IMPROVING ARABIC WRITING SKILLS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH *JAWLAH LUGHAWIYYAH* ACTIVITY

Zulazhan Ab. Halim[1*], Mohd Shahrizal Nasir[2*], Mohd Firdaus Yahaya[3*], Wan Abdul Hayyi Wan Omar[4*] and Nur Salina Ismail[5*]

The main problem faced by the students in mastering the language is the failure to master the vocabulary of the Arabic language. To produce good writing, precise vocabulary selection is vital in the delivery of clear meanings. Moreover, the use of the five affective senses through activities outside the classroom which are structured and fun can have a positive impact on the language acquisition. An alternative medium that is *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* which implements the seven stages of language learning has been conducted towards non-native speaking students in two secondary schools in Terengganu. The main objective of this study was to identify the level of students' writing skills before and after attending the *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity. A total of 30 form four students from each school were randomly selected and some of them have undergone this activity. The data was collected by administering pre- and post-tests to all participants and was analysed using quantitative methods. The findings showed that there were significant improvements in the students' writing skills. Therefore, this study suggests that *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity needs to be practiced in the process of teaching and learning the Arabic language, particularly when involving non-native speaking students at secondary school level.

Keywords: Arabic language; non-native speaker; *Jawlah Lughawiyyah*; writing skills; Arabic vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the codes that connects the ideas shared among a certain group of people who give meaning to the sound of words, gestures and other symbols as to enable them to communicate with each other (Lahey, 1988). Diversity in languages has made human language become interdependent in uplifting the quality of life. Allah SWT created human beings with a variety of nations and languages so that people can learn from each other and share the goal of life. Allah SWT mentions in the Quran that says: "And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know." (Quran, 30: 22).

Being proficient in foreign languages, especially Arabic language indeed is an added value to individuals. Arabic has been recognized by Allah SWT as a special language to the extent it is mentioned as the language of the Quran. The beauty of the Arabic language has made it significant in bringing out the contents

---

* Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kampus Gong Badak, 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia, *E-mails: zulazhan@unisza.edu.my[1]; mohdshahrizal@unisza.edu.my[2]; mohdfirdaus@unisza.edu.my[3]; wahayyi@unisza.edu.my[4]; nursalina@unisza.edu.my[5]*

of the Quran in such a beautiful manner. Thus, various parties have sought and offered Arabic language learning either in schools, tertiary institutions, organizations or associations related to the field of language. *Pondok* institution is among the earliest institution in developing the teaching and learning of the Arabic language in Malaysia. Currently, the j-QAF (Jawi, Quran, Arabic and Fardu Ain) was introduced to primary school students in Malaysia as a part of the government's initiative to improve Arabic language learning. It is seen as a recognition to the importance of improving the quality of education that involves mastering a foreign language other than mastering the native language (Jasmi, 2002).

Arabic learning environment which involves the affective senses through outside-the- classroom activities consolidate some teaching techniques which is more relaxed, structured, interesting, nice to be heard, easy to learn, modern and fun and these teaching techniques can have a positive impact in increasing students' vocabulary and improve their language acquisition process. Hence, non-native speaking students would be able to understand the lesson that they learn and they might perceive that learning Arabic is an interesting learning process (Ghazali et al., 2010; Zawawi et al., 2011; Ismail et al., 2013). With sufficient vocabulary learning and positive perceptions towards learning the Arabic language, it helps students to enhance their motivation and level of mastering the language skills, especially writing skills (Hisham, 2007).

The four language skills are important skills which need to be learned gradually in enhancing other complex language skills. Listening skill is a basic and essential skill learned by children in the early stages before reaching the ability to speak, read and write (al-Madkur, 2001; Hyslop & Ton, 1988). However, continuous, systematic and progressive exposure towards writing skills is among the aspects that needs to be addressed seriously in the process of learning the language, but it has now become one of the effective methods of communication (Roselan, 2003; Yah et. al., 2010). A student is able to produce arranged graphic symbols by writing. This could be based on spoken texts which are formed through the word meaning that is eventually produced through the narration of the events or expression of feelings in writing forms such as texts, notes, drafts and printed materials whether long or short (Kamarudin & Siti Hajar, 1997; Ismail et. al., 2013). The teaching and learning process of writing skills is very challenging because it is closely related to several other skills such as reading skills. Academic success is closely related to the ability to read, and this relationship is logical because, in order to understand what they have read, the students must have also a huge vocabulary (Kamariah, Mahani & Bordin, 2016). Besides, having an adequate acquired vocabulary also affects the process of mastering writing skills which involves the ability to choose the right words and arrange them in the correct order as to illustrate the meaning expressed (Shahatah, 1993).

