THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COGNITIVELY GIFTED LEARNERS: GUIDELINES FOR MALAYSIAN TEACHERS IN TEACHING LANGUAGE

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Abstract: Teaching gifted learners sometimes can be frustrated due to the endless questions from them and because of their asynchronous development that indicates physical and emotional development as well as cognitive abilities in learning. In fostering this common situation, teachers or lecturers have, perhaps, the greatest opportunity in cultivating the language knowledge for gifted learners in the classroom. This article discusses the action of teachers that focuses on identifying characteristics of gifted learners in reading Arabic text. Besides, gifted learners have special needs that require interventions, such as academic acceleration and academic enrichment. Additionally, without appropriate modifications of strategy in teaching, gifted learners are at risk of underachievement in their academic life. Apart from that, the authors of this article intend to mention a few theories related to this situation in learning the language. The findings indicate that all interviewees were asked to discuss their feelings and the excitement of learning Arabic sentences. Eventually, these findings can be used to inform gifted secondary school educational practices and specifically, how to design interventions that optimize learning experiences for secondary school of gifted learners in comprehending Arabic sentences.

Keywords: Teaching Strategy, Differentiated Instruction, Effectiveness of Learning Arabic Sentences

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Introduction
The first definition of the word gifted is to identify high ability student was used by Lewis Terman in 1925 (Stephens 2000; Morelock 1996). But before that, Galton (1869) defined gifted

as intelligence which is related to keen senses and more to hereditary genius. Binet (1905) disagreed with this definition and preferred gifted definition as intelligence in the perspective of "mental age". According to Morelock (1996), Morgan (1996) and Sarouphim (1999) the definition of gifted referred to the test of IQ that developed in the early 1900s by Alfred Binet. Terman identified students indicate the score in the top two per cent in general intelligence based on the Binet test or a similar measure as gifted individual (Clark 2002).

Literature Review
It is crucial that teachers are aware of, and understand, the various learning styles of their students so that they can plan and execute their lesson successfully (Faryadi, 2012). According to Faryadi an educational psychologist known as Gagne, Briggs & Wager (1992), introduced five conditions which can facilitate knowledge transfer for gifted learners in the classroom; verbal information, intellectual skill, cognitive strategies, attitudes and motor skills. Gagne suggested that differentiated instruction is effective to teach gifted learners in comprehending lesson in the classroom. The differentiated instruction is necessary in teaching due to avoid underachiever in their academic learning. Research indicates multiple definitions of differentiated instruction Tomlinson (2005), an authority on differentiated instruction, defines differentiated instruction as "a philosophy of teaching purporting that students learn best when their teachers effectively address variance in students" readiness levels, interests, and learning profile preferences".

Differentiated education is an individual experience. There is variation in how each student studies and learns. The best method of teaching is to individualize the instruction to match each student's learning needs in learning. Tomlinson (2003) also states, "In differentiated classrooms, teachers ensure that a student competes against himself as he grows and develops more than he competes against other students"

Gifted students have a different way of reasoning than their non-gifted peers. The students can easily see similarities and differences and compare knowledge more successfully (Chamberlin, 2006). These students tend to want to know the "hows" and "whys" behind the language lesson, rather than the more traditional processes of learning which focus on student-centred. This is because the students prefer in asking questions based on comprehending the language deeper, therefore may need more guidance in learning language".

As for the teaching and learning situation, according to Gagne et. al (1992) all of the learning conditions are simple, specific and can be applied to a classroom situation for excellent outcomes. Gagne also introduced and additional nine instructional events to enhance learning conditions these events are such as the following (Strauss, Sidney, 1972):

      a.   Gaining the attention of the learner
      b.   Outlining the objectives of the study.
      c.   Reviewing previous lesson before starting a new lesson.
      d.   Presenting the lesson proper.
      e.   Providing guidance to the learner during the lesson
      f.   Encouraging the learner to respond
      g.   Providing feedback for the learner
      h.   Assessment and evaluation of the learner
      i.   Enhancing learner's retention of the new knowledge or skills.

