Academic and Social Media Practices of Arabic Language among Malaysian Students

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ABSTRACT
Nowadays, more and more countries are paying attention to graduates' language skill and sending their students abroad to learn languages. As an Islamic country, Malaysia has sent many students to learn Arabic language and Islamic knowledge. This paper aims at examining the level of practice of Arabic language among Malaysian students in Jordanian universities. The study seeks to answer the following questions: What is the level of practice of Arabic language (academic, social media) among Malaysian students of Jordanian universities? Do any significant differences exist in the level of Arabic language practiced by Malaysian students of Jordanian universities in relation to certain variables? Results indicate that the Malaysian students had a medium level of practice of Arabic language. Significant differences were observed among gender, marital status, and field of study variables, whereas no significant difference was identified among university, level of study, distance of residence to the university, previous school, housemate qualities, nor CGPA.

INTRODUCTION
Many nations have acknowledged the need to produce more graduates who are multilingual in the effort to compete in the global society. Malaysia has confirmed the importance of proficiency in a third language in order to develop human capital that helps the economy besides remaining competitive in the international arena (Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009 ; Pufahl, Rhodes & Christian, 2000). As an Islamic country, Malaysia is one of the countries paying most attention to the study and preservation of Arabic language, and it provides scholarships to support a large number of students to study abroad in different fields related to the study of Arabic (Latifah binti Abdul Latiff, 2004).

According to Oberg (2006) students studying abroad undergo four stages in their adjustment and practice of the target language. In the first few weeks, most of the students were observed to have a fascination with the new environment and language. This stage may last from a few days or weeks to six months depending on circumstances. The second stage is characterized by a hostile and aggressive attitude toward the host country, resulting in troubles at home and school, in language study, transportation, and shopping, whereas the people in the host country are largely indifferent to all these troubles. The consequence is aggression and the tendency of the students to join their fellow countrymen in criticizing the host country. People who overcome the second stage stay in the host country; otherwise, they leave before reaching the stage of a nervous breakdown. If the students succeed in obtaining knowledge of the language, which is a basic requirement in learning, and begin to use the language, their learning will be facilitated. In acquiring a complete adjustment at the fourth stage, one not only adapts to the food, drinks, habits, and language, but also begins to enjoy them. Students who are in the process of practice and understanding will attain enjoyment in time.

The language acquisition process does not involve a conscious or organized effort, but it is a tradition and simulation dependent on social learning theory. According to Bandura, a basic role of social learning theory is an individual obtaining opportunities in various life situations and spontaneously as required in social communication. For example, the children acquire language by exposure to many opportunities involving the practice of the language with the community and learning the origins of the language and its rules (Abdulsalam, 2012; Lightbown & Spada, 2002).

So, the high interaction within a group will result in an individual learning the target language more rapidly than an individual performing self-learning because of the continued use and practice of the language. Alternatively, a student who does not engage in interaction will fall behind because of inadequate practice and use of the language (David, 1997).

De Keyser (2007) indicated that practice has a central importance in skill acquisition in both cognitive and educational psychology. In cognitive psychology, Anderson (2000) mentioned the adaptive control of thought theory that hypothesizes practice as the driving force behind skill acquisition and the vehicle that can transform declarative knowledge to procedural and then to automatized knowledge. In educational psychology, Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993), Ericsson and Charness (1994), and Ericsson (1996) demonstrated the effect of deliberate practice in developing expert skills in a wide range of domains. In addition, numerous hours of specific practice and training are necessary in reaching the highest levels of performance (Ericsson, 2006). Contrary to common belief, the effects of extended deliberate practice are highly extensive. Performers can acquire skills that circumvent the basic limitations on working memory capacity and sequential processing. Deliberate practice also induces anatomical changes as a result of adaptation to intense physical activity. The study of expert performance has important implications for our understanding of the structure and limits of human adaptation and optimal learning. The scientific study of deliberate practice will enhance our knowledge about how experts optimize the increase in performance and motivation through a high level of daily practice continued for days, months, and years (Ericsson, 2004).

De Keyser (1998) viewed the relevance of practice in second language learning as an essential skill to be acquired, and the engagement in deliberate practice predicted higher performance ratings (Sonnentag and Kleinc, 2000). Ushida (2005) identified students who are most successful in learning a second language as those who consistently speak the language and integrate with the culture connected with the language. This is strongly associated with the personality of the individual (Smith and Renk, 2007).

