

Difficulties Faced by Malay Students at Tarbeya Islamia Secondary School in Pasir Puteh in Mastering the Arabic Listening Skill.

Dr Elsayed Makki Elbishr Ali Hassan, Siti Sonia Mohamad Ghazali

FBK, Department of Modern Languages, Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0529>

Received: 02 September 2025; Accepted: 08 September 2025; Published: 07 October 2025

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to see the mastery of Arabic listening skills among religious secondary students. This study was conducted on sixty respondents who were third-grade students at Tarbiyyah Islamiyyah Arabic Religious Secondary School, Lepah. This study is descriptive and quantitative. The instrument used to obtain the data is a questionnaire that contains information on the respondent's background and the difficulty factors of students in mastering Arabic listening skills. The research data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) software. The findings show that the overall mastery of the respondents in Arabic listening skills is at a moderate level of knowledge and the level of achievement of female respondents is higher than that of male respondents. Among the implications of this study is that listening skills need to be established in a formal learning system. In addition, students need to try to practice various methods and strategies that can help empower and improve their Arabic listening skills.

INTRODUCTION

The Education Act 1996 clearly states the place of Arabic in the Malaysian education system as a foreign language (Law 550, Education Act, 1996). The application of Arabic as one of the subjects at school is an additional subject for communication in Arabic and an optional subject for upper Arabic as mentioned in the "Educational Regulations (Curriculum) 1997. However for religious schools especially those related with religion. secondary school, Arabic language subjects are compulsory either at the lower secondary or upper secondary level. Arabic is one of the subjects offered in the education system in Malaysia. It has existed for a long time in the world of education in the Malay region which began to be based on the Malay language with the arrival of Islam. The use of Arabic learning books has become a practice among the Muslim community. Islamic education is taught in Pondok institutions and schools based on Arabic books. The teaching and learning of Arabic in the Malay Islands is heavily influenced by religion, and it is said that people who learn Arabic also learn Islam.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Malaysia has taken steps to introduce Arabic subjects at all levels of education from primary to tertiary level. This clearly proves that Arabic language education in Malaysia is always developing. Many things are being done through the National Development Plan to ensure Arabic language education in Malaysia is recognized globally in line with the development of other languages and is always competitive. Former Prime Minister Tun Haji Abdullah bin Haji Ahmed Badawi introduced the Arabic language to primary schools through a program known as the j-QAF program. Learning Arabic was officially introduced into the national education system through the Jawi, Quran, Arabic and Fardo Ayn (j-QAF) program in 2005 which was carried out in stages. It makes Arabic

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical studies are important because they are the basis of any research. So it can be interpreted that a good or quality theoretical study will also determine the quality of scientific writing or research done or not. This study uses a cognitive theory framework in language understanding based on Anderson's model (1985, 2005). Cognitive theory in language comprehension is based on Anderson's model because researchers think that this theory is suitable for studying comprehension in foreign languages. Based on Nur Zihan Hussin's study, Cognitive theory in language comprehension based on Anderson's (1985, 2005) model was continuously updated from 1983 to 2005. Cognitive theory in language comprehension developed by Anderson (2005) was used by Goh (2000), to study listening comprehension skills and listening strategies and learning strategies in a second language even though Anderson's theory is for a first language. Mendelsohn, argues that when listening skills are taught, students should be encouraged to use the same strategies as they listen in the first language. In cognitive theory, listening comprehension generally involves an active and complex process. Individuals construct meaning from information heard or written. He emphasized that mental process language is important to understand listening and writing. Anderson distinguishes the process of understanding into three interrelated stages.

