The Use of Novel in Learning and Teaching Arabic Language to Non-Native Speakers: Problems and Strategies

Penggunaan Novel dalam Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran (PdP) Bahasa Arab bagi Penutur Bukan Arab: Cabaran dan Strategi

Nursafira Lubis Safian[*,1], Nur Farhana Mohamad Zainol[1], Mohamad Zulfazdlee Abul Hassan Ashari[2] & Mohammad Ahmad Al-Qudah[3]

[1]Department of Arabic language and Literature, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur.

[2]Research Centre for Arabic Language and Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Islamic Studies, The National University of Malaysia, 43600 UKM, Bangi, Selangor.

[3]Department of Arabic language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, The University of Jordan, Amman, 11942 Jordan.

Corresponding Author; email: nursafira@iium.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Arabic novels are one of the resources that can be utilised in the process of teaching and learning the Arabic language. However, they are rarely featured as teaching aids to improve the proficiency of non-native students, except those who choose to specialise in the study of Arabic literature. Hence, this article presents a study on the challenges faced by non-Arab students in using novels to learn Arabic. The study also identified the strategies employed by students when using novels in learning Arabic. This is a qualitative study involving interviews with ten (10) students who were studying Arabic Prose Texts at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). The data were subjected to thematic analysis, and the study's findings indicated that the integration of Arabic novels was hindered by several factors: insufficient motivation, limited interest, lack of exposure to Arabic literature, and the advanced level of language employed in the novels. However, the implementation of various strategies successfully heightened students' awareness of the significance and benefits of Arabic novels in learning the Arabic language. Some students utilised dictionaries, read bilingual novels (English-Arabic), participated in group discussions, and sought guidance from teachers and Arabic-speaking peers. The article subsequently suggested various methodologies to improve the incorporation of novels in the Arabic language. A variety of strategies can be employed to integrate literature and linguistics, thereby making the learning of Arabic more student-focused and effective through an innovative pedagogical approach.

Keywords: Arabic language learning; novels; literature; learners' problems; learners' strategies

ABSTRAK

Novel Arab merupakan antara sumber yang boleh dimanfaatkan dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran (PdP) Bahasa Arab. Namun, novel jarang diketengahkan sebagai bahan pengajaran untuk meningkatkan kecekapan pelajar bukan penutur asli kecuali yang memilih pengkhususan kesusasteraan Arab. Justeru, artikel ini membentangkan kajian tentang masalah yang dihadapi oleh pelajar bukan Arab dalam penggunaan novel untuk pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. Kajian ini turut mengenal pasti strategi yang digunakan oleh para pelajar semasa menggunakan novel dalam proses pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. Kajian kualitatif ini melibatkan temubual ke atas sepuluh (10) orang pelajar yang sedang mengikuti kursus Teks Prosa Arab di Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM). Data yang diperoleh telah dianalisis secara tematik dan hasil kajian mendapati bahawa penggunaan novel Arab tidak menggalakkan disebabkan oleh kekurangan dari sudut motivasi, minat dan pendedahan terhadap novel Arab dalam kalangan pelajar serta ditambah pula dengan ketinggian tahap bahasa dalam novel yang membataskan keupayaan pelajar. Bagaimanapun, kepelbagaian strategi yang diamalkan berjaya merangsang kesedaran pelajar tentang kepentingan dan kelebihan

novel Arab dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. Antara strategi yang digunakan adalah dengan merujuk kamus, membaca novel dwibahasa (Inggeris – Arab), melaksanakan perbincangan berkumpulan dan merujuk kepada guru dan pelajar berbangsa Arab. Artikel ini mencadangkan beberapa pendekatan bagi meningkatkan penggunaan novel dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. Beberapa cadangan boleh dilaksanakan untuk mengintegrasikan kesusasteraan dengan linguistik bagi memastikan pembelajaran Bahasa Arab terarah kepada berpusatkan pelajar dan berkesan melalui pendekatan baru.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab; novel; kesusasteraan; masalah pelajar; strategi pelajar

INTRODUCTION

Learning the Arabic language in Malaysia these days is not uncommon, as it is present at all educational levels, from elementary school to university. Previously, it was limited to religious schools only, but with knowledge development and openness, all students now learn Arabic in educational institutions such as elementary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities (Abdul Razif et al. 2019). Moreover, people of the society today learn Arabic due to its connection with worship and to communicate with others while in the Holy Mosque. The Arabic language holds a significant position, closely intertwined with other branches of knowledge since the advent of Islam (al-Muslim 2023). However, Arabic is not limited to religious aspects only; it also has global significance, playing an important role in education, culture, and communication among international communities and peoples (Munawwar et al. 2013; Gamal et al. 2015; Mohd Shahrizal et al. 2017).

