

Arabic Debate and World-Readiness

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Arabic is a major world language with some 22 million native speakers largely living in the West-Asian region. Thus, the learning of Arabic may be a shortcoming if it does not equip learners with the world-readiness to function in the language and interact in the Arabic culture. World-readiness has been defined in terms of the standards for foreign language learning. These standards correspond to 'The Five C's': Communication, Culture, Connection, Comparison and Community. Previous studies on these standards have predominantly focused on the main instructional language curriculum. The contribution of co-curricular activities to the realization of world-readiness received less research attention. Thus, this paper seeks to report the contribution of debates to the world-readiness of non-native learners of Arabic at the tertiary level. This investigation is part of a larger study on the impact of debate to learners' language development. Qualitative data were collected through observations of debate training sessions and subsequent interviews with four debaters. Data were analyzed thematically and those related to world-readiness were identified and discussed. These preliminary findings show that debates as an activity for learners of Arabic as a foreign language contribute to the achievement of four of the 5C's: communication, culture, connection and community goals. These findings support the importance of debates in foreign language learning as a powerful tool in equipping learners with world-readiness.

Keyword: world-readiness; debate; language learning; Arabic

INTRODUCTION

The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2014) evolves from an earlier document Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996). These standards guide learners, language instructors and curriculum developers in developing learners' language and cultural competence to communicate effectively and interact with multilingual communities at home and around the world. According to NSLEP 2015:

The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages provide the framework for a curriculum with the richness and depth to provide a broad range of communicative experiences and content knowledge. These Standards put the focus on the broader view of second language study and competence: What should learners know and be able to do and how well? The Standards provide a purpose for learning another language, establishing a broader, more complete rationale for language education to guide parents, educators, administrators, and community members to develop and support language learners through the design of effective programs and options to learn, practice, and apply this competence (para. 5)

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FIVE CS OF LEARNING LANGUAGES

GOAL AREAS		STANDARDS	
<p>Communication Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situation and for multiple purposes</p>	<p>Interpersonal Communication: Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.</p>	<p>Interpretive Communication: Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.</p>	<p>Presentational Communication: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.</p>
<p>Cultures Interact with cultural competence and understanding</p>	<p>Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.</p>	<p>Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.</p>	
<p>Connections Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career related situations</p>	<p>Making Connections: Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.</p>	<p>Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives: Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.</p>	
<p>Comparisons Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence</p>	<p>Language Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.</p>	<p>Cultural Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.</p>	
<p>Communities Communicate and interact with cultural</p>	<p>School and Global Communities: Learners use the language both</p>	<p>Lifelong Learning: Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using</p>	

competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world	in within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.	languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.
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Source: (NSFLEP 2015)

Communication, or communicating in languages other than English, is at the main goal of second language study, whether the communication takes place face-to-face, virtually, in writing, or through the reading of current events or literature. Through the study of other languages, students obtain a knowledge and understanding of the other *cultures* that use that language; in fact, students will not become truly proficient in the language until they have also experienced and understood the cultural contexts in which the language occurs. Conversely, without the ticket provided by its language, one does not truly enter a culture. Learning languages provides *connections* to additional bodies of knowledge that are unavailable to monolingual English speakers. Through *comparisons* and contrasts with the language studied, students develop greater insight into their own language and culture and realize that multiple ways of viewing the world exist. Thus, these elements enable the student of languages to participate in multilingual *communities* at home and around the world in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways. As is apparent, none of these goals can be separated from the others (NSFLEP 2015: para 2).

Several studies have been documented on the implementation of these standards in teaching and learning. Katherine (2008) proposed a rewriting of statements in the standards to include different literary text genres, anchored in cultures. For the Communication standards, learners need to match genres to situation, compare their forms and uses at intermediate ones and produce them nuanced in complex forms at more advanced one. For the culture standards, learning about the genres require students to know the history of the genres and to understand the functions of each genre. The Connection standards are achieved when learners deepen their knowledge of other social and communicative situations through the genres. With respect to the Comparison, learners demonstrate their understanding of the genres through comparison of the same genre in two cultures. As of the Communities goal, learners identify ways to use the concept of genres for personal enjoyment and for engagement with communities.