A study by Hisham Khuddaj (2007) is the principal application *for Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity in increasing of levels of Arabic language skills among non-native speaking students. Currently, Arabic learning in Malaysia only focuses on activities in the classroom through traditional teaching approach which is more teacher-centred. In this situation, students are given less opportunity to practice what they have learned in their daily outside-classroom-activities after the lessons (Azani *et al.,* 2012; Ashinida 2012). Hence, the role of students as recipients of information needs to be transformed into the explorers of diverse information through student-centred learning activities so that the students get the opportunities to explore language skills. The teacher should act as a facilitator in conducting teaching and learning session (Mohd Firdaus & Mohd Feham, 2011). This view is also supported by Esah Sulaiman (2003) in Che Zanariah Che Hassan and Fadzillah Abd. Rahman (2011), suggesting the same approaches as described in Figure 1.
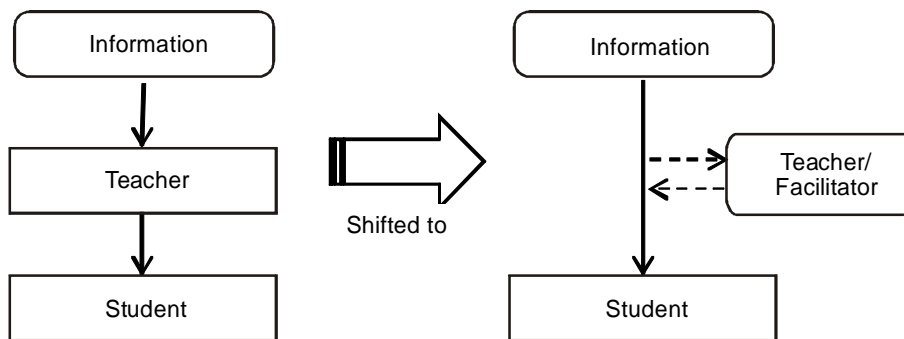
Figure 1: The Changes in Teacher's Role

Jawlah Lughawiyyah activity is a combination of language learning activities which is organized into seven structured stages (Table 1). This is a result of the combined language-learning techniques that have been tested for its effectiveness in improving the Arabic language among non-native-speaking students, particularly involving writing skills and vocabulary acquisition. This activity combines the self-learning approach (student-centred learning), active learning and group learning (study group) which are jointly utilised in implementing *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity. The structure of the activity is based on the skills and outcomes that are aligned with the learning objectives as proposed by Bloom's Taxonomy Bloom in 1956. Bloom Taxonomy outlined three domains which include cognitive, affective and psycho-motor. Cognitive domain is used to assess intellectual skills through retrieval, analysis and evaluation of information. The affective domain is used to measure generic skills, appreciation and use of the five senses that are applied through the involvement of students in the activities and group discussions such as

visit experiences, the feeling when touching and observing the historical artefacts. Psycho-motor domains are intended to strengthen the practical and technical skills to apply the knowledge gained and this can be done through communication training process, presentation, paperwork construction, teaching and sharing the findings through audio and visual (Aqilah *et al.,* 2005).

TABLE 1: STEPS IN JAWLAH LUGHAWIYYAH ACTIVITY

Steps	*Actions*
1	Identification of students' level of language.
2	Orientation and description of the assignment.
3	Information gathering relevant to the assignment (group activity).
4	Sharing of information obtained from the assignment (group activity).
5	Workshop/discussion of information gathered (individual activity).
6	Writing essays related to accumulated information (individual activity).
7	Presentation overall of *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activities in language seminar.

This article is about research on *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity. This study was conducted:

1. to introduce *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity to students who study Arabic at the secondary level

2. to identify the students' level of writing skills in the *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity.

METHODOLOGY

This study was a fieldwork utilising quantitative approach. It was conducted at two different secondary schools; SMAK and SMASZAL. The main objective of this study is to identify the level of students' writing skills before and after attending the *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity. A total of 15 Form Four students from each school were randomly selected and some of them have undergone this activity. Students were randomly selected involving two academic streams which are science and arts streams. SMAK is an all-girls school, meanwhile SMASZAL is an all-boys school. To obtain the data, this study used a pre- and post-test which was conducted before and after *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity. Figure 3 below illustrates the framework of the procedure.

