic language-arts such as good description techniques, story narration, letter writing, arithmetical concepts and critical thinking. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the papers of Arabic as a second language is normally directed to proper application of Arabic writing skills such as: focusing on main point, elaboration on communicated ideas, organization of ideas, correct use of: vocabularies, grammar, morphology, mechanics and spellings. Various assessments of Arabic as a second language also focus on proper application of Arabic idioms, systematic sentences' constructions, rhetoric and proverbs. Such language-arts constitute criteria of adequate
performance in all Arabic language papers. Although they sound different, they are assessed in written form.

Then it becomes a necessity for different examiners of Arabic language skills to generally award scores on language arts in various papers of Arabic as a second language based on how properly do student write the required information. The above instances remind us about practical significance of Arabic writing skills as one of immediate aims that should be achievable in early academic levels of Arabic language programs. This is also a reminder about variables influencing the acquisition and examination of Arabic as a second language. Unfortunately, very few of these variables have been properly investigated. Therefore, it is still difficult without reliable information to achieve a consistent academic excellence in our programs of Arabic as a second language.

Conclusion
Arabic language education today needs more empirical research in order to regain its potentiality as an all round active language in Malaysia. This will not only contribute towards enriching research and educational perspectives in Malaysia, it will also contribute in developing the world intellectual and cultural aspects. Therefore, more information is needed to supplement on historical contributions in the field of Arabic language education so that we can revive the original status of Arabic language in Malaysia. Thus, it is important for Arabic Teachers all over the world to learn from modern and successful educational experiences in order to reactivate the historical power of Arabic language-arts. The goal for this paper is not whether or not Arabic language should be the Malaysian leading language, but a proposed goal of our mission is that Arabic language should be all round active again like any other modern language in the world. The movement of language revival is normally critical and challenging. Therefore, Arabic Teachers should be patient while struggling to improve on Arabic language education. Arabic Teachers need to carefully diagnose Arabic educational problems and apply valid and reliable research tools, methods and procedures. The key is to understand Arabic language position amongst various teaching and learning variables in Malaysia. This will provide us with clear ways for Arabic language developments. The systematic observation procedures will also provide Arabic teachers with more confidence and encouragement to deal with contemporary psychological challenges in the process of accomplishing such important intellectual goal, hence chances for achieving Malaysian Arabic objective seem to be higher.

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