Application of Arabic Language Communication Model in Teaching and Learning of Islamic Education

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Abstract: Arabic language is considered as a special language, at least for Muslims, as it is the language of the Qur'an. Therefore the language has been given emphasis in Islamic education system. In fact, it is not only introduced in religious stream schools but also in daily secondary schools as an elective subject. Realizing the important of Arabic language, the Ministry of Education, Malaysia through the Islamic and Moral Education Department has introduced Arabic Language Communication Model in the j-QAF programme. It was initially implemented at primary school level in year 2005 and now has almost completed a round of its implementation. As the Arabic Language Communication Model is still newly introduced, a research to identify the effectiveness of its implementation has been conducted. 309 j-QAF teachers in Selangor state were involved in this research. The quantitative data gained were analysed using the Statistical Package for The Social Science (SPSS) programme. Besides discussing the research findings, the researchers also analysed the problems faced in the implementation of the Arabic language Communication Model and a few suggestions have also been highlighted.

Key words: Islamic education system · Arabic Language · Communication Model · j-QAF programme

INTRODUCTION

Acknowledging the important of the Arabic language, the subject of Arabic language has been introduced in schools. Arabic language curriculum for secondary schools was officially enacted in 1977 with the establishment of National Religious Secondary School (SMKA). Subsequently, up to year 1981, the Islamic Education Division (BPI), Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) had prepared two Arabic language syllabuses for the use of the entire SMKA and certain fully residential schools.

Through the Secondary School Integrated Curriculum (KBSM), the name Arabic language was changed to Communication Arabic Language (BAK). Besides that, the MoE also introduced Higher Arabic Language (BAT) in year 1992. BAK and BAT subjects are currently offered to students from Form 1 until Form 5. The MoE often ensures that teachers who teach BAK and BAT have a wide knowledge and are required to secure at least a Diploma in Education qualification which specialises in Arabic language. For teachers who do not have professional qualifications, they are required to attend in-service courses related to the teaching and learning of Arabic language [1].

The Implementation of Arabic Language Communication Model in Schools: Following the *Jawi*, Qur'an, Arabic language and *Fardu Ain* (j-QAF) Seminar organized by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, it has been decided that the implementation of Arabic Language Communication Model is to be carried out together with other j-QAF models. The widening of the implementation of Arabic Language Communication means that the Arabic Language Communication subject is widen to all Muslim students and provide options for non-Muslim students [2].

The objective of teaching and learning Arabic Language Communication at the primary level is to instill interest in learning the Arabic language in order to master language skills besides enable students to communicate easily. Specifically the objectives for the introduction of the Arabic Language Communication are to enable students to;

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- Listen to the sound of the Arabic language alphabets, words and sentences and understand them;
- Pronounce the Arabic language alphabets, words and sentences accurately;
- Utter in Arabic language based on certain situations and understand them;
- Read accurately and understand words and sentences in the Arabic language;
- Write the Arabic language alphabets, words and sentences accurately and understand them; and
- Write passages based on certain situations using simple sentences and understand them.

The Arabic Language Communication Model is implemented by using existing allocated time for the Arabic Language Communication in national schools which is 60 minutes per week (30 minutes x 2 periods) and is required to be stated in the school official timetable. This model is based on 10 units/topics as contained in Standard 1 Arabic Language Communication Textbook Package 2004 edition.

In terms of the Arabic Language Communication teaching and learning approach, teachers are suggested to use communicative approach as it is suitable with the characteristic and purpose of the Arabic language itself. The approaches that can be used are Thematic approach, *Ajuk-Hafaz* approach, Natural approach, Direct approach, Drill method and Eclectic approach. In order to identify students' achievements, teachers are required to carry out evaluation according to the School-based Evaluation (PKS) format.

Based on the initial plans, j-QAF programme was implemented formally in national schools starting from year 2005 and would complete a circle of its implementation in year 2010 [3]. In order to give a clear guideline related to Arabic Language Communication Model, MoE provides Arabic Language Communication Textbook Package. It consists of a textbook, an student's exercise and activity book as well as a guideline book for teacher which is constructed based on Arabic Language Communication syllabus and Standard 1 Arabic Language Communication Syllabus Description.

General Objective: Generally, this research is intended to examine j-QAF teachers' opinions with regard to the application of Arabic Language Communication Model in the teaching and learning of Islamic Education in schools in Malaysia.