After the random sampling selection, all participants sat for a one-hour pre-test to evaluate their essays before participating in the activity. The title of the essay is about educational visits or *Rihlah 'Ilmiyyah*. After carrying out the pre-
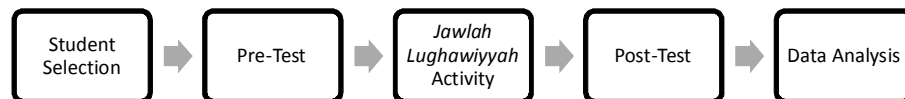
Figure 3: The Framework of the Research Procedures

test, the participants participated in an educational visit to the Terengganu State Museum. The duration between the pre-test and the educational visit is about a week. All stages, starting from the selection of students until before the post-test, are a part of the *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity. The activity consists of seven structured stages and all participants must undergo these stages. After going through all the stages in the *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity, the participants sat for a post-test for an hour. Post-test question requires the participants to write an essay as was done for the pre-test. The tests are reviewed and scrutinized based on the scores achieved by each participant in order to identify the level of writing skills

TABLE 2: SCORING RUBRIC FOR PRE- AND POST-TEST

Level	Description	Marks (%)
5 Excellent	Completes the task perfectly, all content points are included. Ideas organized effectively. Good use of linking devices. A wide range of vocabulary. Language well-developed. Errors are very few, minimal and due to ambitious attempts at complex language. Register and format appropriate.	81-100
4 Very Good	All the content points are included. Ideas organized clearly. Suitable use of linking devices. A good range of vocabulary. Language is accurate. Some errors due to attempts at complex language. Register and format mostly appropriate.	61-80
3 Good	All the content points are included. Ideas organized adequately. Use of simple linking devices. An adequate range of vocabulary. There are some errors, but none that impedes communication. A reasonable attempt at appropriate register and format.	41-60
2 Average	Communication of message not clear. Has very negative effect on the reader. Some content points required are omitted. There is irrelevant material. Structures and vocabulary are limited. Errors distract the reader and obscure communication. Register and format inconsistent or unsuccessful.	21-40
1 Weak	Has a very negative effect on the reader. Irrelevance or omission of content points. Lack of organization. Poor linking or no linking devices. Little evidence of language control. Narrow range of structure and vocabulary. Frequent errors which obscure communication. No awareness of format or register.	0-20

among the participants of *Jawlah Lughawiyyah*. The scoring rubric for this test was adapted from a scoring rubric of Wikispaces (*Social Writing Platform for Education*) as stated in Table 2. The students' performance was then analysed with reference to *One Way Anova* to identify its significance by utilizing *the Graph Pad Prism* programme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre- and post-test data were analysed based on the scoring rubric as shown in Table 2. The main components that were taken into account during the scoring process were ideas, vocabulary, style, grammar and writing format. Table 3 shows the number of students and the levels achieved by them in the pre- and post-test.

TABLE 3: RESULTS OF PRE- AND POST-TEST

		Number of Students			
		SMAK		*SMASZAL*	
Grade	*Marks*	*Pre-test*	*Post-test*	*Pre-test*	*Post-test*
Excellent	81-100	-	-	-	-
Very Good	61-80	-	7	-	2
Good	41-60	2	7	-	11
Average	21-40	8	1	12	1
Weak	0-20	5	-	3	1
Total	15	15	15	15	

Pre-test data showed that none of the students achieved the levels of "excellent" and "very good". The statistics also showed that only two students from SMAK achieved the level of "good". Besides, eight students from SMAK and twelve students from SMASZAL achieved the level of "average" and the remaining five students from SMAK and three students of SMASZAL attained the level of "weak". Another data revealed that seven students from SMAK and eleven students from SMASZAL have shown progress to "good" and only one student from each school attained "average" level.

As for the post-test, the data showed that no student attained the level of "excellent" and only one student from SMASZAL achieved "weak" level and seven students from SMAK attained "very good" level. Only two students from SMASZAL successfully scored "very good" level. Seven students from SMAK and eleven students from SMASZAL managed to raise their achievement to "good", and only one student from SMAK and SMASZAL attained the "average" level. The increase in students' writing skills performance can be seen as only one student scored "weak" in the post-test as compared to eight in the pre-test.

Pre- and post-test data analysis of this study found that there was an increase in all students who have attended the *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity. This can be seen in the Table 3 as there is a significant reduction in the number of "weak"

students compared to the increase in students who scored "good" and "very good". The significant difference of the mark was also found through the analysis carried out. There are significant differences between the achievement of students from both SMAK and SMASZAL in the pre- and post-test.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the increased language skills can be strengthened without having clear and a good command of vocabulary. Mastering vocabulary is the driving force in the construction of phrases or even the understanding of ideas. Vocabulary acquisition was analysed through writing and a significant increase in vocabulary acquisition was found among the students at SMAK and SMASZAL by looking at their achievement in the pre- and post-test.