Dong (2015) argues that linguistics courses are necessary for bridging between language learning and the 5C's because these courses contain two essential components. In his study, Dong evaluated the effectiveness of his Chinese linguistics courses in achieving the 5Cs. The data were collected over the span of five years using the standard course evaluation form. The students in his study reported that that the linguistics courses had increased their ability in conceptual understanding and critical thinking of the target language. In addition to this, the linguistics courses in themselves are less demanding than the language courses. Linguistics topics can help students learn the target language better in term of communication, cultures, connection and comparison goal. In-depth analysis of core topics in linguistics, namely the sound and grammar systems can be very beneficial to students' achievement in communication. For cultural and comparison standards, the learning of the linguistic features of the target language enable learners to draw cultural comparisons between these features and those of their native language. In terms of connection, students benefit from the target language in acquiring and reinforcing interdisciplinary knowledge. Thus, Dong recommends that for the 5C's to happen, an introductory course to linguistics needs to be introduced to any

language program. A linguistics course does only provide learners with knowledge about the target language, rather it also enhances their cognitive skills to think critically in making connections and comparisons needed for successful achievement of the 5C's.

Eddy (2015) reports the use of Uncovering Content: Assessment Design Aligning Performance and Transfer (UC/ADAPT) as a curriculum design model for aligning cultural standards with performance assessment. This framework gives the cultural standard a very paramount role in the curriculum. Using the backward design, the curriculum design departs from cultural themes and is aligned with the world-readiness through three stages. In Stage One, instructors use the Culture Standard to formulate an essential cultural question and identify the desired results or objectives within the cultural context. In Stage Two, the Communication standard comes in whereby the instructors determine the acceptable evidence for communication within each particular cultural theme. In Stage Three, they design the learning, experiences, instruction and summative performance assessment in three modes: Interpretive - Interpersonal - Presentational. At this stage, the remaining standards which are Comparison, Connection and Communities are embedded. The formative assessments are aligned with the can-do statements as well.

Garn (2012) discussed the advantages and ways of using cinema in language courses to achieve the 5C's. Cinema adds excitement to the classroom and can be used to fit the varied levels and backgrounds of learners. Garn proposed plans for incorporating four cinema-based Russian language textbooks for third year learners, heritage speakers, and non-traditional students. Her students reported that the cinema-based language course were exciting and engaging. On top of these affective impact, the students showed much progress in speaking, listening and writing skills which clearly contributes to the communication standard. They also showed deeper appreciation and understanding of the Russian language, history and people.

Lear & Abbot (2008) investigated the use of 5C goal as a framework for a community service learning (CSL) of Spanish. The study employed qualitative case study to provide an in-depth description on how CSL impacts the achievement of the National Standard. The population for the study was 40 fifth-semester students enrolled in two sections of the "Spanish and Entrepreneurship: Languages, Culture, and Communities" course. The data were collected from three sources: student's written work for the course (written journal, activity report, and exam), instructor-student correspondence and instructor-community partner correspondence. The data were coded for the presence and absence of the 5C's and triangulated. The finding shows that Spanish CSL can satisfy the 5C's National Standards, in ways that otherwise are not quite possible in traditional classrooms. All students in the courses provided evidence of learning in all 5C's. Learners who were heritage speakers were good in demonstrating communication and culture standards, while those with strong academic skills or interest in entrepreneurship demonstrated the ability to achieve the connection standards. All students met the comparison and communities standards.

The above literature reveal attempts to revisit the 5C's and report some curricular and instructional innovations in achieving those standards. None of the above studies report on the potential of extra-curricular activities such as debates in realizing the 5C's for language learners. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine an existing research data and relate them to the contribution of debate as an extra-curricular activity to the realization of the 5C's.

DEBATE AS A LANGUAGE ACTIVITY

Debates have been used in education to benefit students learning and development, specifically because they involve complicated direct communicative interaction where high level of cognitive and discussion skills are used (Lubetsky et al. 2000). Najafi, Motaghi, Nasrabadi and Heshi (2016) discussed the instructional functions of debate as a social learning method in formal education. Debate may be used to promote learning mastery, continuity in learning, centralized thinking, creative learning, learning speed, evaluation skill, thinking-centered learning, entrepreneurial skills, the development of oral skills, critical thinking, social skills, self-confidence and social relationship. While the use of debate in the classroom as a learning tool has its own challenges, limitations and opposition such as difficulty in understanding the issues being debated and the possibility that it introduces stress to some students (Omelicheva 2007) and changes the climate of the classroom from peace to confrontation (Tumposky 2004), debates are still being used for educational purposes.