On the other hand, we are currently surrounded by new technology, such as computers, the Internet, e-mail, voice mail, compact discs, and fax machines, which create meaningful and relevant contexts for learning language. According to modern language principles and practice, the use of ICT can bring people directly into contact/practice with others from around the world, and provide real-life contexts that motivate students and young people and help them to see a purpose to their language learning and help them to develop their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the culture surrounding the language being studied (Education Scotland, 2015).

In this study, we discuss about social media, Grahl (2013) revealed that social media can be divided into six different which include: 1.social networks (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn); 2.bookmarking sites (e.g., Delicious, StumbleUpon); 3.social news (e.g., Digg, Reddit); 4.media sharing (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, Flickr); 5.microblogging (e.g., Twitter); and 6.blogging, particularly comments and forums. The popularity of social media tools has increased dramatically over the past years.

Hillman and Säljö (2016) advocated that academic learning was not only limited in the school, the use of social media is also one important resource. Hence, the practice of Arabic language learners does not only depend on the academic aspect, that is, the atmosphere of learning and teaching in the field of education, but also on the direction and extent of practice in various areas, such as random exposure, involvement in the social community, culture and customs, participation in different clubs and activities, and use of media or television (Ahmed, 2011). Moreover, Mikal and Grace (2012) commented that social media and electronic connections to family members can reduce stress and help students with psychological adjustment in living abroad. Emotionally well-adjusted students find it easier to enjoy their experience in a foreign culture and to be more satisfied when engaging with locals (Mikal, Yang, & Lewis, 2014).

Álvarez Valencia (2015) declared that "social networking has compelled the area of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) to expand its research palette and account for new virtual ecologies that afford language learning and socialization".

New technical possibilities result in new types of text and then to new social possibilities, as people find different means of communicating and practicing a language with each other (Shortis, 2001). Gray et al. (2007) revealed that students overall have a positive perception on the use of Internet tools in language study. A computer-mediated communication environment was revealed to decrease the psychological barriers of students, enabling them to freely express their opinions and to actively communicate on the Internet, while their critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills are enhanced by online activities or class homepage construction. The criterion of success is whether students have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their language practice, their understanding of their language practice, and the situations in which they practice (Atweh et al., 2002).

Godwin-Jones (2016) discussed in his study the personal and learning benefits of technology use while abroad, the formation of second-language identities, the affordances for pragmatic language development, the integration of mobile devices for place-based language learning, and the opportunities for enhancing intercultural communication competence; all of this explained that social media help students in language learning while abroad.

Only a few studies have discussed the impact factors on language learning abroad, for example: gender (Kinginger, 2013; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005), age, racial or ethnic characteristics (Simon & Ainsworth, 2012) and Social class and economic status also can be factors as well (Kinginger, 2004). A major contributor to success or failure is motivation, or the degree to which students are invested in becoming part of the target linguistic and cultural community (Godwin-Jones, 2016).

Hence the purpose of this study is to investigate the level of practice of Arabic language (academic, social media) among Malaysian students in Jordanian universities. And to see if any significant differences exist in the level of Arabic language practice of Malaysian students in Jordanian universities in relation to gender, university, field of study, level of study, marital status, distance of residence to the university, previous school, housemate qualities, and CGPA.

METHODS

Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study comprised Malaysian students who are studying in Jordanian universities. After researchers refer to some of the studies (Harmer, 1991; Raban, Brown, Care, Rickards & O'Connell, 2011). The language practice questionnaire covered 35 items and the researchers distributed them to a random sample of 386 students from the following institutions see [Table 1]

Table 1. Frequency and percent scores on variables

Study Variables	variables levels	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	170	44.0
	Female	216	56.0
University	University of Jordan	15	3.9
	University of Yarmouk	160	41.5
	University of Mu'tah	53	13.7
	Jordan University of Science and Technology	37	9.6
	Al Bait University	121	31.3
Field of Study	Study of Islam (Shariah/Usuluddin/Islamic Economics...)	260	67.4
	B.A. (Language/Literature Arabic...)	87	22.5
	Science (Medical/Dental/Pharmacy...)	39	10.1
Level Of Study	Year 1	189	49.0
	Year 2	86	22.3
	Year 3	68	17.6
	Year 4	43	11.1
Marital Status	Single	371	96.1
	Married	15	3.9
Distance of residence to the university	About 500 meters	223	57.8
	Around 1000 meters	60	15.5
	More than 1000 meters	103	26.7
Previous School	National Religious Secondary School	92	23.8
	Religious Government Aided School	149	38.6
	People of Religious school	65	16.8
	National Secondary/Boarding School	80	20.7
Housemates	From one country (Malaysia) only	106	27.5
	the various states (Malaysia)	263	68.1
	A variety of countries, including Jordan	17	4.4
C. Percentage G.P.A.	84 to	20	5.2
	68-75	177	45.9
	76-83	162	42.0
	68 and below	27	7.0
	Total	**386**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows the details of the participants. From this table we can see that the number of female students (216) exceeds the male students (170); University of Jordanian (10 males and 5 females), Yarmouk (72 males and 88 females), Mu'tah (12 males and 41 females), Science and Technology (22 males and 15 females), and Al Bait (12 males and 41 females). Some 96.1% of participants are single and 67.4% participants study in field of Islam. Furthermore, around 80% participants' previous schools are religious schools and around 96% participants' housemates are Malaysian.