Specific Objectives: Specifically, the objectives of this research are to

- Observe teachers' interest towards Arabic Language Communication by looking at j-QAF teachers' perceptions;
- Observe students' interest towards Arabic Language Communication by looking at j-QAF teachers' perceptions;
- Identify the frequency level of teachers using Arabic Language Communication teaching and learning techniques;
- Identify the effectiveness of the techniques used by j-QAF teachers;
- Identify students' skill mastery level in Arabic Language Communication; and
- Observe the implementation of facilities and support with regard to the Arabic Language Communication Model.

Methodology: This research is based on a prospective descriptive design. It is intended to gain quantitative data on primary school j-QAF teachers' perceptions towards Arabic Language Communication Model used in j-QAF programme in Selangor.

In order to obtain sample of teachers for this study, the researchers used simple random sampling technique. However, the sample size for teachers was determined so that an economical number could be reached and used as respondents. Hague *et al*. [4] suggested that sample of more than 30 and less than 500 is accurate in most research.

In order to gain the required information, the researchers used questionnaires to analyse j-QAF teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of Arabic Language Communication Model. The validity of the research instrument was carried out by appointing a panel which consisted of two experts from a local university for evaluation purpose in terms of the vocabulary, format as well as a clear and comprehensive meaning on the content of each constructed item. In order to look at the reliability, a pilot study was conducted. The instrument reliability coefficiency value was found to be more than $\alpha.80$.

Upon 397 j-QAF teachers who were selected as research sample, 309 (77.8%) of them had gave their responses to the circulated questionnaires and they were found to return completed questionnaires to be used in the analysis. However the number was more than the required sample size based on Kercjie and Morgan Table and Cochran formula [5]. The obtained data were analysed by applying statistical method to gain the required information using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS).

Table 1: j-QAF Teachers Backgrounds

Detail		f	%
Gender	Male	82	26.5
	Female	227	73.5
Age	<25 years old	59	19.1
	26-30 years old	189	61.2
	31-35 years old	59	19.1
	> 36 years old	2	0.6
Position	Permanent	158	51.1
	Training	151	48.9
Teaching j-QAF Experience	1 year	148	47.9
	2 years	78	25.2
	3 years	83	26.9
Higher Academic Qualification (Academic)	SPM	0	0
	STPM	0	0
	Bachelor's Degree	309	100.0
	Master's Degree	0	0
University	Overseas	79	25.5
	Local	230	74.5
Specification	Islamic Studies	247	79.9
	Islamic Education	7	2.3
	Arabic Language	55	17.8

Research Findings

j-QAF Teachers Background: In terms of gender (Table 1), 82 people (26.5%) were male teachers while the rest were female teachers (227 people) whereas in terms of j-QAF teachers' age, their age range was 23-37 years old. Overall it was found that the majority of j-QAF teachers were of age 26-30 years old (189 teachers, 61.2%). This was followed by those who were less than 25 years old (59 teachers, 19.1%) and those of 31-35 years old (59 teachers, 19.1%). Only two (0.6%) j-QAF teachers were more than 36 years old.

In terms of position status, 158 teachers (51.1%) were permanent j-QAF teachers while 151 teachers (48.8%) were in training. This means that more than half of the j-QAF teachers have professional qualification - Diploma in Education which was about 51.1%. With regard to the highest academic qualification, it was found that all j-QAF teachers had Bachelor's degree.

In terms of j-QAF teaching experiences, majority of them had teaching experiences for a year (418 teachers, 47.9%). This was followed by 83 (26.9%) teachers who had more than 3 years of teaching experiences and 78 teachers (25.2%) who had 2 to 3 years of teaching experiences.

j-QAF teachers in this research consisted of those who had local and overseas qualifications. Majority of them were locally qualified (230 teachers, 74.5%) while the rest of them were overseas qualified (79 teachers, 25.5%) such as from al-Azhar University, Jordan University and universities in Indonesia. When they furthered their studies in Higher Learning Institutions, majority of the j-QAF teachers' qualification was Islamic Studies (247 teachers, 79.9%) followed by specialization in Arabic language (55 teachers, 17.8%) whereas Islamic Education had 7 teachers.

The research findings also showed that all j-QAF teachers had undergone courses related to j-QAF.

The Implementation of Arabic Language Communication Model: j-QAF teachers were requested to give their opinions on a few aspects related to the implementation of the model.

Teachers' Interest Towards the Arabic Language Communication Model: j-QAF teachers gave their opinions regarding their interest towards the Arabic Language Communication Model. Overall it was found that the teachers were interested (more than 80%) towards the Arabic Language Communication Model. However there were two items found whereby less than 80% teachers agreed that Arabic language learning class is not necessary if parents play their roles well (241 teachers, 78.0%) and only 167 teachers (54.0%) agreed that it is parents' responsibility to teach their children to learn Arabic language. Refer to Table 2 for further details.