The advantages of debates in second language learning have been discussed by scholars (Stewart & Pleisch 1998; Krieger 2005; Aliasari & Ahmed 2013; Pezhman & Moomala 2013; 2015). Pezhman and Moomala (2013) reviewed literature on the importance of systematic use of debate as a learning approach. They found that the foremost importance of debate is that it increases student-student interaction, develop multifaceted thinking skills, train them in making appropriate use of course content and enhance their critical reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Debates provide sample access to meaningful linguistic inputs and ample opportunity for practical meaningful outputs, both of which encourage effective language learning. In fact, debates possess various key features of communicative language learning (Jacobs & Farrell 2003) and learner-centered teaching, namely, active learning environment, cooperation, collaboration, competition, as well as credible and meaningful interactions.

Krieger (2005: 1) proposed that while debates engage complex cognitive skills, they can be used for non-native learners of a language. A debate activity serves language learners because "*involves students in various cognitive and linguistic ways*". Debates require argumentation; hence it requires advanced cognitive skills such as analytical and critical thinking. Debates enhance language skills as in the course of training, debaters need to perform much critical reading so that they can choose relevant and useful evidence and reliable references to support their claims and arguments. They also have to engage in oral discussions, speech training, effective and critical listening. Ultimately, they have to produce argumentative and persuasive writing and speaking.

Aliasari and Ahmed (2013) discussed the functions of debate in ice-breaking and language skill acquisition. They proposed 13 debate modules for use in the language classroom and explained how each of this module contributes to language learning. The modules are designed to reflect gradual progression in debate skills from mere ice-breaking session and identification and discussion of points to making arguments to actual debate with native speakers.

Stewart and Pleisch, (1998) found that debates promotes language fluency and academic skills in a fascinating and challenging way for students. They conducted a study in which debates were used as a teaching tool for EFL college students in Japan. Over a period of 15 weeks, the students engaged in debate activities twice weekly for 75 minutes per session. The findings showed that 80 percent of the students passed the debate training and think debate in class as the most engaging activity. They have commented that debates are motivating, interesting and lead to the improvement of their English

language skills. This study also concluded that the debate in the classroom builds language skills, second foreign language fluency and public speaking skills. In addition, the debate also promotes collaboration and teamwork, while promoting critical thinking.

In another study, Pezhman and Moomala (2015) conducted a study on student perceptions on the use of debate in the classroom. Sixteen TESL specialists were randomly divided into groups, and took part in nine sessions of debates throughout the semester. Overall, respondents believed that the debate helps to improve the critical thinking skills and oral communication capabilities and especially public speaking skill. In addition, the students also reported other benefits which are mastery of course content, increase in confidence, overcoming of speech fears and improvement of teamwork skills. Students viewed debate in the classroom as a very constructive learning activity. For debates to be really engaging, the debate issues selected need to be interesting to the students and does not seem to favor one side.

Sabbah (2015) investigated the effectiveness of using debates in developing speaking skills among English majors at University of Palestine. The sample of the study consisted of twenty English major students from University of Palestine in Gaza. The researcher used real life situations to measure the students' ability to speak. The findings indicated that there are statistically significant differences between the pre and post- tests in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary skills after the use of debates as strategy for teaching speaking skills.

In the other word, the above literature provide evidence on the advantage of debate in enhancing second language learners' cognitive and linguistic skills. None of the above studies investigated debate from the framework of world readiness standards: communication, culture, connection, comparison and communities. Thus, this study seeks to understand how debate contributes to the realization of the world-readiness standards.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study is part of a larger qualitative investigation of the impact of debate on learners of Arabic as a foreign language in a Malaysian higher learning institution. The purpose of this specific study is to make a preliminary evaluation of the contributions of debate to the world-readiness of non-native debaters of Arabic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This particular study departs from an existing data on the impact of debate on the output language skills and fluency of non-native debaters of Arabic. In the original study, qualitative data were collected through observations of debate training sessions and interviews. The researcher was the main instrument present at the research site to research and collect the required data. 2 types of training sessions were observed: training sessions for beginner debaters, and training sessions for advanced debaters. At the time of this research, these advanced debaters were being prepared for the *The International Universities Arabic Debating Championships (IUADCs)* that would be held in Qatar in 2017. They were all non-native speakers of Arabic and representatives of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) for the aforementioned championship. The observations were followed by interviews. For this particular investigation on world-readiness, the original data were analyzed from the framework of world-readiness in terms of the five goals of language learning: Communication, Culture, Connection, Comparison and Communities.