According to Sumaiyah Sulaiman, Nik Farhan Mustapha, Pabiyah Toklubok, Wan Muhammad, (2018) from the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in their previous study titled **OBSTACLES TO THE MASTERY OF ARABIC LISTENING SKILLS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**. This study aims to explore what are the barriers for students to master Arabic listening skills among student educators at a Teacher Education Institute in Malaysia. This study is a case study at a Teacher Education Institute in the state of Selangor. There are several problems in the aspect of mastery of listening skills in Arabic, namely two main factors identified as obstacles to the mastery of listening skills among students at IPG, namely internal and external factors. External factors are those related to the words, the text heard, lack of aids, external distractions and the speed of the speaker. The Arabic material heard is quite fast especially when listening to a native Arabic speaker. While internal factors are related to individuals such as taking a long time to understand, easily losing focus and own attitude. The objective of this study is to explore the views of IPG students regarding the obstacles encountered during learning Arabic listening skills.

This study uses a qualitative approach that uses interview techniques as a data collection instrument. A semi-structured interview session was conducted in a class at IPG in a relaxed atmosphere to create a natural and non-tense atmosphere. Interview sessions with respondents were audio recorded. Transcription of oral data is done carefully so as to preserve the authenticity of the speech as found in the audio recording. Before the analysis process is carried out using the software, all transcription results are ensured to be clean first and confirmed by the study subjects (member-checking). The next step is to identify emerging themes about the factors of listening problems faced by the students involved in this study. Then, all the oral data was carefully analyzed to see the categories of problems faced by respondents in Arabic listening skills.

The findings of the study show that the respondents face several problems that are obstacles to mastering listening skills. These obstacles can be divided into two specific objectives for this research, namely; Identifying the level of mastery of Arabic listening skills among third grade students at SMU A Tarbiyah Islamiyah. Identifying the mastery level of Arabic listening skills of male and female students. Identifying the number of students in the use of Arabic listening skills mastery strategies. iv. Looking at the number of students with different levels of mastery of Arabic listening skills in the use of Arabic listening skills mastery strategies.

Based on the results of the study obtained, there are three implications of the study that can be identified. The implications can be seen as noted below, Students need to be given attention and emphasis in learning, especially on the basic elements in the Arabic language such as letter sounds and vocabulary. Students need to have self- awareness and the will to improve their mastery of Arabic listening skills. For example, increase the practice of Arabic listening skills whether through learning in class or out of class.

METHODOLOGY

This study on the mastery of Arabic listening skills among students is a descriptive study that uses quantitative data. The data was collected through a questionnaire and a total of 60 students were selected as respondents. Regarding to the research instrument, this study has used one type of instrument which is a questionnaire to obtain primary data. This instrument is made as a result of the modification of previous studies that have been made by local or external researchers. To ensure that the questions in the Arabic language listening skill questionnaire constructed by the researcher are recognized as valid, the researcher has discussed in detail together with the supervisor and other lecturers who are skilled in the field studied by the researcher. In addition to that, the researcher also asked for advice and opinions on the questions that will be tested on the respondents from the respondents' teachers of the subject of Arabic Communication who have had teaching experience for quite some time.

Study procedures to be implemented, At the initial stage, the writer has identified the field to be studied and made some analysis from previous studies to get inspiration in the construction of some research topics. After obtaining some topics that he felt could be used for research, the writer discussed them together with the supervisor and other lecturers to get comments and views. Upon receiving confirmation of approval from the supervisor and members of the academic meeting committee on the topic of the study, the writer visited the study location during the teaching training session which was set at the Religious Secondary School (Arabic) Tarbiah Islamiah to conduct the study at the school. After getting permission to conduct a study from the principal of Tarbiah Islamiah Religious (Arabic) High School, the writer made a few explanations about the researcher's study as well as discussed the appropriate time together with the teachers of the Arabic subject of communication and also the teachers of the Arabic subject of communication who teach the respondents of the study on the day of testing the respondents, the writer gave some information and guidance before the respondents started the session to answer the questionnaire. The writer then entered the data obtained from the respondents into the software for analysis. Finally, the writer makes a discussion and some conclusions from the results obtained