In fact, the existence of Arabic language programs at the university level proves the importance of the Arabic language. Almost all educational institutions in Malaysia offer Arabic language learning programs as a foreign language, especially at the bachelor's level. This means that students enrolled in this program will study all sub-disciplines of the Arabic language throughout their university education, including linguistics and literature. Such programs are offered by universities that have a specialized department or research centre for Arabic language and literature, such as International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), and Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA). In addition, several public universities offer Arabic as a foreign language to non-Muslim students. These include Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) and Universiti Malaysia Pahang Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) (Mohd Shahrizal et al. 2017; Mohd. Taqwudin et al. 2022).

Given that these programs are offered to non-native Arabic speakers, teachers strive to diversify educational methods to make Arabic easier and more effective to learn. Since the environment in Malaysia generally does not help students learn Arabic, it was necessary to explore suitable methods and means in the process of teaching and learning Arabic. This was mentioned by Muhammad Sabri (2015) and Lily et al. (2020), who noted that contemporary and more interactive methods, such as the use of technology and websites, can increase students' enthusiasm for learning Arabic. Therefore, the creativity of teachers in diversifying teaching methods makes the process of learning Arabic wonderful and more attractive.

In addition to appropriate teaching methods, there are strategies that students practice while learning Arabic, which also lead to their proficiency in the language. These strategies are specific procedures that contribute to making the process of learning Arabic easier and more effective, resulting in students transitioning to a new, better, and more suitable learning environment (Oxford 1990). Studies related to learning Arabic in Malaysia have revealed that distinguished Arabic learners use many strategies while learning Arabic (Kamarul Shukri et al. 2009; Rosni et al. 2016). Novels are one of the strategies that can help students master Arabic, as novels are the main material classified under reading materials such as newspapers and magazine. This was mentioned in many previous studies, stated that we should use novels as a material for teaching Arabic as novels contain many vocabulary words, and novels are literary works that provide readers with a clear picture of the way of thinking and the culture of the society mentioned in those novels (Noorsyuhada et al. 2015; Harun 2017; al-'Umri 2018; Nursafira et al. 2022).

Based on this matter, we see that some literary materials, such as poetry and prose, were used in Europe as educational materials at the beginning of the modern era. These literary materials, including novels, are characterized by being rich in vocabulary

and linguistic styles that highlight the author's way of thinking, making them suitable for teaching Arabic, especially to non-native speakers (Loop 2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To identify appropriate student strategies for using novels in learning Arabic, this study relied on a qualitative methodology through the application of thematic analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. This method is suitable for exploring and explaining the main and subsidiary factors, making it appropriate for achieving the research objectives (Othman 2009).

The sample was selected using purposive sampling to facilitate researchers in identifying specific characteristics within the sample, thereby enhancing the quality of the required data (Ahmad Munawar & Mohd. Nor 2018). Data reached saturation at the tenth sample. The selected samples were students from the Department of Arabic Language and Literature who chose the course ARAB 2230 (Arabic Prose Texts). They were selected based on specific characteristics since the novel used in that course serves as an educational tool. Interview sessions were conducted individually with the sample members, recorded using MP3 devices, and coded as RP1 (indicating the first sample) up to RP10. After conducting the interviews, data were transcribed and analyzed immediately before the next interview. Before analysis, researchers ensured the accuracy of the interview transcript content.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study is based on the statements of Ruzbeh Babaee and Wan Roselezam (2004), who stated that literature plays a significant role in language teaching and learning. They mentioned that using literature helps students enhance language skills, including writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Literature also aids in understanding grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The researchers emphasized that using literary materials such as novels is highly beneficial as it can increase students' enthusiasm and motivation towards the learning process, as well as develop their understanding of cultural structures, ways of life, and the nature of society.

Several other researchers agreed with this view, including Al-Dajani (2019) and Tsang et al. (2020).