Students' Interest Towards the Arabic Language Communication Model: j-QAF teachers also expressed their opinions on students' interest towards Arabic Language Communication Model. The research findings

Table 2: Teachers' Interest towards the Arabic Language Communication Model

No.	Statement	Disagree		Less Agree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1	I really enjoy in guiding my students to read in Arabic language well	0	0.0	2	0.6	7	2.3	131	42.4	169	54.7	4.51	.57
2	I regard my students as my own children	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	2.3	164	53.1	138	44.7	4.42	.53
3	Provide knowledge related to the correct ways of reading in Arabic language is the main focus that I emphasize to students	0	0.0	2	0.6	5	1.6	152	49.2	150	48.5	4.45	.56
4	I observe students who are unable to read in Arabic language in school	2	0.6	11	3.6	17	5.5	163	52.8	116	37.5	4.22	.76
5	I pay attention to students who do not know how to read and write in Arabic language	4	1.3	4	1.3	16	5.2	160	51.8	125	40.5	4.28	.73
6	It is the parents' responsibility to educate their children to read n in Arabic language	26	8.4	141	45.6	75	24.3	51	16.5	16	5.2	2.64	1.02
7	Arabic language reading class is not necessary if parents carry out their responsibility well	102	33.0	139	45.0	33	10.7	28	9.1	7	2.3	2.02	1.00
8	Teaching students to read in Arabic language affects my leisure time with family	6	1.9	11	3.6	24	7.8	97	31.4	171	55.3	4.34	.91

Table 3: Students' Interest towards the Arabic Language Communication Model

No.	Statement	Disagree		Less Agree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1	My students really like to attend Arabic language reading class	0	0.0	3	1.0	32	10.4	200	64.7	74	23.9	4.11	.60
2	It is very easy for me to disclipin my students during Arabic language reading class in school	1	0.3	29	9.4	36	11.7	180	58.3	63	20.4	3.89	.84
3	My students are serious in following Arabic language reading class	1	0.3	11	3.6	48	15.5	176	57.0	73	23.6	4.00	.75
4	Students tend to play more during Arabic language class in school	5	1.6	50	16.2	41	13.3	150	48.5	63	20.4	3.69	1.02
5	Arabic language reading class in school needs to be conducted by male teachers	104	33.7	133	43.0	39	12.6	28	9.1	5	1.6	2.01	.98
6	Students like to ask me ways to read in Arabic language well	13	4.2	29	9.4	43	13.9	184	59.5	40	12.9	3.67	.95

showed that overall, majority of teachers felt that students had interest towards this model especially as they liked to follow the Arabic language class (274 teachers, 88.6%) and they learnt seriously (249 people, 80.6%). However there were also teachers (213 teachers, 68.9%) who stated that they were students who play around during Arabic language class. Refer Table 3.

The Frequency of the Usage of Arabic Language Communication Teaching and Learning Techniques: There are a few teaching techniques suggested in the Arabic Language Communication Model. With regard to the j-QAF teachers' usage frequency of the 6 suggested techniques, the research findings showed that *Ajuk-Hafaz* approach (296 teachers, 95.8%) and Drill method (290 teachers, 93.8%) were frequently used by the teachers. This was followed by Direct approach (271 teachers, 87.7%) and Natural approach (266 teachers,

86.1%) whereas Thematic approach (216 teachers, 69.6%) and Eclectic approach (210 teachers, 68.0%) were stated by the teachers to be used less often in teaching. Refer to Table 4.

The Effectiveness of Arabic Language Communication Model Teaching and Learning Techniques: With relation to the j-QAF teaching effectiveness, the findings showed that all teachers stated that the techniques used were effective. Further details on the teachers' agreement level could be seen in Table 5.

Students' Skill Mastery Level: There are 12 skill components that need to be mastered by students for the Arabic Language Communication Model. Teachers were requested to state students' mastery level with regard to the skill components. According to the teachers' perceptions, the research findings showed that students

Table 4: The frequency of using teaching and learning techniques

		Not prepared		Never		Seldom		Often		Very often			
No.	Statement	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean	SD
1.	Thematic approach	6	1.9	7	2.3	80	25.9	175	56.6	41	13.3	2.77	.77
2.	*Ajuk-Hafaz* approach	1	0.3	1	0.3	11	3.6	202	65.4	94	30.4	3.25	.56
3.	Natural approach	1	0.3	1	0.3	41	13.3	216	69.9	50	16.2	3.01	.58
4.	Direct approach	1	0.3	1	0.3	36	11.7	202	65.4	69	22.3	3.09	.61
5.	Drill method	0	0.0	0	0.0	19	6.1	158	51.1	132	42.7	3.36	.59
6.	Eclectic approach	3	1.0	14	4.5	82	26.5	174	56.3	36	11.7	2.73	.76
7.	Others (Please state):	296	95.8	0	0.0	2	0.6	9	2.9	2	0.6	0.12	.61