Reliability of the Instrument

According to Pallant (2007), reliability refers to internal consistency, which denotes the extent of cohesion among the items of the instrument; that is, how the items measure the same underlying construct (language practice). The results are shown in [Table 2]

Table 2. Coefficient reliability of the language practice scale

Cronbach's alpha	N of Items
.94	36

Among various statistical references, the main test used to check the reliability or the internal consistency of the instrument was the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which should have a value of more than .7 (Pallant, 2007). With the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .94 for the entire instrument (36 items) of the language practice scale, therefore the instrument is acceptable and has good internal consistency (.94 > .7).

FINDINGS

The study answers the following three questions:

1. What is the level of Arabic language practice (academic and social media) of Malaysian students in Jordanian universities?

To answer this question, the researcher analyzed the language practice score from SPSS. Means and standard deviations scores were used to clarify the level of Arabic language practice of Malaysian students in Jordanian universities.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations scores on the practice item

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Practice	386	3.4624	.59768
Social media Practice	386	3.2205	.75220
Valid N (list wise)	386		

Table 3 shows that students have a medium level of academic practice (M=3.46, SD=0.59), and social media practice (M = 3.22, SD = 0.75) for Arabic language. And the participants practice using social media less than academic practice.

2. Do any significant differences exist in the level of Arabic language practice of Malaysian students in Jordanian universities in relation to gender, university, field of study, level of study, marital status, distance of residence to the university, previous school, housemate qualities, and C. percentage G.P.A.?

The following Table 4 gives the mean and standard deviation scores on the practice language according to variables of the study.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations scores on the practice language by variables of the study

Study Variables	Variables levels	Mean	Std. Dev.
Gender	Male	3.40	0.61
	Female	3.38	0.61
University	University of Jordan	3.19	0.45
	University of Yarmouk	3.34	0.62
	University of Mu'tah	3.45	0.59
	Jordan University of Science and Technology	3.01	0.59
	Al Bait University	3.56	0.56
Field of Study	Study of Islam (Shariah/Usuluddin/Islamic Economics...)	3.38	0.57
	B.A. (Language/Literature Arabic...)	3.62	0.61
	Science (Medical/Dental/Pharmacy...)	2.97	0.58

Level Of Study	Year 1	3.37	0.62
	Year 2	3.28	0.54
	Year 3	3.57	0.53
	Year 4	3.41	0.73
Marital Status	Single	3.37	0.60
	Married	3.92	0.55
Distance of residence to the university	About 500 meters	3.41	0.63
	Around 1000 meters	3.39	0.45
	More than 1000 meters	3.34	0.65
Previous School	BC National Religious	3.42	0.53
	Religious BC Government Assistance	3.41	0.62
	SM Agama Rakyat	3.45	0.64
	BC National/Residential	3.26	0.64
Housemates	From one country (Malaysia) only	3.29	0.55
	the various states (Malaysia)	3.39	0.62
	A variety of countries, including Jordan	3.95	0.47
C. Percentage G.P.A.	84 to	3.21	0.66
	68-75	3.37	0.63
	76-83	3.47	0.57
	68 and below	3.17	0.61

As shown in Table 4, significant differences were observed between the averages of second language practice among the respondents, considering the previously mentioned variables. To examine the significance of these statistical differences, nine-way ANOVA without interaction analysis was performed, and the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. 9-way ANOVA without Interaction on the practice Arabic language by variables of the study

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Gender	2.561	1	2.561	8.297	0.004
University	2.448	4	0.612	1.982	0.097
Field of Study	3.631	2	1.816	5.882	0.003
Level of Study	2.484	3	0.828	2.682	0.047
Marital Status	3.013	1	3.013	9.761	0.002
Distance of Residence	0.375	2	0.188	0.608	0.545
Previous School	0.706	3	0.235	0.762	0.516
Housemates	4.746	2	2.373	7.687	0.001
C Average GPA	2.908	3	0.969	3.140	0.025
Error	112.366	364	0.309		
Total	142.396	385			

Table 5 shows the statistically significant differences among the following variables at the level of $\alpha \geq 0.05$ in the second language practice: there are no significant difference $\alpha \geq 0.05$ among universities, Distance of residences and Previous schools. Moreover, there are significant difference $\alpha < 0.05$ in male (M =3.40, SD = 0.61) and female (M = 3.38, SD = 0.61) the results favored male respondents, Marital status married (M = 3.92, SD = 0.55) and not married (M = 3.37, SD = 0.60) the results favored respondents who were married.