Data from observations and interviews show that through debate activity, the debaters achieved four out of five of the world-readiness goals: communication, culture, connection and communities. No evidence were found to support the contribution of debate to the Comparison goal.

COMMUNICATION GOAL

The Communication goal in the world-readiness standard reflect three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational. It also involves all the language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. The biggest observed and reported impact of debate on students is the improvement of speaking skill in terms of the courage to speak, the ability to construct sentences and fluency. In addition, the debaters reported that debate had led to the improvement of their reading, writing and listening skills. These improvements were observed in all the four skills across the three modes of communication.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication refers to the ability to initiate and maintain exchange of conversation and negotiation of meaning in a continuous manner between two interlocutors or more. Primary challenges in interpersonal communication include the ability to select the correct word to convey meaning and to construct comprehensible sentences. Through debate training, the debaters reported the difference debate has made to them with respect to this very ability:

Dulu agak susah untuk bercakap even if nak buat satu ayat pun. Tapi sekarang agak ok untuk bercakap(TBR4)

[It was quite difficult for me to speak [Arabic], [I couldn't] even make a single sentence. But now I am quite ok to speak [it](TBR4)]

Sangat berbeza sebab sebelum debate saya tak boleh cakap bahasa arab. Saya boleh tapi, benda-benda yang formal saya tak tau nak menyampaikan apa yang saya nak cakap. Contohnya dulu saya tahu dalam bahasa Arab sama ni maksudnya سواء, tapi nak kata saya sekolah dengan dia .. saya tak reti benda tu. kecuali selepas saya dah join ni saya tahu ohh أنا في نفس المدرسة guna نفس untuk maknanya sama . Saya tak tahu sampai saya masuk debat. So kadang-kadang saya awkward sikit nak cakap benda-benda macam ni.. benda mudah tapi saya tak tau apa wording dia tu sebenarnya. (TBR2)

[Totally different because before [I joined] debate I couldn't speak Arabic. I could but, for formal matters I did not know how to communicate them. For example I used to know in Arabic that the word for 'same' is سواء, but to say 'I was in the same school with him ...' I did not know it. Until I joined debate, I realized that ohhh "I was in the same school with him" in Arabic is أنا في نفس المدرسة, use نفس for the meaning "the same". I never knew this until I participated in debate. So at times I used to feel somewhat awkward to say stuff like this .. simple things but I did not know what the real word would be. (TBR2)]

Interpretive Communication

Interpretive communications refers to the ability of learners to understand, interpret, and analyze what they hear, read or view. Debate requires extensive knowledge and in-depth understanding of a wide range of issues. As such, preparing for debates necessitates that debaters read and listen to materials on theories, concepts and issues related to social,

economic and political matters. Debaters develop the reading habit of serious topics, improve their vocabulary and enhance their proficiency to read in the foreign language. Such reading goes beyond word recognition and mere comprehension. Rather debaters learn to conduct information search and to organize study circles to discuss their reading materials in a critical and evaluative manner.

Kita duduk sekali juga untuk discuss macam apa-apa isu sekarang ni. Ataupun apa-apa isu yang kita dah discuss kita discuss balik untuk bagi tahu macam mana flow dia apa semua (TBR4)

[We sit together to discuss such current issues. Or any issue we've discussed before, we discuss it again to articulate its flow (TBR4)]

Bacaan. Kajian. dan debat sendiri (TBR2)

[Reading. Research. and own debate (TBR2)]

Pelajar mula berbincang mengenai usul perdebatan. Pelajar menulis poin-poin perdebatan di atas kertas. (P3)

[Students began to discuss the motions of the debate. Students write the points for debate on paper. (P3)]

Apart from that kita ada research sikit, kira research fasal isu-isu semasa la. (TBR4)

[Apart from that we do some research, researching on current issues. (TBR4)]

In debating, debaters need to understand interpret and analyze the debate topic in order to make the argument. Debaters discuss within the group, try to understand the topic as well as try to revise the topics that have been debated in order to find ideas to build their arguments and to respond to the arguments of their opponents. Brainstorming topic is also carried out through readings on issues related to topics to be debated. The ideas obtained are written on paper as a preparation, and are used to assist the debaters when presenting their arguments during a debate activity.

