THE USAGE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES (ALLS) AMONG SULTAN ISMAIL PETRA INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COLLEGE (KIAS)

Linamalini Mat Nafi [1]
Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh [2]

_____

Abstract: Various studies show that the usage of the Arabic language learning strategies among the students in Malaysia is at a low and average level. There are several factors that contribute to the usage of Arabic language learning strategies. Among them are the Arabic language achievement, language motivation, gender, duration of study and parents' educational level. Thus, this study aims to explore the ALLS usage by students when learning Arabic language and studying the factors which contribute to the ALLS usage. This study involved 100 respondents from International Islamic College Sultan Ismail Petra (KIAS). This quantitative survey study used questionnaires of Learning Language Strategy SILL version 7.0 as a primary research tool to collect data. The study findings show that Metaphysics strategy is a strategy which is most frequently used by students, while cognitive strategy is the strategy which is the least used by students. It is also indicating that students used all strategies at an average level.

Keywords: Strategies Of Learning Language, Arabic Language, Metaphysics Strategy
_____

Introduction

Normally, in the process of teaching and learning languages we can see the number of students is successful compared to other students. The forms of successful that can be seen are their fast progress, they easily master new words and sentences, or they also often achieve outstanding results in language tests. There are several other factors that can affect these achievements. Among those factors is the usage of language learning strategies (SPB) (Charmot, 1993; Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Kamarul Shukri & Mohamed Amin, 2009). This scenario occurs the field of foreign language learning research to begin focussing on learning strategies and individual differences of students (Rubin, 1997; Kamarul Shukri & Mohamed Amin, 2010). Hence, it is

_____

[1] Deputy Chief Executive (Students Affairs), Kolej Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Ismail Petra (KIAS), Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia. Email vna3172@gmail.com

[2] Deputy Vice Canselor (Academic & International), Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia. Email kamarul@unisza.edu.my

not surprising that studies on the ALLS which turned out being one of the fields of language research became so fertile and active in the past few years (Mac Intyre, 1994; Kamarul Shukri & Mohamed Amin, 2010).

Field study in terms of ALLS is still a hot topic to be discussed and the study about ALLS as well as aspects related to the student gives a good impression, especially in learning a second language (Nonglaksanakama, 2007). There are also studies showing that the use of this ALLS has relationships with a number of other factors such as gender, cultural background, ethnic and so on (Kamarul Shukri, 2009).

Research Background

In recent years many studies have shown deterioration Arabic student achievement at the secondary level. Misnan's Study (1999) of Form 4 students in two of national religious secondary school (SMKA) and four of Islamic Stream Class (KAA) in Perak showed that the students' achievement in Arabic Language Communication (BAK) subject is not encouraging. Saupi's Study (2003) on a number of Arab schools at upper secondary level also showed the majority of students are weak in the Arabic speaking skills. Nik Rahimi's Study et al. (2006) of 16 religious secondary school of Kelantan state's government found that the level of students' achievement in Arabic is at an unsatisfactory level. Another study conducted by Al-Muslim and Zamri (2012) in Negeri Sembilan shows that the teaching and learning of the Arabic language in the state is at a average level. Added by Al-Muslim and Zamri (2012), the study which was conducted on 100 students at several schools under the Kelantan Islamic Foundation (YIK) showed that only 50% of students are able to understand the taught lessons. In fact, this problem affects the learning of Arabic in higher education level (Kamarul Shukri, 2009).

There are some factors which influence the phenomena, such as students' attitude towards Arabic language, teachers' role which is more towards using conventional teacher-centered teaching method are also identified as the down-turn factors of mastery Arabic language among students (Ab. Halim, 2007; Azhar et al., 2008). Besides, the weakness in using LLS and the lack of knowledge about it are the factors which support the down-turn factors of mastery Arabic language among students (Nurhayuza et al., 2003; Sueraya et al., 2010). Thus, the field of language learning strategy supposes to be developed in order to offer a beneficial contribution for Arabic language learning.

