

The Perception of Lecturers in Malaysia toward Implementation of Cooperative Learning Method to Teach Arabic

Suo Yan Mei, Zarima Binti Mohd Zakari, Suo Yan Ju, Mikail Ibrahim

Abstract: *This research aims to investigate the Perception of lecturers in Malaysia toward implement of cooperative learning in the Arabic class. A total of 30 lecturers were randomly selected from 3 Malaysian universities; namely UPSI, IIUM, and USIM and self-reported instruments were distributed for data collection. The data were collected using questionnaire consisted 17 questions that relate with 3 Dimensions such as interaction and skill that digested from cooperative learning items were used as independent predictors while performance in Arabic class . The result of this research showed that the lecturers from 3 universities in Malaysia had positive responses toward the implementation of Cooperative Learning approach to teach Arabic Language.*

Keywords : *Perception, Cooperative learning Approach, Teaching Arabic.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching Arabic for non-Arabic speaker would fail to achieve its main target when instructors did not use proper approach in the teaching. In 21st century when World witnesses fast developments in every aspect of life, the teaching tools and strategies are also dramatically changing due the changes of technology, economics and social situations. But still a lot of teachers and lecturers are using traditional teaching method, however, studies indicated that the teacher – center approach is not suitable for the students anymore, especially in the high institutions of education, because the university students have higher creative and critical thinking skills compared to their secondary schools counterparts. But for these students to meaningfully utilize their acquired skills through interaction with the environment for the betterment of their academic endeavors, their instructors should effectively play their facilitation roles. Therefore, many approaches such as Cooperative learning, Students' Centre approach, Discover center approach and Problem based approach are introduced to help students to learn by themselves with minimum facilitation from their instructors.

Revised Manuscript Received on November 11, 2019.

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These learning approaches aim to transfer learning processes from been instructors dominated approach to learning from personal experiences and through meaningful involvement in the learning processes

Cooperative learning is a teaching approach that can helps students to be successful in academic achievement and skills, as well as can assist the students to enhance the social interaction and human relation [1]. Since the early 1970s, cooperative learning has one of the greatest success stores in the history of educational innovation, now this approach is so common place that they are often seen as standard part of education practice, not as a innovation [2]. Studies also suggested that using cooperative learning approach improve cognitive processes in the learners and enhance their learning abilities because they elaborate and organize information in their minds, as they work together to comprehend a passage.

In relation to language, Ghaith (2002) conducted his study on learning English as a second language and he found that cooperative learning approach associated positively with language achievement (proficiency), personal supports, feelings of belongingness and more academic involvement, while learners' feelings of alienation were negatively correlated with language achievement. Hence, the main objective of this research is to explore the perception of the lecturers from 3 selected universities of Malaysia about cooperative learning approach in teaching Arabic language.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Teaching language for non-native speaker at non-native speaker's environment is always discussed by expertise of language and education. The major problem in teaching Arabic language in non-Arab society as Malaysia is in the teaching approaches use in inculcating Arabic language. The traditional methods of teaching is still pervaded in every higher institution of learning. Arabic usage and practice is just limit to the classroom, the students would just listen and taking note without practicing. If cooperative learning approach is adopted it is believed to compensate the lack environment conduciveness. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the perception of the lecturers toward cooperative learning approach in teaching Arabic language

III. METHODOLOGY

This research will depend on the survey research design. The study will use a sample of 30 lecturers who are teaching Arabic language randomly selected from 3 universities in Malaysia. Those universities are international Islamic university Malaysia (IIUM), Islamic sciences university Malaysia (USIM) and sultan Idris education university Malaysia (UPSI). The method will use for data collection will be a 17-item questionnaire. The response pattern was in the form of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. These were weighted by liker scale 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively for the data analysis's purpose. Mean scores above the midpoint of the scale, that is 2.5, indicate majority agreement. Percentages were also used to describe this.

A. Population and sample

A sample of 30 lecturers who are teaching Arabic from 3 different universities; namely University Pendidikan Sultan Idris Malaysia (UPSI), Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) and International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) voluntarily participated in this study. These samples were randomly participated in answering the questionnaires to give every individual of targeted population opportunity to be selected which eventually gives credibility of the study. The lectures of this sample were majority of respondent are 18(60%), Male while 12(40%) female. And among those respondents, 36.7% (n= 11) from IIUM, as well as, the number of USIM's respondents is same like IIUM 36.7% (n=11), however, the respondents from UPSI only 26.7% (n=8). The majority of them hold PHD (63.3% n=18). And the minimum of qualification is master holder which are 16.7 %, (n=5) of them. Moreover, there are only 6.7 %, (n=2 professor holder and 13.3% (n=4) are associate professors among those respondents, Hence, the majority of experiences of their teaching is more than 5 years.