Al-Dajani stated in her study that learning language through literary materials is an enjoyable method as literature is the essence of language and a mirror of society. In the context of the Arabic language, Al-Dajani (2019) sees that using literary materials such as novels in learning Arabic will enhance students' ability to broaden their understanding, leading to a comprehensive understanding of political, economic, social, religious, heritage, cultural, and humanistic issues from various perspectives. Discussing such issues with students indirectly stimulates thinking and intellect, helping them grasp the topic in the simplest and most precise manner. Tsang et al. (2020) mentioned that using literary materials such as short stories help students in Hong Kong learn English, suggesting further research by selecting novels as research materials to measure students' perceptions of using literary materials in learning English. However, Demotivation among students also contributes to the lack of novel usage in language learning. Other factors influencing student demotivation in learning foreign languages include performance during exams, course content, the role and creativity of teachers, workload and personal anxieties. Rokiah et. al. (2024) highlighted these findings when focusing on Malaysian students learning Mandarin as a foreign language. These factors are similarly relevant when discussing the attitudes and motivation of Malaysian student learning Arabic.

Based on this context, this study attempts to apply these suggestions by focusing on the strategies of non-Arab students towards using novels in the process of learning Arabic in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The topic of using literary materials in the process of teaching and learning foreign languages has sparked heated debate between two opposing views: one in favor and the other against. Paran (2008) mentioned this conflict and divergence in his study. For example, the team against it, represented by Edmonson (1997), argued that literature is not important in the process of teaching and learning languages at all. Edmonson also noted that the general process of teaching and learning does not consider literature as a useful tool in understanding the language, and he suggested focusing more on culture to learn the language rather than literature.

To counter Edmonson's fallacy, Paran (2008) presented the argument of Shanahan (1997), who

supports the idea of using literature in the process of teaching and learning languages. Shanahan believes that literary materials should be integrated into language teaching and learning because literature is the main source for exploring effective elements in the teaching and learning process, as well as understanding the symbolism of expression through the styles used. Paran (2008) concluded that literature offers significant benefits in the process of teaching and learning languages and thus encouraged the continuation of experimental studies by observing the situation in language and literature classrooms, exploring related data, and analyzing suitable methodological means for the students' level.

Among the studies related to students' perceptions of using literature in the process of teaching and learning languages, is the study carried out by Bloemert et al. who mentioned that students' opinions and perspectives on using literature in language teaching and learning differ from person to person, especially regarding the texts used and their content. However, almost all sample members agreed that literature could be a means to improve their language skills. Bloemert (2017) also stated that literature should be integrated into the teaching and learning process as it is the main source of language, encompassing three characteristics: texts, content, and style.

One way to employ novels in learning Arabic is confirmed by Al-Dajani (2019), who stated that learning Arabic does not only involve acquiring the four language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—but must also include knowledge of Arabic literature, as it is considered the soul of the language. She reviewed some examples of Arabic novels such as "'Usfur min al-Sharq" by Tawfiq al-Hakim, "Qindil Umm Hashim" by Yahya Haqqi, "Mawsim al-Hijrah ila al-Shamal" by Tayeb Salih, "Sharaf" by Sonallah Ibrahim, and "Bab al-Shams" by Elias Khoury. Al-Dajani (2019) pointed out that these novels are highly beneficial in the process of teaching and learning Arabic, particularly in terms of linguistics and understanding the dialogues contained within these novels. Additionally, Arabic literature also benefits students in understanding the development of Arab history and culture, including dialects and lifestyles. Therefore, Al-Dajani suggested that the process of teaching literature should be suitable for students' abilities and capacities, and that novels are a suitable means for intermediate and advanced students, as they

have reached a good level in vocabulary acquisition. Khataybeh (2024) supports al-Dajani's viewpoint, asserting that novels are excellent resources for grasping the traditions, cultural continuity, and social dynamics of a place, particularly as they relate to the life and experiences of the author. This notion is emphasized by Khataybeh (2024) in his comparative analysis of novels by the Arab writer Naguib Mahfouz and the Chinese writer Ba Jin.

Novels are considered a primary material for language proficiency among students because they fall under reading materials like newspapers and magazines, and they can be used in the teaching and learning process. This has been mentioned in many previous studies (Harun, 2017; al-'Umri, 2018). We should use novels as materials for teaching Arabic because they include vocabulary and provide readers with an insight into the thought processes and culture of the society depicted in those novels. Based on this, we see that some literary materials, such as poetry and prose, were used as educational materials at the beginning of the modern era in Europe (Loop, 2017). The characteristics of literary materials, including novels—rich in vocabulary and styles that highlight the author's way of thinking—make them suitable for teaching Arabic, especially to non-native speakers.