Many LLS research in Malaysia have been conducted in English language learning, and Malay language learning compared to Arabic language learning (Kamarul Shukri & Mohamed Amin, 2010). Research on LLS which is focusing on Arabic language learning among IPT's students in Kelantan is still undergoing. Therefore, this research is assumed as an apprentice for language learning strategy research which focusing on Arabic language learning in Kelantan. It would surely contribute to the Arabic language teaching and learning in Kelantan.

Research Objectives
Among the objectives of this study are outlined as follows:

1. To identify the type of ALLS that is used by Students when learning Arabic language.
2. To identify the level of ALLS used by Students when learning Arabic language.

Research Questions
This undergone study answers the issues below:

1. What type of ALLS that is used by Students of KIAS when learning Arabic language?
2. What kind of the level of ALLS usage that is used by Students of KIAS when learning Arabic language?

Research Methodology

This is a quantitative study which is implemented through a descriptive review method deductively (Neuman, 1993). Questionnaires of learning Arabic strategies (ALLS) were used in collecting data. It was built based on SILL version 7.0 (Oxford 1990) with additional metaphysics strategies (Kamarul Shukri, 2009). Cronbach Alpha Method is used to obtain reliability index instrument of this study. The earned reliability index instrument of questionnaire is 0.944. According to Mohd. Majid (2009), Sekaran (1992), Mc Millan and Schumacher (2006), Crowl (1996), and others' view, the reliability index instrument of this study is high and can be applied to carry out the actual test. The validity constructs of item questionnaires are reviewed by ALLS expert from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UNISZA). In measuring the level of ALLS consumption, the interpretation methods that are submitted by Oxford (1990) is used (please refer to Table 1).

Table 1: Interpretation of Oxford (1990) for The Level of ALLS Usage

Interpretation	Scale	Statement Treatment	Mean Score
High	5	Constantly true about myself	4.5 to 5.0
	4	Always true about myself	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	3	Usually true about myself	2.5 to 3.4
Low	2	Usually untrue about myself	1.5 to 2.4
	1	Never untrue about myself	1.0 to 1.4

The sample consists of 100 students of third semester at Kolej Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Ismail Petra (KIAS) Nilam Puri, Kota Bharu Kelantan. The sampling technique that is used in this study is stratified random which is not based on ratio. The questionnaires are analysed using SPSS version 17.0. Descriptive statistic is used to find the frequency, percentage and mean.

Research Findings

Strategy Usage Based on Strategy Item

Table 2 shows that 10% or six strategies that are most frequently used are item s62 "I seek forgiveness from my parents and ask them to pray for me" (mean=4.23 SD=1.02), s57 "I tried to understand or feel the meaning of the reciting in salat, dua'a, Al-Quran verse and al-Hadith" (Mean=3.70, S.D=0.92), item s61 "I ask blessings from my teachers before I sit for exam" (Mean=3.44, S.D=1.14), item s48 "I ask the Arabic language speaker to slow down, repeat or explain what he had said if I do not understand it" (Mean=3.42, S.D=1.10), item s26 "I guess the meaning the words that I do not understand based on the context and situation " (Mean=3.38, S.D=0.97) and item s44 "I realize if I feel afraid or nervous when studying or using the Arabic language" (Mean=3.37, S.D=1.13). The six item strategies that are most frequently used by students of KIAS while learning Arabic language are at the average range.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of 10% on Most Frequently Used Strategies (n=100)

No Item	Strategies	Mean	S. D	Category of strategy	Interpretation
S62	I seek forgiveness from my parents and ask them to pray for me	4.23	1.02	Metaphysics	High
s57	I tried to understand or feel the meaning of the reciting in salat, dua'a, Al-Quran verse and al-Hadith	3.70	0.92	Metaphysics	High
s61	I ask blessings from my teachers before I sit for exam	3.44	1.14	Metaphysics	Average
s48	I ask the Arabic language speakers to slow down, repeat or explain what he had said if I do not understand it	3.42	1.10	Social	Average
s26	I guess the meaning the words that I do not understand based on the context and situation	3.38	0.97	Compensation	Average
s44	I realize if I feel afraid or nervous when studying or using the Arabic language	3.37	1.13	Affective	Average