Table 5: The effectiveness of Arabic Language Communication Model teaching and learning techniques

		Not prepared		Not Effective		Not sure		Effective		Very Effective			
No.	Statement	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean	SD
1.	Thematic approach	5	1.6	6	1.9	66	21.4	178	57.6	54	17.5	2.87	.77
2.	*Ajuk-Hafaz* approach	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	3.6	195	63.1	103	33.3	3.29	.53
3.	Natural approach	0	0.0	0	0.0	42	13.6	203	65.7	64	20.7	3.07	.58
4.	Direct approach	0	0.0	0	0.0	37	12.0	187	60.5	85	27.5	3.15	.60
5.	Drill method	0	0.0	1	0.3	12	3.9	161	52.1	135	43.7	3.39	.58
6.	Eclectic approach	2	0.6	10	3.2	69	22.3	178	57.6	50	16.2	2.85	.74
7.	Others (Please state):	293	94.8	0	0.0	2	0.6	11	3.6	3	1.0	0.15	.69

Table 6: Students' Mastery Level of the Arabic Language

		Weak		Less Good		Average		Good		Very good			
No.	Statement	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Mean	SD
1.	Understand an Arabic language alphabet.	0	0.0	2	0.6	38	12.3	176	57.0	93	30.1	4.16	.65
2.	Understand an Arabic language word.	0	0.0	7	2.3	95	30.7	158	51.1	49	15.9	3.80	.72
3.	Understand an Arabic language sentence.	10	3.2	23	7.4	134	43.4	108	35.0	34	11.0	3.43	.90
4.	Pronounce an Arabic language alphabet.	0	0.0	6	1.9	39	12.6	188	60.8	76	24.6	4.08	.66
5.	Pronounce an Arabic language word.	0	0.0	9	2.9	64	20.7	177	57.3	59	19.1	3.92	.71
6.	Pronounce an Arabic language sentence.	0	0.0	17	5.5	110	35.6	147	47.6	35	11.3	3.64	.75
7.	Utter in Arabic language based on certain situations.	12	3.9	34	11.0	133	43.0	105	34.0	25	8.1	3.31	.91
8.	Read Arabic language sentences correctly.	4	1.3	20	6.5	105	34.0	145	46.9	35	11.3	3.60	.82
9.	Write Arabic language alphabets correctly.	0	0.0	8	2.6	69	22.3	181	58.6	51	16.5	3.89	.69
10.	Write Arabic language words correctly.	0	0.0	9	2.9	76	24.6	183	59.2	41	13.3	3.82	.68
11.	Write Arabic language sentences correctly.	5	1.6	19	6.1	97	31.4	152	49.2	36	11.7	3.63	.82
12.	Write passages based on certain situations using simple sentences.	21	6.8	37	12.0	128	41.4	96	31.1	27	8.7	3.22	1.00

were able to master well the skill to understand Arabic language alphabets (269 teachers, 87.1%), pronounce Arabic language alphabets (264 teachers, 85.4%), pronounce Arabic language words (236 teachers, 76.4%), write Arabic alphabets correctly (232 teachers, 75.1%) and write Arabic words correctly (224 teachers, 72.5%).

186 teachers (60.2%) on the other hand stated that students achieved average or less good level for passage writing skill using simple sentences based on certain situations. This was followed by the skill to utter in Arabic language based on certain situations (179 teachers, 57.6%), understand Arabic language sentences (167 teachers, 54.0%), read Arabic language sentences correctly (129 teachers, 41.7%) and pronounce Arabic language sentences (127 teachers, 41.1%). Refer to Table 6.