Moreover, novels have been used as strategies in learning Arabic. Harun (2017) chose the novel "Mughamarat Tom Sawyer – The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" to apply translation learning strategies to forty samples, all of whom were university students. The research indicated that the use of translation strategies was at an intermediate level. Nevertheless, the use of novels in this research proved effective in the process of teaching and learning Arabic. Based on this context, questions arose: Do students care about novels in Arabic during their language learning? Are novels a choice for students when searching for reading materials in Arabic? Given the advantages of novels as a linguistic source, it is advisable to make them a primary option for students to master the Arabic language as much as possible.

Unfortunately, many studies indicate the opposite. For example, a study by Noor Adawiyah et al. (2017) conducted on 543 students at several public universities and other institutions, including Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), focused on the topic of reading material selection among these students. To obtain the required data,

they used the Emotional Inventory Test tool. The study concluded that there are three preferred reading areas for students: religion, education, and food. However, novels, which fall under literature, were not a primary choice for reading materials among these students.

These results are consistent with findings from a study by Ab. Halim and Wan Muhammad (2016) conducted on 130 public university students. The study revealed that 86.1% of these students had never read literary novels before. These results indicate that no matter how much students love the Arabic language, particularly in terms of grammar and linguistics, they do not prefer novels as reading materials. This study proves that students' behavior does not align with their interests and specializations; the high percentage of students who had never read novels means they do not fully and seriously apply the Arabic language, which will be an obstacle to mastering Arabic well. Rosni et. al. (2013) also support this observation, indicating that students tend to use Arabic-Malay dictionaries and basic to intermediate Arabic textbooks to collect, record and memorize new Arabic words. Clearly, novels-despite their extensive vocabulary and distinctive language style-are not the primary choice for students to expand their Arabic vocabulary. There was a study conducted by Al-Muslim et al. (2020) to measure the effectiveness of the narrow reading approach on Arabic reading skills. However, this study only used texts (*matan*), commentaries (*syarah*), marginal notes (*hashiyah*), and summaries (*ringkasan*) as reading sources for the students involved. This study did not use Arabic novels as reading material to assess the students' reading proficiency.

Furthermore, the widespread use of social media has also led to a decline in the use of novels as teaching aids in Arabic language education. For example, Facebook has become a major source for students to obtain the latest information about Arabic, through both written content and videos (Alwerikat, 2023). This trend is supported by earlier studies, such as those by al-Rahmi et al. (2014), al-Rahmi & Zeki (2017) and al-Shawabkeh & al-Fadel (2015), which affirm that social media is a key resource for information and teaching materials that enhance students' academic performance. As a result, traditional materials like novels are no longer the preferred option for students today.

An earlier study on students' attitudes toward Arabic reading materials by Nik Farhan et al. (2010) was conducted on 170 bachelor's degree students majoring in Arabic language and literature at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The study indicated that these students read Arabic reading materials daily at a rate of 22%, but novels were not among their daily reading choices (1.2%). More than half of the sample had never read Arabic novels before (55.3%). This study suggests that novels were not a primary choice for reading materials among students, due to various factors, whether subjective or environmental, including students' weakness in understanding the text, lack of self-confidence, lack of interest in literature, difficulty finding suitable novels for mastering the language, lack of knowledge about novels, limited use of novels in the teaching and learning process, and the role of teachers. Therefore, choosing appropriate novels is a crucial condition for the effectiveness of using novels in the process of learning Arabic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research objectives, the results obtained after conducting the interviews will be discussed and divided into two main sections which are: the problems students face when using novels; and the learning strategies employed by students while reading the novel.