Table 3 shows that 10% or six strategies that are the least used are item s45 "I express my feelings about Arabic language learning in my diary" (Min=1.83, S.P=1.04), item s19 "I write notes, messages, letters or reports in Arabic language" (Min=2.07, S.P=0.97), item s7 " I use flash cards to remember new words" (Min=2.07, S.P=0.92), item s18 " I read materials in Arabic language for fun. For example: reading story books, magazines or Arabic newspapers" (Min=2.16, S.P=0.95), item s53 "I give rewards or presents to myself if I manage something that I can be proud with in Arabic language learning" (Min=2.22, S.P=1.02) and item s52 "I ask questions in Arabic language" (Min=2.23, S.P=0.90). The six item strategies that are the least used by students of KIAS while learning Arabic language are at the average range.

Table 3: Min and Standard Deviation of 10% on the Least Used Strategies (n=100)

No item	Strategies	Mean	S. D	Category of strategy	Interpretation
s45	I express my feelings about Arabic language learning in my diary	1.83	1.04	Affective	Low
s19	I write notes, messages, letters or reports in Arabic language	2.07	0.97	Cognitive	Low
s7	I use flash cards to remember new words	2.07	0.92	Memory	Low
s18	I read materials in Arabic language for fun. For example:	2.16	0.95	Cognitive	Low

	reading story books, magazines or Arabic newspapers				
s53	I learn about Arabic's culture	2.22	1.02	Social	Low
s52	I ask questions in Arabic language	2.23	0.90	Social	Low

Strategy Usage Based on Main Construct Strategies

This experiment also counts the min for every main construct strategy. The result found that the category that is used frequently is metaphysics strategy (Mean=3.34, S. D=0.73). Followed by the compensational strategy (Mean =3.05, S. D=0.69). Then, followed by affective strategy (Mean=2.85, SD=0.68), and social strategy (Mean=2.83, SD=0.79). Next, followed by metacognitive strategy (Mean=281, SD=0.75), memory strategy (Mean=2.72, SD=0.63), and last but not least is cognitive strategy (Mean=2.71, SD=0.63). All the seven main construct strategies are used at the average level. This study shows that not even one category from the main strategy is used at the high level. This study also shows that not even one category from the main strategy was used at the low level. The mean, standard deviation and interpretation ALLS usage level based on LLS main category is showed in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of ALL Usage Level Based on Main Category (n=100)

Main Strategy	Mean	S. D	Interpretation
Metaphysics	3.34	0.73	Average
Compensation	3.05	0.69	Average
Affective	2.85	0.68	Average
Social	2.83	0.79	Average
Metacognitive	2.81	0.75	Average
Memory	2.72	0.63	Average
Cognitive	2.71	0.63	Average
Whole Strategy	2.88	0.57	Average

The usage of Whole Strategy

This study also analyses the mean for whole strategies used by Students while learning Arabic language. Based on Table 4, usage of ALLS are at the average level (M=2.88 SD=0.57). This shows that the frequency of ALLS usage is at the average level.

Summarization and Discussion

This study found that the level of overall usage of ALLS among the students is average (M=2.88). This result is in line with other studies conducted in Malaysia (Nurazan 2004; Lim, 2008; Tan 2008). It is also similar with several studies in overseas (Nisbet, 2002; Wu, 2003; Sanders, 2004, Xiao 2006; Mokhtari, 2007). However, this finding is slightly different to a study conducted by Sima (2008) on TESL students at the University Putera Malaysia and Kamarul Shukri's Study (2009) on students of religious secondary school whereby the respondent usage level is low.

Among the factors that led to the average of ALLS usage level are the students' attitude toward Arabic language. Students' attitude toward a language and its learning determine the choice of strategy that is not used in their study (Kuntz, 1996). According to Zulkifley (1994), factors such as attitude and motivation play the important roles in influencing the learning of a second language.

The second factor that may leads to the average of ALLS usage level is the tendency for teachers to use teacher-centred teaching methods and lack of students' involvement in the teaching and learning process turn the students become less prone to the ALLS usage (Ab. Halim, 2005; Hassan Basri, 2003).