To derive the statistically significant difference field of Study (Study of Islam or B.A. or Science), Level of Study (Year 1 or Year 2 or Year 3 or Year 4), Housemates (From one country (Malaysia) only or the various states (Malaysia) or A variety of countries, including Jordan), C Average GPA (84 to or 68-75 or 76-83 or 68 and below) the researcher conducted the Levene test to check the homogeneity of variances, power and robust to non-normality (Gastwirth & Miao, 2009), the results are shown in [Table 6].

Table 6. Levene test results of practice by variable (Field of Study, level Of Study Housemate, C. Average GPA)

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.387	254	131	0.018

The results indicated a violation of the homogeneity of variance at the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ because of the variables of the study, which include field of study, level of study, housemate qualities, and CGPA. Hence ($\alpha < 0.05$). Thus, the researchers implemented the Games–Howell test to detect significant differences between the arithmetic mean which include field of study, level of study, housemate qualities, and CGPA. Hence. The Games-Howell is essentially a *t*-test for unequal variances that accounts for the heightened likelihood of finding statistically significant results by chance when running many pairwise tests (Howell, 2012). The results of this test are presented in Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10.

To detect significant differences between Field of Study (Study of Islam or B.A. or Science), the researcher used the Games –Howell test to analysis the language practice scores and the results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Games –Howell test the degree of practice by variable Field of Study

Field of Study		**Science (Medical/Dental/ Pharmacy...)**	**Study of Islam (*Shariah*/ *Usuluddin*/ Islamic Economics...)**
Games-Howell	Mean	2.965	3.376
Study of Islam (*Shariah*/*Usuluddin*/Islamic Economics...)	3.376	0.411	
B.A. (Language/Literature Arabic...)	3.618	0.653	0.242

The findings demonstrate a statistically significant difference at the level of $\alpha \geq 0.05$ for the arithmetic mean of field of study, which favored students of B.A. in Language/Literature Arabic ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.65$) compared with those specializing in Science (Medical/Dental/Pharmacy) ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.41$) and *Shariah/Usuluddin*/Islamic Economics ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.24$) . By contrast, the differences were more favorable to students of *Shariah/Usuluddin*/Islamic Economics than to students of Science (Medical/Dental/Pharmacy) in Arabic language practice.

To detect significant differences between Level of Study (Year 1 or Year 2 or Year 3 or Year 4), the researcher used the Games-Howell test to analysis the language practice scores and the results are shown in [Table 8].

Table 8. Games –Howell test the degree of practice by variable level of Study

Level Of Study		Year 2	Year 1	Year 4
Games-Howell	Mean	3.279	3.368	3.410
Year 1	3.368	0.089		
Year 4	3.410	0.131	0.042	
Year 3	3.574	0.295	0.206	0.164

As shown in Table 8, a statistically significant difference for level of study was observed, favoring Year 3 students ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.29$) more than Year 4 students ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.13$), Years 2 students ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.09$) and Year 1 students ($M=3.36$, $SD = 0.042$) in Arabic language practice.

To detect significant differences between Housemates (From one country (Malaysia) only or the various states (Malaysia) or A variety of countries, including Jordan), the researcher used the Games-Howell test to analyze the language practice scores and the results are shown in [Table 9].

Table 9. Games –Howell test the degree of practice by variable Housemate

Housemates		From one country (Malaysia) only	The various states (Malaysia)
Games-Howell	Mean	3.286	3.395
the various states (Malaysia)	3.395	0.108	
A variety of countries, including Jordan	3.946	0.660	0.551

The differences that appeared of housemates as in the Table 9 were in favor students of variety of countries including Jordan (M = 3.95, SD = 0.66) compared with from one country (Malaysia) (M = 3.29, SD = 0.11) and the various states (Malaysia) (M = 3.39, SD = 0.55) in Arabic language practice.
To detect significant differences between CGPA (84 and above or 68-75 or 76-83 or 68 and below), the researcher used the Games-Howell test to analysis the language practice scores and the results are shown in [Table 10]