CONCLUSION

Jawlah Lughawiyyah activity is an alternative medium for educators, especially those involved in the teaching of a foreign or a second language. This activity is believed to assist non-native students to improve writing skills and vocabulary of the Arabic language. Students benefited from the acquisition of new vocabulary during *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity as they used this new vocabulary in their essay writing. Some of the stages in this activity such as observations using the five senses, group discussion, sharing of information between partners, presentation of the results of observation and essay writing are complementary of each other in the acquisition of new vocabulary. These stages can be utilized in improving the writing skills of the students. As explained, *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity is not totally a new method to learn a language, but it is an activity that combines a number of student-centred activities. The *Jawlah Lughawiyyah* activity is organized in a structured and systematic way so that evaluation can be conducted effectively in identifying the level of language skills, both speaking and writing skills. This study is hoped to provide more opportunities that can be explored by other researchers, especially those involved in Arabic education focusing primarily on improving the writing skills of the non-native speaking students at secondary school level. The implementation of this activity for adults and working adults needs to be done to fit its suitability so that it can be shared by new researchers.

References

Al-Madkur, A.A. (1991). *Tadris Funun al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah*. Kaherah: Dar al-Syaraf.

Aqilah, B.H, W.M. Diyana W.Z., Aini, H., Hafizah, H. & Nor Fadzilah, A. (2005). *Perlaksanaan Penggunaan Taksonomi Bloom bagi Mengukur Kesesuaian Tahap dan Menjamin Keberkesanan Outcome Kursus.* Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (dalam talian) *www.ukm.my/p3k/images/sppb08/b/1.pdf.* Retrieved on 31st October 2013.

Ashinida, A. (2012). Analisis Penggunaan Strategi Komunikasi dalam Komunikasi Lisan Bahasa Arab. *GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies,* 12(2), 645-666.

Azani, I., Azman, C.M. & Mat Tai, P. (2012). Membina Kemahiran Pertuturan Menerusi Aktiviti Lakonan dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Arab. *GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies,* 12(1), 325-337.

Bloom, B.S., Engelhart, M.D., Furst, E.J., Hill, W.H., & Krathwohl, D.R. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. Handbook 1 Cognitive Domain.* New York: David McKay.

Che Zanariah, C.H. & Fadzilah, A.R. (2011). Pelaksanaan Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Kemahiran Menulis di Sekolah Rendah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu,* 1(1), 67-87.

FCE for ENSTBB, FCE Writing – Scale. *http://fceforenstbb.wikispaces.com/FCE+Writing+-+Scale.* Retrieved on 2nd December 2013.

Hisham, K. (2007). Al-Rihlat al-Madrasiyyah al-Taw'amah bayn al-Tarfiyah wa al-Ifadah al-Tarbawiyah, *Al-Majallah al-Tarbawiyah, 41/Tishrin Awwal*, Suriyyah: Wizarah al-Tarbiyah wa al-Ta'lim.

Hyslop, N. & Tone, B. (1988). Listening: Are We Teaching It, and If So, How. ERIC Digest 3 *http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED295132.* Retrieved on 30th October 2013.

Ismail, M., Wan Maizatul Akmar, W.A & Azman, C. (2013). Sikap dan Realiti Penguasaan Kemahiran Bahasa Arab Pelajar Program j-QAF. *GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies,* 13(2), 81-97.

Jasmi, A. (2002). *Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Komunikasi dari Sudut Pembacaan dan Penulisan: Satu Kajian Terhadap Murid Tingkatan Tiga Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama Johor Bahru*. Johor: Fakulti Pendidikan Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Kamariah, Y., Mahani, M., & Bordin, W. (2016). The Breadth of Receptive Vocabulary Knowledge among English Major University Students. *Journal of Nusantara Studies,* 1(1), 7-17.

Kamarudin, H. & Siti Hajar A.Z. (1997). *Keterampilan Bahasa*. Kuala Lumpur: Kumpulan Budiman Sdn. Bhd.

Lahey. M. (1988) *Language Disorder and Language Development*. New York: Macmillan.

Mohd Feham, G. & Mohd Firdaus, Y. (2011). Evaluating the Use of e-Portfolio as an Alternative Assessment Tool for Students Majoring Arabic and Islamic Studies: Some Experiences from International Islamic University Malaysia. *Proceeding of Language and Education Conference (LEC 2011)*, organised by Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 23-24 November.

Roselan, B. (2003). *Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu*. Shah Alam: Karisma Publications Sdn. Bhd.

The Holy Quran (Trans: Abdullah Yusuf Ali). (2000). Birmingham: Wordsworth Classic of World Literature.

Zawawi, I., Ab Halim, T., Nik Mohd Rahimi, N.Y. & Mohd Ala-Uddin, O. (2011). Teknik Pengajaran Kemahiran Bertutur Bahasa Arab di SMKA di Malaysia. *GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies,* 11(2), 67-82.