The third factor is the exam-oriented learning system in the Malaysia's education system also affects the SPB usage level on average students. The lecturer of Arabic language at KIAS particularly tied to the lesson syllabus which is already set by the institution. They have to complete the syllabus within the specific time. Therefore, they put more effort trying to finish the learning syllabus and give priority for good results in examination. The students, in the meantime, become more focus on getting excellent results or passing their exams with flying colours. Most of the time, they spend on studying subjects other than Arabic language. Students will be more likely to fulfil their own interest in the exam and ended with ignoring the language construction aspect. This situation also affects the selection and ALLS usage among students. This is caused by insufficient time for them to think of language learning strategies.

The fourth factor is the position of the Arabic language in the context of education in Malaysia. In general context of education, Arabic language is considered as a foreign language. Actually, these status and position are very important in determining the direction and future of the Arabic language in Malaysia (Muhammad Fauzi, 2010). Malaysians, especially Muslims still have an unclear perception of the learning and teaching of Arabic language in Malaysia (Abd. Razak, 2007). This is because most of them still do not know about the status of the Arabic language itself in their soul. Normally the Malays, their native language is Malay language, while English language is considered as the second language. Arabic language indirectly gains the third position or in other words, a foreign language. However, in the context of education in the religious schools states and also the faculties of Islamic studies at institutions of higher learning in Malaysia, Arabic language is considered as the second language as it is compulsory to be studied by students (Muhammad Fauzi, 2010). Nevertheless, the domination of Arabic language among of them is not so stimulating (Ab. Halim, 2009).

The fifth factor is students of Arabic language at KIAS especially and commonly in Malaysia is in a poor level as a source of input for Arabic language environment than Malay and English language. The environment of Arabic language is also not supportive, Arabic language usage is also less encouraging and most of the students are ashamed to communicate in Arabic language. This scenario gives a big effect towards ALLS usage.

The Implication of Study
There are two implications from this study such as theoretical implication and pedagogy implication.

    Theoretical Implication

Generally, the ALLS usage by all students who are involved with this study supporting the theory of ALLS which mentions that all of the students use LLS during learning the language.

Pedagogical Implication

These studies' findings desire to express several implications that can be carried out in language teaching. The implications can be concentrated to lecturers and students:

Language Lecturer

Lecture need to aware about the importance of language learning strategy in acquisition of language. They must understand and accustom in theory and taxonomy of LLS. With the conception of learning strategy, every category of strategy can be applied for helping the acquisition of language process with more comprehensive view.

Lecturer also needs to aware that choosing and using the LLS usually have in connection with gender, achievement, motivation and more. The language teaching that overlook elements of difference in individual will result a failure. Therefore, they need to understand about the effect of factors by using the LLS so that the lecturers can make efforts to offer efficient and suitable exercise strategies to the students' need and condition.

Language Student

Language student must be aware that a passive learning, receives only the given information and too depends on lecturers will only limit the success of learning. Therefore, student must upgrade the level of autonomy, self-esteem and proactive in their learning. One of the steps that bring patterns of successful learning is the use of language learning strategy. The difference factor of individual, situation and social that affects the level of LLS usage are needed to be well manipulated by students. They should try to enhance the motivation of language learning. They should also multiply the effort in learning outside the class. Every learning infrastructure that is prepared by the institution should be used quite well. All these steps will give students a chance to use various strategies with consistent and lead a way to the successful of language learning easier and more fun.

Conclusion

This study gives an overview about the level of LLS usage which is average among the students of KIAS when learning Arabic language. However, students still have a good chance to increase the level of LLS usage. The result of this study is a hope to be a helpful one to various parties especially KIAS in Arabic language teaching and learning activities so that it becomes more interesting, simple, effective, self-esteem, faster and doubles the fun.

References

Ab. Halim Mohamad. (2007). *Masalah Komunikasi Bahasa Arab di Kalangan Pelajar Bacelor Bahasa Arab di IPTA Malaysia*. Prosiding Seminar Penyelidikan Dalam Pengajian Islam ke-4, pp 1-13. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Ab. Halim Mohamad. (2009). *Tahap Komunikasi Dalam Bahasa Arab Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Sarjana Muda Bahasa Arab di IPTA Malaysia*. Journal of Islamic and Arabic Education 1 (1), 1-14.