Integration of Advanced Language and Cognitive Skills

Debate creates a situation in which the debaters learn not only to speak in Arabic, but also to read, listen, write, speak and think in the language. develops learners' writing skills too. While writing debate scripts, students practice writing composition in an organized way. To make debate scripts, they need to brainstorm on the topics and jot down points. Thus, they learn how to think about a topic in a systematic manner and also to link between points.

Moreover, they learn the process of prioritizing the points. If students get debate topics one or two days earlier, they usually collect information and write the whole script. Debate-scripts are like argumentative essays. Thus, they learn writing argumentative paragraphs and essays. Furthermore, students practice refining and scrutinizing their ideas and making them controversial enough for arguments and counter-arguments. When students prepare the final debate-script, they retain only the main points, not the details. In this way, they master limiting topics, writing topic sentences and also making outlines (Ali Alasmari & Sayed Salahuddin 2012). The excerpts below show that debaters improve their reading and writing skill through debates:

Sebab memang debat ni dia ajar kita untuk berfikir dalam bahasa Arab, bertutur dalam bahasa Arab, membaca dalam bahasa Arab, menulis dalam bahasa Arab (TBR3)

[the reason is because debate teaches us to think in Arabic, speak Arabic, read in Arabic, write in Arabic (TBR3)]

macam mana kita nak sampaikan kita punya idea dalam bentuk tulisan dalam bahasa Arab. Let say macam kita nak voice out kita punya idea dalam tulisan arab la. (TBR4)

[how to deliver our idea in the form of written Arabic. Let's say, we want to voice out our idea in Arabic writing. (TBR4)]

Presentational Communication and Self-perception Linguistic Confidence

Presentational communication is one-way speaking or writing *from* the student *to* an audience. Students need to strategically formulate how best to make themselves understood, using their highest proficiency to convey their information, ideas and arguments.

In debates, debaters need to convey the message of the argument clearly to the audience, so that the latter can comprehend the issue being debated and are convinced of the arguments presented. Data from the interview shows that through the frequency of debate practices, the debaters acquire efficiency of presentational communication so much so that the debaters gained much confidence in their linguistic competence: Dulu saya tak confident, saya tak confident dengan capability saya sendiri. Tapi lepas join debat kira bahasa pun nampak sangat improve (TBR3)

[Before this I was not confident, I was not confident with my own capability. But after joining the debate the language seems to be very improved (TBR3)]

Culture Goal

Culture goals imply that language learning empowers learners with the tool to gain access to a culture's world view or perspectives which include values, ideas and attitudes. Cultural knowledge is broadly categorized into Big Culture and Small Culture, debate topics generally fall into the Big Culture: political, environmental, economic, culture and social issues. However, these topics are not necessarily specific to a particular culture, rather to pressing global issues. The statements below indicate the global nature of the debate topics:

Sekarang ni kita dah mula debat isu politik America dan China sebagai contoh. (TBR2)

[Now we have been debating the political issues of America and China as an example. (TBR2)]

dan usul juga dalam pelbagai bidang. Kita ada tajuk politik, ekonomi, sosial dan juga kita ada topik berkaitan alam sekitar (TBR2)

[and motions are also in various fields. We have political, economic and social topics, and and we have topics related to the environment (TBR2)]

..sekarang setiap tajuk macam ada isu yang memang latest isu (TBR3)

[..now, every topic seems to have the most recent issue (TBR3)]

Based on the variety of topics to be argued, students need to study, understand and make a research about the topic. Should a debate topic relates to culture, it increases student understanding of the culture. The following are a few examples of topics in debates that obviously relate to cultural perspectives:

- i. How important is race to American identity? (fact)
- ii. To what extent does individual identity depend on ethnic affiliation? (definition)
- iii. How does immigration from Latin America affect the culture of America? (fact)
- iv. Why do Americans think in terms of a person having one race when so many Americans have a mixed racial, cultural, and/or ethnic background? (value)
- v. Is it a good idea for people to adopt children from another ethnic group? (value)
- vi. What is the value of knowing your racial and cultural heritage? (value)
- vii. Should schools be required to teach multiculturalism? (policy)
- viii. How can parents help raise their children to be appreciative of other cultures? (policy)

However, where Arabic is concerned, the topics above may or may not contribute to the understanding of Arab culture, unless some arguments are formulated on the grounds of Arab immigrants in America.

Connection Goal

Connection goal standards reflect the idea that language learning gives students access to knowledge that they could not otherwise obtain in any other ways. Learning a language enables students to increase their content knowledge using sources produced in that language for example, they can read about current events online in the language they are learning. Through language learning, students also broaden their world views by becoming aware of the knowledge and viewpoints that native speakers of the language possess. Through debate, students build, reinforce and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and solve problems creatively. Debates and high order critical-thinking skills are like the two sides of a coin. In debates, debaters argue against their opponents' arguments. This act encourages debaters to think quickly and critically to break the opponents' arguments. Debater learn how to detect mistakes in arguments and evidence of the opponents. Moreover, debaters need to criticize the opinions of their opponents though facts and logical reasonings. This engages the debaters in complex thinking skills. Debaters carefully select and articulate their logical reasons when being rebutted by their opponents. Thus, debate encourages thinking skills and problem solving and imposes the need for students to build relationships between words and ideas that make the concept more meaningful. The statements from the interviewees how they perceive debates as a means for enhancing their thinking skills, and thus their academic skills:

Jadi debat ini serious dia menyokong penggunaan bahasa Arab seharian saya dan untuk akademik debat bantu saya dalam kemahiran berfikir. Contoh macam last sem saya ada ambil subjek research methodology, so dekat kelas tu, saya katakan direct la memang nampak la siapa yang masuk debate dengan yang tak masuk debate dia beza. Senang catch up dengan lambat catch up. (TBR1)

[So debate... seriously, it supports the use of my daily Arabic language. Academically, debate help me in thinking skills. For example, last semester I took the Research

Methodology subject, so in the class, obviously I could see the difference between students who join debates and those who don't. [the former] catch up fast, [the latter] catch up slow. (TBR1)]

Jadi debat ini lain sebab dia memerlukan pemikiran yang kritikal dan sebagainya (TBR2)

[So debate is different from other activities, because its necessitates critical thinking (TBR2)

secara generalnya memang saya punya ideas semua pun semakin lama semakin berkembang la (TBR3)

[in general, with time [the longer I engage in debate], my ideas are increasingly expanding (TBR3)]

Sebab memang debat ni dia ajar kita untuk berfikir dalam bahasa Arab, bertutur dalam bahasa Arab, membaca dalam bahasa Arab, menulis dalam bahasa Arab (TBR3)

[Because debate its teaches us to think in Arabic, speak Arabic, read in Arabic, write in Arabic (TBR3)]

Communities Goal

Communities goal reflect the notion that learning a language gives students access to communities that they could not obtain in any other way. Students become global citizens by moving beyond the classroom to use the language in the larger community for personal and professional reasons. In debates, learner use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world. The data from interview below support the above statement :

communicate dengan orang Arab sendiri (TBR4)

[communicate with the Arabs (TBR4)]

so after kita dah masuk sana kita dah compete dengan Arab, kita dah lawan dengan Arab, dan tengok prestasi diri kita dan orang Arab punya respond pun macam menunjukkan kita ni setanding dengan dia orang, so macam motivasi diri tu meningkat (TBR1)

[so after we've gone there and we've competed with Arabs, we've debated against the Arabs, and we can gauge our performance, and the responses from the Arabs sort of signaled that we are comparable to them, thus our motivation increases (TBR1)]

saya dapat menambah kenalan baru dari pelbagai universiti tidak kira tempatan dan luar negara .. (TBR2)

[I acquired new acquaintances from various universities wheher from the local universities or abroad .. (TBR2)]

Debaters practice their speaking skills by communicating with Arab communities in their institution. International Debate Competitions such as *The International Universities Arabic Debating Championships (IUADCs)* that was held in Qatar further enhance the debaters' opportunity to mingle with and communicate with Arab community from various countries. At the same time it enriches their knowledge, experience and global efficiency. In fact, the debaters, despite being non-native speakers of Arabic, are able to stand tall and compete with their native Arab counterparts.