B. Instrumentation

In this study, the instrument was divided into two parts. The first part focuses on cooperative learning in general and consists of 5 distinctive questions while the second part consisted of 17 questions and was categorized into three dimensions; namely academic achievement, social interaction, and Arabic language skills. This scale was a self-developed instrument to examine the cooperative learning approach to teach Arabic as a second language. The internal consistency of the scale was investigated through Cronbach's alpha and the result indicated that it is suitable to be used for any meaningful academic exercises. The Cronbach's alpha was ranged between .73 to .90 which suggested that the scale is psycho-metrically sound and can be used for this research activity. The questionnaire was then distributed to the respondents and they were asked to define the degree to which they agree or disagree with each item in the questionnaire rated from 1 to 5 used the Liker-style scale.

C. Descriptive Analysis

Category frequencies of the demographic variables of the lecturers who voluntarily participated in this study, which include gender, their period of teaching, educational experience, qualifications, and their specializations. A total of 30 lecturers from 3 different universities, namely

International Islamic University (IIUM), Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) and Sultan Idris Education University Malaysia (UPSI) were participated in the study. According to the information displayed in the table1, it can be observed that majority of the respondents (60%, n = 18) are male, while the rest (40%, n = 12) are their female counterparts. This indicates that more than half of the respondents were male. Moreover, the analysis of the demographic variables also shown that 36.7% (n = 11) of the respondents were drawn equally from IIUM and USIM respectively, while 26.7% (n = 8) drawn from UPSI.

As for the Academic qualification of the respondents, the result of analysis indicated that majority of them are Ph.D. holders (63.3% n=18) followed master degree holders (16.7 %, n=5) while 13.3% (n = 4) and 6.7% (n = 2) of the respondents are Associate professors and professors respectively.

In relation to the years of experience, it was found that the teaching experience of majority of the respondents lied between 11 to 15 years (36.7%, n=11) followed by the respondents with teaching experience ranged between 16 to 20 and 21 to 25 (20%, n = 6) for each respectively. It was also discovered that 13.3% of the respondents (n = 4) have teaching experience ranged between 6 to 10 years while 10% (n = 3) of them have teaching experience of 26 years and above. This results showed that the starting point of the respondents' years of experience is 6 years which indicated that they are experienced teacher and they are capable to examine the teaching processes and having ideas on how to improve teaching and learning Arabic language.

Furthermore, the analysis also showed that 26.75% (n=8) of the respondents specialized in the Arabic language, while 13.3% of them (n = 4) specialized in Arabic literature, translation and Nahu and Sarf respectively. Moreover, the study also suggested that 10% of the participants (n = 3) specialized in Linguistic (Arabic Linguistic) and Arabic for a specific purpose, while 6.7% (n = 2) specialized in pedagogy and computer application for Arabic language respectively.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to Background Characteristics

	Characteristics	n	%
Gender	Males	18	60
	Females	12	40
Academic Qualification	Professor	2	6.7
	Associate professor	4	13.3
	PhD	19	63.3
	Master	5	16.7
Experience	1-5	0	0
	6-10	4	13.3
	11-15	11	36.7
	16-20	6	20
	21-25	6	20



	26 and above	3	10
Specialization	Arabic language	8	26.7
	Arabic linguistic	3	10
	Arabic literature	4	13.3
	Translation	4	13.3
	Arabic for a specific purpose	3	10
	Pedagogy	2	6.7
	Computer application for Arabic language	2	6.7
	Nahu and sarf	4	13.3

IV. DISCUSSION AND FINDING

Since all the participants indicated that they are applying the cooperative learning in their classroom, the question of the frequency of application is due warrant. Overwhelmingly majority of the participants (80%, n=24) asserted that they apply cooperative teaching approach 1-2 times per week while 13.4% (n = 4) are using the approach 3-4 time per week. However, only 6.7% (n = 2) applying cooperative teaching approach 5-6 times per week

In relation to the type of approach the participants employing, the result of analysis showed that 30% of the participants (n = 9) applying Group Investigation and Think-Pair Share approaches respectively, while 20% (n = 6) each using Jigsaw and STAD respectively.