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

| Std.Deviation | Mean | |
|---------------|------|---|
| 1.282 | 3.53 | أفقد التركيز بسهولة عندما يعلم المعلم مهارات الاستماع |
| 1.094 | 3.92 | أشعر بالملل بسهولة عند تعلم اللغة العربية في الفصل |
| 1.250 | 3.88 | أشعر أن اللغة العربية ليست مهمة كلغة ثانية بعد اللغة الإنجليزية |
| 1.249 | 4.00 | لقد استغرق الأمر وقتاً طويلاً لفهم تعلم اللغة العربية في الفصل |
| .935 | 3.80 | يتكلم المدرس اللغة العربية بسرعة |
| .756 | 4.27 | "أنا أخلط بسهولة بين نطق الحروف العربية مثل "ق" و "ك" |
| .971 | 4.15 | أنشطة مهارات الاستماع نادراً ما يتم القيام بها في الفصل |
| 1.047 | 4.23 | سأكون أكثر تركيزاً (عندما يستمع المعلم إلى الآيات أو المقاطع العربية بنبرة شيقة |
| .863 | 4.37 | أكون أكثر حماساً إذا قام المعلم بتغيير أنشطة مهارات الاستماع |
| 1.058 | 4.00 | يتكلم المدرس اللغة العربية كمزيج من اللهجات الماليزية والعربية |

Section to analyze and discuss the study data. The data was obtained through a questionnaire on Arabic listening skills on a total of 60 third-grade students at Arab Religion Secondary School Tarbiah Islamiyyah Lepah Pasir Puteh. To simplify the analysis and obtain accurate data calculations, this study entered the data obtained into the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 11.5 software. The data that has been entered into the SPSS software will be analyzed in two stages. In the first stage, this study will analyze the background of the respondents. The second stage, analyzing the level of mastery of the respondent's Arabic listening skills. This study uses only one method of analytical approach, which is the quantitative

method, and uses the Likert scale Symbols in the form of numbers are widely used by this study to explain a pattern. This study will describe data descriptively to explain the frequency score, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

The background section of this respondent, this study has broken down into two different categories, namely the respondent's information category and the respondent's Arabic language learning information category. For the respondent's information category, 7 questions are asked about, gender, class, language spoken at home, place of residence, father's level of education, mother's level of education, and family income.

The findings of the study obtained by the researcher from the questionnaire to obtain the factors of students' difficulty in mastering listening skills are due to external and internal factors faced by the respondents. External factors are those related to the words, the text heard, lack of aids, external distractions, and the speaker's speed. While internal factors are related to individuals such as taking a long time to understand, quickly losing focus, and own attitude.

aspects, namely external and internal obstacles. The analysis of the interviews showed that all the respondents had problems with the words they heard. This shows that words are a big problem for students. The findings of this study are in line with some previous listening studies which found that one of the problems with listening skills is that listeners do not have a high level of vocabulary knowledge such as words that are rarely heard (Underwood, 1989).

According to Nazratul Aini Ramli (2021) in his study entitled Difficulty Factors for Malay Students in Identifying the Sounds of Arabic Letters is that students cannot distinguish Arabic letters. The results of the interview analysis found that there are five factors that contribute to the difficulty of Malay students in identifying the sounds of Arabic letters. The first factor is the influence of the first language on the second language. The second factor, the clash between two dialects in one language. Next, psychological factors. Then, the interference of letter sounds that are almost the same in two languages. Lastly, extralinguistic factors also affect students' weaknesses. Thus, the objective of this study is to summarize the factors of Malay students' difficulty in identifying the sounds of Arabic letters.

This study uses a qualitative methodology through the instrument of interview technique. This method requires an interviewer who conducts a detailed interview based on established guidelines. The advantage of the interview is that the interviewer can clearly explain the purpose of the study and the type of information desired. The researcher has chosen a semi-structured interview session to obtain more detailed information and views related to the difficulties and problems of the Arabic alphabet among students. Interviews were conducted over the phone. The population of this study is students at Universiti Putra Malaysia who take the subject of Arabic as a foreign language. The study participants were students who attended level one Arabic language skills class. The screening test involved 33 students from a total population of 250 students. The screening results found that there were 11 students who admitted to having problems distinguishing Arabic letters. Next, five students were selected based on purposive sampling techniques. These five students had no previous education in Arabic or phonetics.