DISCUSSION

The interviewees in the current study confirm previous hypothetical recommendations and empirical evidence on the cognitive, linguistic, communicative and interactional values of debates (Lubetsky et al. 2000, Najafi et al. 2016; Pezhman & Moomala 2013; Krieger 2005; Alasmari & Ahmed 2013; Sabbah 2015). None of these studies however linked debates to the world-readiness standards.

From the perspective of world-readiness, the pursuit of language learning is about producing individuals who are linguistically, cognitively and culturally capable of functioning at the global level. Apart from advanced language skills in all four language skills, debate prepares the individuals who practice it with high level cognitive skills which include critical thinking, the ability to synthesize and the ability to articulate the argument in writing and speaking. In debate, all of these happen in meaningful, contextualized and authentic manner. In the present study, debate is reported to have developed the linguistic competence of non-native debaters of Arabic. In this study, the debaters were not selected from those with advanced proficiency in Arabic, rather from those who have had some training in Arabic and were willing participants. With constant practice and feedback, they make tremendous progress in their language skills. In fact, it is intriguing to note that this linguistic competence is accompanied by the development of linguistic self-confidence, a psychological variable that is much needed for the success of language learners. The opportunity to debate with native speakers lead to higher linguistic self-confidence as the learners now develop the belief that they were just as good as native speakers. This supports the plausibility of designing debate practices and competitions to progress from debating with fellow non-native speakers to competing against native speakers.

The study also shows that debate widens the social circle of the debaters to include community of the target language and all other races with common interest. Such engagements familiarize the debaters to make befriend and connect with people who may be culturally different from them. On top of this, debates have also raised the debaters' the awareness of cultural and global issues, all of which are critical qualities for learners to function as a world citizens. The cultural exposure from the debate topics may or may not relate to the culture of the target language as they cover topics of concern to humanity. If debate is to be used to enhance knowledge and interaction with the culture of a particular language community, it has to be intentionally designed as such. An example topic could be about whose responsibility is it to protect the identity of Arab diaspora. Another important note on culture is that other than the Big C, we are uncertain as to which aspect of culture do debaters actually engage in: Product, Practices or Perspectives (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). Where culture and comparison standards come together, the data in the study could not trace if the debaters actually engage in cultural perspectives and comparing between their own culture and those of others. Thus, we have no evidence whether the perspective aspect of culture and the Comparison Standard are achieved through debate activity, and if so in what manner. As this study is a byproduct of another research, further systematic inquiry into how debates actually empower learners of foreign languages with world-readiness standards is desirable.

CONCLUSION

This study supports the value of debates in achieving the World Readiness Standards for Language Learning world language learning as illustrated by non-native learners and

debaters of Arabic. Out of the five standards outlined in the roadmap, four are supported through debates, and they are: Communication, Culture, Connection and Community. From the Communication Standard perspective, debates support the development of all three interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of communication at high level proficiency. Where Community Standard is concerned, debates necessitates authentic interaction with the community of the target language at home and abroad. In fact, the nature of this engagement goes beyond casual daily and academic conversations to actually competitively debating against native Arabic speakers. Debate is also an excellent platform in getting in creating the Connection between language learning and other content areas, particularly because debate activities involve a myriad of pressing global concerns. In addition to that, debates connect between language use and high order thinking skills. With respect to culture standard, debate does widen the debaters' cultural perspectives particularly with regards to aspects in the Big Culture at a wider global level rather than at a particular language specific level. The extent to which debates contribute to the acquisition of the target language cultural views is dependent on the relation between the topic and the target language community. In conclusion, the value of debate in enhancing the World-Readiness of language learners is priceless. Hence, the employment of debates in language learning to create multilingual citizens with linguistic competence, linguistic self-confidence and international posture should be optimally encouraged, particularly amongst countries with mutual cultural, social, political and economic interests such as the West-Asian region, and for any nation aiming for productive international engagement.

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