Table 2: General Opinion about the application of cooperative learning

	Characteristics	n	%
Do you apply cooperative learning in your class?	Yes	30	100
	No	0	0
How many times do you apply per week?	1-2	24	80
	3-6	4	13.3
	5-6	2	6.7
Which approach of cooperative learning you are Applying in the class?	Jigsaw	6	20
	STAD	6	20
	Group Investigation	9	30
	Think-Pair-Share	9	30

Table 3: Frequency, percentile, means and Standard Deviation of Academic Achievement

Item	SA	A	U	D	DA	Mean
I feel that group discussion will achieve common goals.	3 (10%)	15 (50%)	12 (40%)	-	-	3.7 (.651)
I feel that group discussion will achieve an individual's goals in the groups.	3 (10%)	24 (80%)	3 (10%)	-	-	4 (.455)
My students understand particular Arabic material in the group faster than they study any material in the Arabic language alone.	3 (10%)	18 (60%)	9 (30%)	-	-	4.2 (.61)

1- Academic achievement

A total of 16 items were used to examine the achievement of the students when cooperative learning approach is been employed. These items were categorized into three distinctive categories, namely; academic achievement, social interaction and language skills. The participants from the selected universities (IIUM, USIM and UPSI) were asked to respond to the item based on these three categories.

According to the results of the analysis of first category (academic achievement), the participants asserted that using cooperative learning during teaching and learning Arabic language would foster students' Arabic learning outcome. The results suggested that more than half of the participants (60%, n = 18) believed that students would achieve their common goals in group while 40% (n = 12) were not sure whether group discussion can lead to the attainments of common goal. Interestingly, overwhelmingly majority of the participants (90%, n = 27) acclaimed that group discussion would enhance individual Arabic language achievement, and improve their language proficiency. Also, they believed that group discussion would lead to the achievement of individual's goal. However, a small portion of the participants did not believe that. Once participants asked about their students 'quality of understanding for particular Arabic material through group discussion almost two third of the participants (70%, n=21) asserted that the students understand particular Arabic material in the group discussion faster than they study any material in the Arabic language by themselves

Furthermore, the result of analysis also indicated that overwhelmingly majority of the participants (80%, n=24) stressed that the students obtain better grades in Arabic language when they adopting group discussion strategy, when only 10% (n = 3) disagreed with this assertions

In relation to concentration during learning process, the researchers found that 70% (n=21) of the participants in this research agreed that activities in the group learning make the students more focus on Arabic language study, and more alert which would eventually imbue their learning outcome and academic engagement, however 20% (n=6) of them were not sure whether the students would be more focused in the Arabic language study through activities in the group.

In summary, it can be generally assumed based on the participants responses that group discussion plays a significant role in enhancing Arabic language learners' skills, foster their language proficiency and encourage them to work in team which eventually lead to greater achievement individually or collectively.

My students get the better result in the Arabic language with group study.	15 (50%)	9 (30%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	-	4.2 (.997)
Through activities in the group, learning makes my students more focus on Arabic language study.	6 (20%)	15 (50%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	-	3.8 (.887)

2- Social interaction

Cooperative learning approach is a strategy cater not only for academic achievement to also foster students’ social interaction and responsibility. Therefore, cooperative interaction, is a holistic approach which cater for academic endeavor and encourage social interaction and human relation [3]. According to the results of the analysis, 90% (n = 27) as presented in table 4 asserted that the cooperative learning cultivate students more confidence during the group discussion while 10% (n = 3) denied that group discussion would encourage confidence. Moreover, the analysis also 90% (n=27) of the participants affirmed that cooperative learning instil how the students could take care of their classmates in the group discussion while 10% (n = 3) were unsure that cooperative learning encourage students to take care of their colleagues.

In relation to knowledge sharing, the analysis showed that two-third of the participants (70%, n = 21) asserted that group discussion enriching knowledge sharing

among Arabic learners and the matter is give and take while the rest 30% were uncertain.

Furthermore, the analysis also indicated that 90% (n = 27) of participants believed that cooperative learning provides learners with problem solving skills in Arabic language, while 10 (n = 3) of the participants denied that view.