SECTION ONE: PROBLEMS STUDENTS FACE WHEN USING NOVELS

LACK OF MOTIVATION

The primary reason for the negative perception among students towards Arabic novels could be their personal experience, where they find it difficult to understand Arabic novels and are not frequently exposed to them. This can be understood from the interviews conducted with some sample members, where some mentioned:

1. "Honestly, I am weak in literature subjects like poetry because I do not like ornate and ambiguous texts; I prefer clear texts. So, when I get such obscure texts, I cannot understand them, and I feel less inclined to read them, feeling that I will not be able to continue reading them either." (RP1)
2. "Sometimes, when I read a novel, I find a difficult part to understand, and I sometimes feel like giving up and not continuing to read this novel." (RP4)

3. "Between poetry and novels, of course, the level of surrender in novels is higher because I have not read them. In this university stage, we have not been exposed to Arabic novels, but we have been exposed to poetry only. In the Abbasid poetry subject, we study poetry, and in the pre-Islamic poetry subject, we study poetry." (RP9)

Based on these results, the researchers see that the inability to understand the texts of the novel affects the behavior, desires, and perceptions of students towards using the novel in learning the Arabic language. The high and advanced linguistic level in the novel is one of the factors that make students less attracted to it and also less preferred as a linguistic material leading to mastering the Arabic language.

LACK OF DESIRE

Internal factors play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions towards using the novel in the process of learning Arabic. Some sample members' behaviors indicate their lack of desire to use the novel in the learning process, showing that negative perceptions are still persistent. The lack of desire and motivation among students to read Arabic novels are internal factors preventing them from mastering the Arabic language. This can be understood from the data obtained from the interviews with the sample members:
1. "From the beginning, there is no desire, so it is difficult for us to read it. When we want to read, we feel lazy, and while reading, we do not understand, so these two problems hinder us." (RP1)
2. "Reading the Malay novel is difficult, so how about reading the Arabic novel." (RP5)
3. "I do not prefer the novel, as I said earlier, so I will read a little of it only, not a lot. I cannot bear reading the novel; I quickly get bored." (RP8)

The behaviors of students who do not prefer reading novels indicate that this is the main obstacle preventing them from using the novel as an auxiliary material in learning the language. These behaviors can be summarized as a lack of desire among these students to read Arabic novels.

HIGH AND ADVANCED LANGUAGE LEVEL

The interview results indicated that students display selective behavior toward choosing novels as reading material due to two main factors: the language level of the novel and the students' understanding of the novel. It was clear that the complex and advanced language of the novels is a major obstacle preventing students from reading them. For example, one student said:
1. "If I see that its language level is very high, I won't read it." (RP9)

LACK OF EXPOSURE TO ARABIC PROSE

The interviews also revealed that students are confused when asked about literature and novels, as they perceive literature to revolve solely around poetry and are unaware that literature includes prose as well. This limited understanding of Arabic literature leads to a lack of development in their skills in dealing with novels. One student said:
1. "In this university stage, we have not been exposed to Arabic novels, but only to poetry. For example, in the Abbasid poetry course, we study poetry, and the same goes for the pre-Islamic poetry course." (RP9)

SECTION 2: STRATEGIES FOR READING NOVELS TO ACQUIRE ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING

USING ARABIC DICTIONARIES

One of the main strategies students use while reading Arabic novels is relying on dictionaries, whether in paper form or online. All students in the sample utilized dictionaries to understand the texts more accurately. One student said:
1. "I often use my phone, as there is a correct dictionary, and also Google Translate, at least to get the meaning. I use the dictionary, and rarely do I ask someone else." (RP2)
2. "I try to understand everything I read, and if I encounter any unfamiliar words, I refer to the dictionary and try to relate it to the sentence context and adapt it to the sentence context." (RP4)
3. "What helps me a lot is the "Ma'any" Dictionary for synonyms and antonyms; I've benefited greatly from it." (RP8)
4. "When I see the dictionary, the first thing I look for is the word I didn't understand. I look it up because sometimes one word has many meanings." (RP9)

Using dictionaries is a straightforward solution for students to overcome the barriers to understanding texts and narratives in Arabic novels. This result aligns with a previous study by Hairun Najuwah Jamali et al. (2015), which indicated a very high percentage of dictionary use as an auxiliary material in Arabic language education across three educational institutions. The advantages and capabilities of dictionaries in helping students comprehend Arabic texts, including novels, make them a primary choice for students when assigned to read Arabic novels.