Table 10. Games –Howell test the degree of practice by variable C. Average GPA

C. Percentage G.P.A.		68 and below	84 and above	68-75
Games-Howell	Mean	3.172	3.206	3.373
84 and above	3.206	0.034		
68-75	3.373	0.201	0.167	
76-83	3.466	0.294	0.260	0.092

Table 10 presents a statistically significant difference for CGPA, which favored students of 76 to 83 (M=3.47, SD=0.29) compared with 68-75 (M=3.37, SD=0.09), 84 to (M=3.21, SD=0.17), 68 and below (M=3.17, SD = 0.03) in Arabic language practice.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall result showed that participants have a medium level in practice (academic and social media) Arabic language. Michael and Ibrahim (2013) described Malaysians as naturally simple, calm, timid, and low in initiative compared with Jordanians who Malaysian students perceived as having a strong and serious personality. Simultaneously, the findings in the present study are similar to those of Michael and Ibrahim (2013) who argued that Malaysian students are weak in using the Arabic language and practice this language less intensively than native speakers. Moreover, Malaysian students tend to avoid conversing in Arabic with others.
According to Ismail, Mahmod, Qadous, and Mohamed (2013), the Malaysian students who study abroad said during the interviews conducted by the researchers, one challenge they face in the academy is the language, because the lecturers, local students and the university staff do not use the standard Arabic language in their communication. This makes the Malaysian students confused and anxious as they read books and references in standard Arabic. Thus, they will refrain from participating and interacting with classroom climate or outside the classroom. (Barron, 2006; Saghir, 2001; Tinto, 1996). In this regard, Macintyre (1998) suggested that to address this weakness, a comfortable environment should be established inside the classroom to increase the confidence of students and encourage them to communicate in Arabic with others. Concurrently, teachers should create suitable classroom conditions for Malaysian students to motivate and promote communication with others inside the classroom. Malaysian students will subsequently develop a positive attitude toward Arabic language practice (Ushida, 2005). Furthermore, Haron, Ahmad, Mamat, and Mohamed (2010) suggested that from the academic practice side knowledge of vocabulary and grammar seem to be inseparable and indispensable to speak a second language, because in order to say something learners must have the knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structure to form sentences correctly. The result also found that students prefer to do academic practice on Arabic language more frequently than social media practice. The reason more likely academic language is typically found in textbooks, it always used in the classrooms for education purpose (Bailey, 2007), probably because the participants are residing outside their countries, so they resort to using social media much more to connect with relatives and friends in their own language. Thorne (2010) declared that the upsurge of online social interaction may be attributed in part to a desire to connect with new people, to share opinions, to stay in touch with old friends and colleagues, and to share different types of information with a widespread community of followers. Mikal and Grace (2012) commented that social media and electronic connections to family members can reduce stress and help with psychological adjustment in those living in abroad. And emotionally well-adjusted students find it easier to enjoy their experience in a foreign culture and more satisfying to engage with locals (Mikal, Yang, & Lewis, 2014).

This study concluded that there are significant difference in Malaysian male and female students in practice, with the results favoring male respondents. This finding differed from that in Malek, Noor-Azniza, and Farid, (2011) where the results revealed no gender differences. With regard to this, Cook's (1995) study shows that female students face a lot of the problems during the adjustment and the establishment of relations on campus compared with male students.

Ismail, Mahmod, Qadous, and Mohamed (2013) resulted that it is clear that the marital status factor has a great role in the adjustment and is very important for the students who are under pressure during their studies. This study results favored respondents who were married in practice Arabic language. Although (Ismail, Zailaini,

Mohamed, Ali & Xuan, 2015; Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006) concluded that unmarried students reach higher levels of adjustment compared to married students, because most of the married students living abroad leave their wives behind. But the Malaysians students in the current study are residing in Jordan with their wives so the factor of marital status is a positively contributing factor in helping them to adjust and cope with the difficulties.

As for the result on the statistical differences, we can see that students whose housemate come from a variety of countries (including Jordan) were favored in Arabic language practice more than students living with housemates from the same country. Bergström, Klatte, Steinbrink, and Lachmann (2016) described "Immersion appears to be a successful method for early second language learning; it fosters second language receptive skills without any cost for the first language."
Additionally, Cohen (1990) supports the teaching context should with the intent that learners become active, independent users of the strategies wherever they see opportunities to do so; this can make students became self-regulated learners and help them to overcome the challenges they meet and acquire the language. Ushida (2005) emphasized that teachers should create a unique class culture that will affect student motivation and attitude toward second language study. Teachers should also demonstrate the skills at a high degree, better than those practicing language at the low level.

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