

A Needs Analysis for Motivational Language Teaching Practices in Teacher Education

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Research Background

This paper reports the needs analysis for introducing an innovative module based on motivational language teaching practices into the training of Arabic teachers in Malaysian teacher education. Earlier studies imply that the teaching and learning of Arabic in Malaysia is generally unsatisfactory, declining of motivation is not uncommon among students, and that current and prospective Arabic teachers would benefit from more adequate training (Mustafa Che Omar, 2004; Abdul Rahim Ismail 1994). Sumaiyah (2011) found that while teachers observe the teaching practices related to creating initial motivation, their exercise of practices pertinent to maintaining motivation is relatively limited.

Methodology

This need analysis employs qualitative research: i) document analysis of course descriptions as documented in Buku Panduan Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda dengan Kepujian Sesi 2007/2008 (Bahagian Pendidikan Guru, 2006a), the latest curriculum for Bachelor of Education Programme (Arabic Language) implemented since 2005 at the Malaysian Institutes of Teacher Training (MITI), and Pro Forma Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda dengan Kepujian Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (2006b); ii) face to face interviews with four practicing teachers and two lecturers; and iii) focus group interview with six teacher trainees majoring in Arabic language of the Programme Bachelor in Education in who have gone through their practical internship at MITI.

Initial Findings

The document analysis indicate that while the teacher training curriculum contain elements of pedagogy and educational psychology, there is no clear indication that the practical synthesis between the two in the teaching of Arabic is adequately emphasized. The interviews reveal that the declining motivation in learners is a real problem that the teachers face in the classroom. However, the teacher training they had earlier received did not equip them with the knowledge and skills to effectively overcome the problem and that they need further professional development in the matter. This would support Sumaiyah's (2011) recommendation that teachers need more training in the practice of maintaining learner motivation.

It can be concluded that the proposed module is a necessary innovation leading to the improvement of the teachers' ability in dealing with motivational issues in Arabic learning, which in turn will lead to improvement in the teaching and learning of Arabic. The research is now at the stage of designing and developing an innovative module for the training of Arabic teachers based on Dornyei's (2001) model of motivational teaching practices.

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