USING BILINGUAL NOVELS

Some students exert effort in reading bilingual novels (English-Arabic) and use them as a means to instill a desire to read novels and give them an initial understanding of the content. According to some of the students, the strategy of reading bilingual novels helps them unconsciously build translation skills and understand translated texts. Their efforts in finding bilingual novels that match their language proficiency should be appreciated. One student said:

1. "I bought an English novel translated into Arabic, meaning there are two pages, one in Arabic and the adjacent page in English. Therefore, if I don't understand the texts in Arabic, I refer to the texts in English because we understand English better. If I don't understand the texts in English, I will try to look at their meaning in Malay. I use the translation technique while reading the novel." (RP2)
2. "In my opinion, the bilingual novel is a tool... That's why I love the bilingual novel because its translation cannot be wrong... One side of the page is in Arabic, and the other side of the page is in English." (RP6)

REFERRING TO THE TEACHER

The efforts made by students to read Arabic novels will be fruitful if there are other creative approaches that can be used while reading the novel, such as the guidance provided by a creative teacher. Siti Rohani et al. (2020) proved that using various effective approaches and the role of a creative teacher has a positive impact on learning the Arabic language. Al-Muslim and Zamri (2015) confirmed the same, mentioning that the role of an effective teacher is important in influencing students' performance. Therefore, it is not surprising that most students in

the sample use the strategy of referring to the teacher or instructor when they encounter difficulty while reading Arabic novels. One student said:

1. "In truth, students must rely on the teacher. Like me... because without the teacher, we might misunderstand. So, whether we like it or not, we must be tutored by them. I myself have set a special strategy, which is to refer to the teacher. Because sometimes we don't find a specific word anywhere, but we find it with the teacher during learning." (RP4)

REFERRING TO NATIVE ARABIC SPEAKERS

The strategy of seeking help is not limited to consulting teachers only. Some students in the sample make efforts to interact with and seek explanations from native Arabic-speaking students. This is considered the best strategy as Arabic is their mother tongue. Students in the sample described the explanations provided by native speakers as clear, which helped them understand the narrative of the novel:

1. "If I don't understand, I will ask someone who knows more than me, and if I have the opportunity, I will ask native Arabs themselves." (RP4)
2. "If I don't understand, I will definitely ask native Arabs." (RP6)

BENEFITING FROM ARABIC WRITING STYLES

Arabic novels help students improve their Arabic language skills, particularly in reading, writing, and translation. The unique Arabic styles used in these novels can serve as a guide for students to produce good Arabic writing. Some students noted:

1. "Certainly, it helps in improving writing skills because novels use beautiful language and writing styles. Sometimes we can see it for ourselves. The authors of novels are often great people, so when we read their writings, we can unconsciously learn how to write, for example, how to describe a certain situation as the author did." (RP4)
2. "We find many vocabulary words that we can apply in writing." (RP7)

Using various strategies while reading Arabic novels, all the students in the sample agree that there is a positive impact on learning the Arabic language.

CONCLUSION

Based on the interview results, Arabic novels are an effective educational resource for learning Arabic, helping students enhance their language skills and understand the culture of the society. It is suggested to expose students to Arabic novels as much as possible in every course or study plan offered by the university. For instance, sentences from novels can be used in grammar or rhetoric courses. However, it is essential to select novels that match the students' proficiency levels because materials that are too advanced can discourage them from continuing to read the novel and delve into the material. To overcome this issue, the teacher's strong literary background is crucial in selecting appropriate texts for students before transitioning to novels with advanced vocabulary.

The use of novels in teaching Arabic to non-native students is still limited and not serious. Lack of motivation, interest, the high language level of novels, and limited exposure to Arabic novels contribute to the underuse of literary materials in learning Arabic. Therefore, it is important to integrate literature and Arabic language learning. Novels can be used in every branch of knowledge, and literary materials can highlight students' translation skills. Additionally, the study results indicate that students use various strategies while reading novels, including using dictionaries, bilingual novels, consulting teachers and native speakers, and applying Arabic writing styles. Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that the use of novels achieves its intended goals, helping students master Arabic. Future studies can explore this further by focusing on teachers' approaches to using novels in teaching Arabic or evaluating the effectiveness of using novels in mastering Arabic among non-native students in other educational institutions in Malaysia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nursafira Lubis Safian conceptualized the study and led the data collection process. Nur Farhana Mohamad Zainol was responsible for the data analysis and interpretation. Mohamad Zulfazdlee Abul Hassan Ashari contributed to the literature review and manuscript drafting. Mohammad Ahmad al-Qudah provided expertise in translation, cultural interpretation, and contributed to the manuscript revision. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

REFERENCE

Ab. Halim Mohamad & Wan Muhammad Wan Sulong. 2016. Minat dan sikap pelajar bacelor Bahasa Arab di IPTA Malaysia terhadap Bahasa Arab. *Jurnal al-Anwar* 1(1): 21-37.