Al-Muslim Mustafa & Zamri Arifin. (2012). *Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab: Tinjauan Literatur di Negeri Sembilan*. Persidangan Kebangsaan Pengajaran dan Pembelajaraan Bahasa Arab 2012 (PKEBAR'12), pp. 278-285. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Creswell, J.W. (2005). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitave and qualitative research.* Ed. Ke-2. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

Ellis, R. (1994). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. & Sinclair, B. (1989). *Learning to learn English: a course in learner training (teacher book)*. Glasgow: Cambridge University Press.

Hassan Basri Awang Mat Dahan. 2003. *Perkaedahan pengajaran bahasa Arab di Malaysia: antara tradisi dan inovasi*. Prosiding Wacana Pendidikan Islam Siri 3, pp. 164-175.

Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh dan Mohamed Amin Embi. (2010). *Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.

Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh. (2009). *Penggunaan Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Sekolah Menengah Agama*. Tesis PhD. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh, Norasyikin Osman & Siti Salwa Mohd Noor. (2013). *Hubungan tahap pencapaian bahasa Arab dengan strategi pembelajaran bahasa model kognitif dan social kognitif dalam kalangan pelajar UNISZA*. Laporan Penyelidikan Dana Universiti UDM/09/BR0018. Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi UNISZA: Kuala Terengganu.

Kuntz, P. (1996). *Students of Arabic: belief about foreign language learning*. Al-Arabiyya, 29, pp. 153-173.

McMillan, J. & Schumacher, S. (1984). *Research in education: a conceptual introduction*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Misnan Jemali. (1999). *Hubungan antara gaya pembelajaran dengan pencapaian BAK sekolah menengah di Perak*. Kertas Projek Sarjana. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Mohd Majid Konting. (2000). *Kaedah Penyelidikan Pendidikan*. Cetakan kelima. Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Muhammad Fauzi Jumingan. (2010). Arah aliran penyelidikan sarjana Melayu tempatan dalam bidang bahasa dan linguistik Arab di Malaysia. *Jurnal Pengajian Islam* Bil 4. Julai 2010, pp. 87-97. Pusat Penyelidikan dan Pembangunan & Akademi Islam Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor.

Muhammad Fauzi Jumingan. (2010). Kedudukan bahasa Arab di Malaysia. http://www.myamla.org/files/icmm2010.papers/ICMM2010-p42.pdf Diakses pada 7 Januari, 2014.

Neuman, W.L. (1993). *Social research methods: qulitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Nonglaksana Kama. (2007). *Istratijiyyat Ta'allum al-Lughah wa 'Alaqatuha bi al-Akhta al-Lughawiyyah li Muta'allimi al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah fi al-Jami'at al-Islamiyyah al-'Alamiyyah fi Maliziya: dirasah Tahliliyyah*. Tesis PhD. Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia.

Norhayuza Mohamad, Naimah Abdullah, Sahabudin Salleh & Ibrahim Abdullah. (2004). *Kajian penilaian modul BA UiTM (2002) peringkat ijazah*. Shah Alam: Institut Penyelidikan, Pembangunan & Pengkomersilan UiTM.

Nurazan Mohmad Rouyan. (2006). *Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab : Kajian di KUSZA*. Disertasi Ijazah Sarjana. Bangi : Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Oxford, R.L. (1989). *Use of Language Strategies: A synthesis of studies with implications for strategy training*. System, 17 (2), pp. 235-247.

Oxford, R.L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: what every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.

Sekaran, U. (1992). *Research methdos for business: a skalal building approach*. Ed. ke2. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Zamri Mahamod. (2004). Strategi pembelajaran bahasa Melayu di kalangan pelajar sekolah menengah. Tesis Ph.D. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Zamri Mahamod & Mohamed Amin Embi. (2005). *Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu Mengikut Jantina di Luar Kelas*. Jurnal Pendidikan (UKM), 30, pp. 51-73.