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teaching purporting that students learn best when their teachers effectively address variance in students'' readiness levels, interests, and learning profile preferences". Differentiated learning which is teacher suggested for the sake of students' learning differences based on characteristics including interests, readiness, or learning style and vary students' acquisition of knowledge while learning.

Problem Statement
Most method of teaching for the gifted are designed with the underlying perception of giftedness as merely outstanding academic achievement. The best method of education is to individualise the instruction to match each gifted student's needs in learning (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Gifted students mind-set is more fixed compared to their non-gifted peers. It is important to find ways to manipulate the mind-set of the gifted. When gifted students believe their giftedness can be developed by investing effort and persistence, they will be able to increase their performance and fully exploit their potential (Bemmel, 2014).

Obviously, differentiated education for language classroom is not only about language. In another hand, teacher can use various sources of materials in the language classroom, such as textbooks, web sources, literature, photos, images, feature films and online communication tools present another facet of complexity of language classroom context (Kramsch's, 1993). Nevertheless, this more integrative frame of understanding language classroom context that highlighted and focused on gifted learners' characteristics of precocity, intensity, and complexity through several dimensions of advanced content, higher level processes and product development, and interdisciplinary concepts, issues, and themes such as figure 1 below:
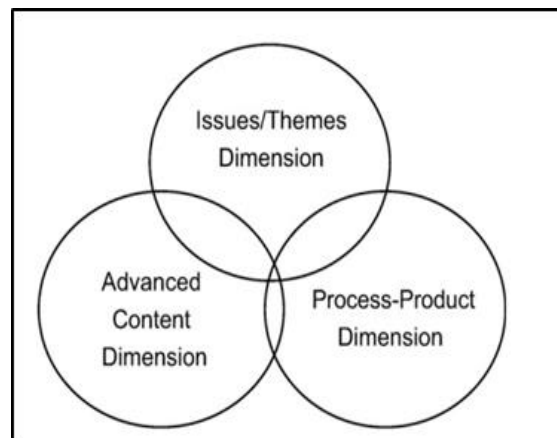
Figure 1: Three Main Dimensions in Teaching Gifted Learners in the Classroom
(Source: VanTassel-Baska.J, Wood,S. Learning and Individual Differences 20 (2010) 345–357)

Figure 1 indicates three main dimensions, according to Van Tassel-Baska & Wood (2010) these dimensions containing; themes dimension, advanced content dimension and process of production dimension. Every dimension reflects the action of teacher in teaching language to gifted learners, and they can only understand the lesson of language if the creative and innovative teacher is able to use these three dimensions effectively in the classroom.

In the classroom students build a small-group and team development activities together which can initiate during the learning process and form learning- centred while teacher observes them (Ferrigno, Tricia & Muth, Rodney, 2004). Learner-centred or transformative-learning

approaches require students to accept responsibility for "their own development through self-managed learning" and to be "actively involved in the development of their classmates" (Foreman & Johnston, 1999). This type of learning has been helping teachers to teach their students successful in the classroom (Deeds and Allen, 2000; Emmer and Gerwels, 2002; Casas, 2008).

Differentiated education can improve student performance that suits individual learning. There is variation proven how each student studies and learns, Noriah, Rosadah and Fatimah (2009) discovered that gifted learners of Malaysia are independent person which is giftedness in the particular intelligence. However, concerning the gifted learners they need parents, teachers, educators, principals and everybody around them aware that they are not gifted for every subject in their academic including language subject.

Objectives of Study
Based on the problem statements, the authors attempt to investigate the feeling of learning Arabic and excitement of three individuals of gifted learners regarding their learning Arabic language via differentiated learning. Therefore, the objectives of this study are such as the following:

> *Objective One:* To explore students' feeling towards differentiated learning regarding learning sentences of Arabic such as; *Jumlah Ismiyyah, Jumlah Fiiliyyah and Shibhu Al-Jumlah*

> *Objective Two:* To explore the excitement of students in learning Arabic sentence

Methodology
This study used a narrative approach whereby perceptions or interpretations were recorded from in-depth interviews from the interviewees (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The methodology considers face-to-face interviews, which included face-to-face interviews with the three participants. All of the participants in the study were selected through purposeful sampling based on survey perceptions made during face-to-face meetings with the participants. To ensure the Inter-Rater Reliability, researchers used Cohen's Kappa Coefficient (κ) to measure Inter-Rater Reliability for qualitative study (Piaw, 2014).