Abdul Razif Zaini, Noorshamsinar Zakaria, Hasmadi Hamdan, Muhammad Redzaudin Ghazali, & Mohd. Rufian Ismail. 2019. Pengajaran Bahasa Arab di Malaysia: Permasalahan dan cabaran. *Jurnal Pengajian Islam* 12(1): 47-57.

Ahmad Munawar Ismail & Mohd. Nor Shahizan Ali. 2018. *Kaedah Penyelidikan Sosial daripada Perspektif Islam*. Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Alwreikat, A. 2023. Student's motivation for using Facebook for academic purposes: Qualitative approach. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 50(1): 99-110.

Bloemert, J., Paran. A., Jansen, E., & Grift, W. V. D. 2017. Student's perspective on the benefits of EFL Literature Education. *The Language Learning Journal* 1-14.

Al-Dajani, B. A. S. 2019. The function of Arabic literature in Arabic language teaching: A gateway to cultural literacy. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 46(1): 281-293.

Edmondson, W. The role of literature in foreign language learning and teaching: Some valid assumptions and invalid arguments. In A. Mauranen. & K. Sajavaara (eds.). 1997. *Applied Linguistics Across Disciplines*. AILA Review No. 12 – 1995/6. 42–55.

Gamal Abdul Nasir Zakaria, Salwa Mahalle & Aliff Nawi. 2015. Kajian amalan pengajaran guru Bahasa Arab sekolah menengah di Negara Brunei Darussalam. *The Online Journal of Islamic Education* 3(1): 32-40.

Hairun Najuwah Jamali, Awatif Abd. Rahman & Ku Fatahiyah Ku Azizan. 2015. Tahap penggunaan bahan bantu mengajar dalam pembelajaran dan pengajaran Bahasa Arab di USIM, UNISZA dan Pusat Asasi UIAM. *Journal of Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah* 2(1): 1-14.

Harun Baharudin. 2017. Strategi dan teknik terjemahan novel Arab dalam kalangan pelajar universiti. *GEMA Online: Journal of Language Studies* 17(4): 225-243.

Kamarul Shukri Mat Teh, Nik Mohd. Rahimi Nik Yusoff, Mohamed Amin Embi & Zamri Mahamod. 2009. Hubungan penggunaan strategi pembelajaran bahasa dengan tahap penguasaan Bahasa Arab. *Journal of Islamic and Arabic Education* 1(1): 41-56.

Khataybeh, Y. S. 2024. Narrative construction between the Arabic and Chinese novel: Naguib Mahfouz and Ba Jin as two examples. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 51(1): 295-304.

Lily Hanefarezan Asbulah, Maimun Aqsha Lubis, Ashinida Aladdin & Mus'ab Sahrim. 2020. The level of students' engagement in Arabic within public universities. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education* 35(1): 1–16.

Loop, J. 2017. Arabic poetry as teaching material in early modern grammars and textbooks. In *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, edited by J. Loop, Hamilton, A. & Burnett, C. E. J. Brill.

Mohd Shahrizal Nasir, Nurkhamimi Zainuddin & Muhammad Sabri Sahrir. 2017. Persepsi pelajar bukan muslim terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. *Islamiyyat: The International Journal of Islamic Studies* 39(1): 29-37.

Mohd. Taqwudin Mohd. Yazid, Wan Muhammad Wan Sulong, Nik Farhan Mustapha & Mohd. Azidan Abdul Jabar. 2022. Teknik pelajar bukan Muslim belajar bertutur Bahasa Arab secara dalam talian. *GEMA Online: Journal of Language Studies* 22(4): 327-350.

Muhammad Sabri Sahrir. 2015. Bahasa Arab tembusi pengajian formal di sekolah, universiti. *Berita Harian*. https://www.bharian.com.my/ taxonomy/ term/61/2015/09/83907/bahasa-arab-tembusi-pengajian-formal-di-sekolah-universiti. Accessed on: 4th October 2023.

Munawwar Mustafa Muhammad & Zamri Arifin. 2013. Tanmiyah Maharah al-Ta'bir fi al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah li ghayr al-Natiqin biha. *Islamiyyat: The International Journal of Islamic Studies* 35(2): 109-112.