The data is the result of an interview conducted to find out the difficulty factor of study participants in identifying the sounds of Arabic letters. After the interview was conducted, the data was copied in the form of direct transcription and the findings for the factors of Malay students not being able to identify the Arabic letters were listed, namely they were confused about the same pronunciation, confused about the pronunciation of other people, Influence of the First Language, Not understanding the pronunciation of native speakers, Influence of dialect, Confusion when a difficult letter is in the middle of a word, experiencing confusion when there is an addition, not understanding Makhraj, not being exposed to Arabic letters, not interested in Arabic.

Arabic teachers and teaching staff should be aware of the current developments in learning and teaching Arabic. The skill of identifying Arabic letters is not only important for listening skills, but can even improve

students' speaking. This can certainly raise the spirits of students who study Arabic to be able to communicate more brilliantly in Arabic. NIK MAHFUZH BINTI NIK MAT (2013) once stated in his study entitled MASTERY OF ARABIC LISTENING SKILLS AMONG RELIGION SECONDARY STUDENTS there are some issues that students do not realize the importance of listening skills to them. In addition, students always make mistakes in learning Arabic because there is no mastery of good Arabic listening skills. This situation can be observed, when many students are often confused about the pronunciation of letters in Arabic lexicons, especially for the pronunciation of letters that are almost the same. The researcher has outlined three

CONCLUSION

Regarding this part of the abstract, this study will summarize the results obtained in two sub-items.. From the results obtained from the questionnaire, it was found that most of the study respondents from the Arab Secondary Islamic Education School had a balanced background and there was no significant difference between them. This is because the results show that the majority of respondents speak the same mother tongue at home, live in rural areas, the results of the study show that they are at a high level of marks and this finding supports the study conducted by Nazar Al-Aini Ramli. (2021). In addition, the results of this finding also show that the study respondents have a high level of awareness in identifying factors that make it difficult to master listening skills. Among the reasons often used by respondents are that it is easy to lose focus when the teacher teaches listening skills, it is easy to get bored when learning Arabic in class, and it takes a long time to understand it. All of the following factors belong to the independent category. Three study effects can be identified based on the study data obtained. Here are some examples of effects:

- 1) Students should pay attention to what they learn, especially the origins of the Arabic language such as letter sounds.
- 2) For students to master Arabic listening skills, they need to be self-aware and motivated. Increase Arabic listening practice, for example, through classroom learning or extracurricular learning.
- 3) The teacher should direct students to use tactics to master Arabic listening skills and give them advice, support, encouragement, and feedback. This is so that it can help in the process of learning Arabic in addition to providing students with fun and confidence to practice strategies.

Based on the results of the study obtained from the respondents, this study presents some suggestions that may have a positive impact on students in helping to improve language proficiency and skills, especially in Arabic. The writer has considered the following suggestions for several parties involved directly or indirectly in this matter. Teachers play an important role in helping and guiding students as they develop their knowledge of Arabic listening skills. Students can benefit from help with classroom teaching techniques, among other things. To stimulate students' interest, teachers should pay attention and diversify activities in the classroom, especially listening exercises. It was found that teachers still evaluate students' listening skills through exercises in the form of listening and comprehension tests. Trainers should stop using comprehension exercises to teach their students how to listen. To improve listening comprehension, children need to be introduced to different comprehension exercises involving pictures. Teachers can use various teaching tools, including watching Arabic movies or dramas, quizzes, or games that can assess students' listening comprehension, ability to recognize Arabic words, ability to act in Arabic, and other skills. To enhance Arabic listening skills among Malay students, schools should integrate more audio-based activities into daily lessons. These may include listening to Arabic news broadcasts, short stories, and everyday dialogues, which provide exposure to authentic language use. Leveraging technology—such as language learning apps, podcasts, and online Arabic channels—can further immerse students in native pronunciation and intonation. Pairing these listening tasks with targeted vocabulary-building exercises helps students recognize and retain frequently used words and phrases. Additionally, encouraging peer interaction through role-plays and conversation drills can build confidence and reinforce comprehension in a communicative

context. Finally, creating a language-rich environment supported by regular listening assessments enables teachers to monitor progress effectively and support students in developing their listening proficiency.