To achieve the goal, a narrative study was used to examine perceptions and options of the interviewees towards differentiated learning regarding learning sentences of Arabic such as; *Jumlah Ismiyyah, Jumlah Fiiliyyah* and *Shibhu Al-Jumlah*. Furthermore, the narrative method allowed interviewees to give their perceptions and options on a wide range of learning strategies used in the classroom setting and to provide content validity. The narrative study allowed the use of face-to-face interviews with the interviewees, opportunities for the interviewees to provide more in-depth input to the study, and provided reflective feedbacks, which supplied in-depth information concerning the fundamental perceptions of the interviewees in this narrative study.

The data analysis included qualitative coding. The data from this study was identified and coding themes were addressed. At the first place open coding was used to identify themes found in the data. During the open coding, focus was primarily on text to define concepts or categories, represent interview responses and explore how the concepts and categories are related. Data reduction and analysis occurred throughout the narrative research study. Secondly, the method of coding included looking at each question and participant response. As

the researcher, similar concepts were explored in each interviewee's response from each question. The following table shows the views of the three interviewees:

Table 1: The Views of the Interviewees

		PARTICIPANTS		
		PTC 1	**PTC 2**	**PTC 3**
Objective One	a) To explore students' **feeling** towards differentiated learning regarding learning sentences of Arabic such as; Jumlah Ismiyyah, Jumlah Fiiliyyah and Shibhu Al-Jumlah	*Seronoklah...Allowing more time for students to practice and master individually the **excitement** of differentiated learning by searching and surfing the internet*	*Pembelajaran dan kerjasama berkumpulan yang **menyeronokkan**! Dapat cari kat YouTube!*	***Seronok!** Sebab setiap orang mempunyai pengetahuan yang berbeza.*
Objective Two	b) To explore the **excitement** of students in learning Arabic sentence	***Fascinating** because explore the lesson freely. Allowing students to learn independently*	***Wah bestnya!**..Begitu menjimatkan masa.. Setiap orang membentangkan tugasan mereka.*	***Bagus!!Bagus!!**Everybody works as a team dan semua orang berjaya menyiapkan dalam masa yang singkat.*

Table 1 shows the views of PTC 1 identified his feeling of spending time to practice and master individually. This follows the view of PTC 2, an excitement of collaboration and effective learning strategy via YouTube. Meanwhile, the view of PTC 3 indicates different levels of knowledge in his group in presenting the task. These responses answer objective one.

Table 1 also indicates the answer of objective two; PTC 1 mentioned the excitement and effectiveness of learning independently. Meanwhile, PTC 2 expressed his excitement and effectiveness in learning Arabic sentence economically in short time his group can present the task completely. PTC 3 also mentioned that his group can work as a team and can completely do the task in a short time.

Discussion and Conclusion
Students' interests to get involved included personal motivations such as making friends or doing interesting things. Goals were refined as they narrowed their focus to joining or remaining in groups that meant something to them. This supports the finding of Ferrigno, Tricia & Muth, Rodney (2004) which indicates building a small-group and team development activities are necessary for gifted learners during the learning process.

This finding in a similar vein with Noriah, Rosadah and Fatimah (2009) which indicates the gifted learners can learn independently with the supervision of teacher. This result also supports

the finding of Foreman & Johnston (1999) that indicates the transformative-learning approaches which require gifted students to accept responsibility for "their own development through self-managed learning.

Previous studies have documented the positive effects of differentiation on gifted students' achievement. There is variation in how each gifted student studies and learns. Teachers should differentiate their teaching because gifted students have many unique learning styles and abilities. Furthermore, differentiated instruction is a teaching philosophy that can help all gifted students with unique needs reach their highest potential. Therefore, differentiated instruction is based on beliefs that students are all different; they learn differently and like different things.

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