Al-Muslim Mustapa & Zamri Arifin. 2015. Penentuan dimensi kualiti guru Bahasa Arab di Malaysia. *Islamiyyat: The International Journal of Islamic Studies* 37(1): 49-57.

Al-Muslim Mustapa, Zulkifli Nawawi, Salamiah Ab. Ghani, Maryam Abdul Rahman, Zuraida Shaadon & Nur Syazwina Mustapa. 2020. Keberkesanan pendekatan narrow reading terhadap kefahaman membaca teks Islamik. *Islamiyyat: The International Journal of Islamic Studies* 42(2): 85-92.

Al-Muslim Mustapa. 2023. Framework of integration between Arabic Language and Qira'at. *Islamiyyat* 45 (Special Edition): 75-81.

Nik Farhan Mustapha, Nik Hanan Mustapha & Abdul Rahman Chik. 2010. Tabiat membaca dalam Bahasa Arab. Dlm. *Pancadimensi Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Bahasa: Trend dan Amalan*, disunting oleh Ambigapathy Pandian et al. Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Noor Adawiyah Ahmad Radzi, Nik Farhan Mustapha & Pabiyah Hajimaming@Tok Lubok. 2017. Pemilihan bahan bacaan Arab dalam kalangan pelajar universiti awam. *Jurnal Kesidang* 2: 144-153.

Noorsyuhada Mohamed Salleh & Maheram Ahmad. 2015. Tinjauan literatur penterjemahan novel Melayu ke Bahasa Arab. *Islamiyyat* 37(2): 147-152.

Nursafira Lubis Safian, Mohamad Zulfazdlee Abul Hassan Ashari & Nik Hanan Mustapha. 2022. Persepsi dan strategi pelajar bukan Arab terhadap penggunaan novel dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. *Issues in Language Studies* 11(1): 55-73.

Othman Lebar. 2009. *Penyelidikan Kualitatif: Pengenalan kepada Teori dan Metod*. Penerbit Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris.

Oxford, R. 1990. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Newsbury House.

Paran, A. 2008. The role of literature in instructed foreign language learning and teaching: An evidence-based survey. *Language Teaching* 41(4): 465-496.

Al-Rahmi, W. M., Othman, M. S. & Musa, M. A. 2014. The improvement of students' academic performance by using social media through collaborative learning in Malaysia Higher Education. *Asian Social Science* 10(8): 210-221.

Al-Rahmi, W.M. & Zeki, A. M. 2017. A Model of Using social media for collaborative learning to enhance learners' performance on learning. *Journal of King Saud University-Computer and Information Sciences* 29(4): 526-535.

Rokiah Paee, Lam Kai Chee, Kuan Wee Ling & Najwa Hanani Kopli. 2024. Demotivation in Mandarin as a foreign language among Malaysian tertiary students. *Journal of Nusantara Studies* 9(2): 40-56.

Rosni Samah, Mohd. Fauzi Abdul Hamid, Shaferul Hafes Sha'ari & Amizan Helmi Mohamad. 2013. Aktiviti pengajaran kemahiran bertutur Bahasa Arab dalam kalangan jurulatih debat. *GEMA Online: Journal of Language Studies* 13(2): 99-116.

Ruzbeh Babaee & Wan Roselezam Bt Wan Yahya. 2014. Significance of literature in foreign language teaching. *International Education Studies* 7(4): 80-85.

Shanahan, D. 1997. Articulating the relationship between language, literature and culture: Toward a new agenda for foreign language teaching and research. *The Modern Language Journal* 81(2): 164–174.

Al-Shawbakeh, Y. & al-Fadel, M. 2015. The role of social networking sites as information sources in the educational-learning process from the perspective of a sample of Jordan University students. *Dirasat: Educational Sciences* 44(4): 315-337.

Siti Rohani Jasni, Suhaila Zailani & Hakim Zainal. 2020. Impak pendekatan kreatif dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran kosa kata Arab. *BITARA International Journal of Civilizational Studies and Human Sciences* 3(1)L, 10-21.

Tsang, A., Paran, A. & Lau, W. W. 2020. The language and non-language benefits of literature in foreign language education: An exploratory study of learners' views. *Language Teaching Research* 00(0): 1-22.

Al-'Umri, F. M. A. 2018. Al-Riwayah Maddah Ta'limiah li al-Natiqin bi ghairi al-'Arabiyah: Namazij Tatbiqiyyah. *Al-Tajdid* 22(43): 137-159.