The Facilities and Support in the Implementation of j-QAF Programme: In relation to teachers' satisfaction level towards the preparation and support of the implementation of j-QAF programme, the findings showed that overall teachers were satisfied with the support of the implementation of j-QAF. It was found that majority teachers were satisfied with the teacher's guidebook

Table 7: j-QAF Teachers' Satisfaction Level towards the Preparation and Support of the Implementation of j-QAF Programme

No.	Statement	Weak f	Weak %	Less Satisfy f	Less Satisfy %	Average f	Average %	Satisfy f	Satisfy %	Very Satisfy f	Very Satisfy %	Mean	SD
1.	Undergo Training/Course	2	0.6	12	3.9	61	19.7	184	59.5	50	16.2	3.86	.74
2.	Prepared teaching aids	6	1.9	20	6.5	56	18.1	184	59.5	43	13.9	3.77	.83
3.	Textbooks	0	0.0	10	3.2	40	12.9	190	61.5	69	22.3	4.02	.69
4.	Students' Exercise/Activity Books	1	0.3	12	3.9	46	14.9	185	59.9	65	21.0	3.97	.73
5.	Teacher's Guidebook	2	0.6	5	1.6	32	10.4	189	61.2	81	26.2	4.10	.69
6.	Guidance and advice from the school authority	0	0.0	13	4.2	60	19.4	183	59.2	53	17.2	3.89	.72
7.	Allocated teaching time	4	1.3	34	11.0	52	16.8	173	56.0	46	14.9	3.72	.89
8.	Support from the school authority	2	0.6	8	2.6	41	13.3	191	61.8	67	21.7	4.01	.71
9.	Support from the management	3	1.0	9	2.9	37	12.0	188	60.8	72	23.3	4.02	.74
10.	Support from the parents	6	1.9	16	5.2	62	20.1	181	58.6	44	14.2	3.77	.82
11.	Others (Please state) :	300	97.1	0	0.0	1	0.3	5	1.6	3	1.0	0.12	.71

(254 teachers, 82.2%), support from the management (236 teachers, 76.4%), support from the school authority (234 teachers, 75.7%), textbooks (226 teachers, 73.1%), exercise/activity books (224 teachers, 72.5%) and the prepared teaching aids (214 teachers, 72.2%). However there were also teachers who were less satisfied with the allocated teaching time (181 teachers, 58.6%), support from the parents (184 teachers, 62.8%), as well as guidance and advice from the school authority (200 teachers, 64.7%). Details of the findings related to this matter are shown in Table 7.

Discussion And Suggestions: Based on the research findings, it can generally be noted that the implementation of Arabic Language Communication Model is effective. This can be seen through the students' interest factor towards Arabic Language Communication teaching. Overall, teachers feel that students do have interest towards the *Jawi* Remedial class model. In fact most of them stated that students are keen to follow and show efforts during the Arabic Language Communication class. In terms of teaching methods and techniques suggested in the Arabic Language Communication Model, teachers feel that all the techniques are effective except for the thematic and eclectic approaches. According to Musa Daia [6], students will gain the most effective learning if they learn something suitable with their interest, purpose and benefits.

Even though Arabic Language Communication Model is seen as effective, however attention needs to be given towards students' mastery of certain determined skills. This is because based on j-QAF teachers' perceptions, students' mastery level is in less satisfactory level especially their skill in speaking Arabic language based on certain situations (179, 57.9%), understanding Arabic language sentences (167, 54.0%), reading Arabic

language sentences correctly (129, 41.7%) and pronouncing Arabic language sentences (127, 41.1%) correctly. Besides that, the facilities and support for the implementation of Arabic Language Communication class, the research findings showed that all j-QAF teachers are satisfied with the facilities and support given by certain parties. In addition, the allocated teaching time as well as the guidance and advice from the school authority should also be given attention. Teachers also feel that there is lack of support from parents in assisting the implementation of the class.

A few suggestions are given based on this discussion. **First,** Arabic Language Communication class programme needs to be continued besides continuous monitoring and improvement need to be taken to ensure that students really have interest towards the class which would then lead to provide a positive impact. **Second,** serious attention needs to be given to identify the reasons that cause students' lack of mastery of fixed skills. It is a waste if students like and have interest to follow the class but fail to achieve expected objectives. **Third,** it is necessary and fun if the school authority could provide language lab for the teaching and learning of the Arabic language. **Finally,** the main thing is that the implementation of Arabic Language Communication class needs to gain support from all parties in order to ensure its successful achievements as well as to achieve the expected objectives. The allocated teaching time needs to be considered to ensure that teaching is conducted more smoothly and effectively.

CONCLUSION

Arabic Language Communication Model class is among the initiatives taken by Ministry of Education Malaysia to instill students' interest in Arabic language.

It begins to be instilled since primary level to ensure that the expected objectives are achieved. Therefore a continuous attention and monitoring as well as solid support from all parties need to be given to the implementation class so that students and teachers will gain the expected benefits. In order to ensure that the Arabic Language Communication class will be carried out smoothly and effectively, all weaknesses and lacking that occur are required to be solved immediately using serious and effective measures. Moreover, an additional study needs to be conducted to identify the reasons and factors that cause students to have lack of mastery of the determined skills.

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