REFERENCES

1. Al-Masih, M. A., Abdu-Allah, A. M., & Mohammed, R. A. E.-F. (2025). Utilizing a Project Based Learning Strategy to Improve Listening Comprehension Skills among Students of Specific Education. **Journal of Specific Education**, 11(2), 1837–1852.
2. Almelhes, S. (2024). Enhancing Arabic Language Acquisition: Effective Strategies for Addressing Non-Native Learners' Challenges. **Education Sciences**, 14(10), 1116.
3. Azka, L., Hafsoh, U. N., & Ibrahim, F. M. A. (2024). The Challenges of Learning Arabic Listening Skills Using YouTube as a Learning Tool. **Alsina: Journal of Arabic Studies**, 6(2), 229–246.
4. Jerie anak Peter Langan, Zamri Mahamod (2011). Sikap dan Motivasi Murid Iban dalam Mempelajari Bahasa Melayu sebagai Bahasa Kedua Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa melayu ;Malay Language Education.
5. **Kamel, N. A., & Mamat, A. (2024).** Exploring teachers' experience in teaching Arabic listening comprehension skill. **International Journal of Arabic Language Teaching and Education Methodology**, 3(4), 45–60.
6. Khairul Azhar Jamaluddin (2021). Isu dan Cabaran Dalam Kemahiran Membaca Dikalangan Murid Sekolah Rendah di Malaysia. Jurnal Fakulti Pendidikan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
7. Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (2007d). Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Perancis Tingkatan Tiga. Putrajaya: Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum.
8. Lembaga Penyelidikan Undang-Undang (2002). Akta pendidikan 1996 (Akta 550) dan peraturan-peraturan terpilih. Petaling Jaya: International Law Book Series.
9. Mahmoud, S. S., & Oraby, K. K. (2024). Listening Comprehension Skill: The Forgotten Skill in the Saudi Classrooms. **ELTALL: English Language Teaching, Applied Linguistic and Literature**, 5(1), 77–84.
10. Mahmudi, I., Irfanudin, A., Hendri, M., & Thoyib, M. (2024). Arabic Listening Comprehension Test Questions for Beginner Level Based on Competency Standards (ACTFL). **EDUCATIO: Journal of Education**, 9(2), 242–253.
11. Mazlan Rais. (2000). Kemahiran mendengar: Asas kemahiran berbahasa. Jurnal Dewan Bahasa, 44(6), 701-714.
12. Mohd Izzuddin Mohd Pisol (2017). Implementation Of Listening Skills In Learning Arabic At School Of Islamic Integration Selangor.
13. Muthmainnah, Y. N., & Nurbayan, Y. (2024). Improving Listening Skills Through the Use of Audiovisual Media: A Classroom Action Research in Beginner-Level Arabic Language Learners. In Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education (ICOLLITE 2023) (pp. 554–562). Atlantis Press.
14. Primadana, R. J., Maswani, M., Wahab, M. A., Fudhaili, A., & Raswan, R. (2024). Development of Listening and Speaking Skills Teaching Materials Based on CEFR Level. **Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab**, 8(2), 559–578.
15. Putri, A. Y., Abin, R., Suryadi, R., Pratiwi, A., Sultan, H. S., & Naing, I. R. (2025). Enhancing Students Listening Skills: The Impact of Podcast Integration in Language Learning. **Research Horizon**, 5(3), 945–954
16. Sidek, H. M., & Mikail, I. (2021). Arabic as a Second Language Listening Comprehension: Instruction and Assessment. **Ulum Islamiyyah**, 20, Article 32.