Additionally, the analysis found that majority of participants (80%, n= 24) emphasized that the student got equal chances for success in Arabic language study through cooperative learning. Nonetheless, 20% (n=6) of the responders are unsure that the cooperative learning provides equal chances of success for the Arabic learners.

Once participants were asked whether students can acquire how to be a cooperative learner, 90% of the participants (n = 27) asserted that cooperative learning skills are acquirable and can be learn through participation and experience but 10% of the participants (n = 3) were uncertain whether the skills could be learned.

Table 4: Frequency, percentile, means and Standard Deviation For Social Interaction

Item	SA	A	U	D	DA	Mean
Cooperative learning gives my students more confidence during group discussion.	9 (30%)	18 (60%))	3 (10%))	-	-	4.2 (.61)
Cooperative learning teaches my students how to take care of each other in the group.	6 (20%)	21 (70%))	3 (10%))	-	-	4.1 (.548)
My students like to share their knowledge in Arabic with their group member and get more from another.	9 (30%)	12 (40%))	9 (30%))			4.0 (.788)
Cooperative learning give my students an idea of how to solve the problem in Arabic language study through group discussion	9 (30%)	18 (60%))	3 (10%))			4.2 (.61)
My students got equal chances for success in Arabic language study through cooperative learning	9 (30%)	15 (50%))	6 (20%))			3.9 (.712)
My students can learn how to cooperate and collaborate through group discussion	9 (30%)	18 (60%))	3 (10%))			4.2 (.61)

3- Skills and language skills

Studies proved that cooperative learning approach is very significant in learning process in general and in teaching and learning foreign language particularly. Comparing with traditional methods of teaching and learning, cooperative learning found to improve students’ language skills, encourage language usage, and boost critical and creative thinking within the classroom or outside the class. Interestingly, the significant of cooperative learning is not limit the academic attainment only but it also develop social interaction, and feeling of belongingness which it would eventually boost the learners’ language proficiency and development. –According to Coelho (1994), cooperative

group instruction provides students with opportunities to discover, to clarify and to internalize ideas among their peers. Such kind of classroom procedures help students to develop high levels of thinking skills by analysing, evaluating, and using the new information provided by other teammates in the group. The aim behind learning any foreign language is to speak and communicate in that language [4].

In accordance with this view, the study found that more than two-third of the participants (70%, n=21) claimed that Cooperative learning improves students’ communication in the Arabic language, while 10% (n=3)



disagree with this view; they believe that cooperative learning adds no merits to language learning and does not improve students' communication skills.

In relation to students' comprehension of spoken Arabic, 80% of the participants (n = 24) believe that adopting cooperative learning approach foster their students' comprehension ability to understand other spoken language whether among member of their group or outside the group. However, only 3 of them (10%) are uncertain, and another 3(10%) of them against to agree that idea.

Additionally, more than half of responders (60%, n=18) believe that their students improved a lot in Arabic writing through cooperative learning, however , there are

(40%, n=12) participants not sure that their students improved a lot in Arabic writing through cooperative learning.

Interestingly, more than half of selected responders (60%, n=18) answers that Cooperative learning helps the students to read the text in the Arabic language well, while (40%, n=12) not make their view known.

Nonetheless, more than two third of selected responders (80%, n=24) believed that the students can understand deeper by the discussing within the group, while 20% (n=6) of them nor sure that the students can understand more by the discussing within the group or not.

Table 5:Skill. Arabic language skill.

ITEM	SA	A	U	D	DA	mean
Cooperative learning improves students' communication in the Arabic language.	9 (30%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	-	3.9 (.96)
Through cooperative learning, my students can understand the Arabic language that had been spoken by another member in their group study.	6 (20%)	18 (60%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	-	3.9 (.845)
My students improved a lot in Arabic writing through cooperative learning	3 (10%)	15 (50%)	12 (40%)			3.7 (.651)
Cooperative learning helps the students to read the text in the Arabic language well.	3 (10%)	15 (50%)	12 (40%)			3.7 (.651)
My students understand deeper about Arabic grammar once they discussed with their group member	3 (10%)	21 (70%)	6 (20%)			3.9 (.548)

V. CONCLUSIONS

The concept of cooperative learning is drawn from the educational philosophies of early social researchers such as Vygotsky, Piaget and Lewin [5] who called attention to the role of community and social interaction in all aspects of learning. This approach is believed to foster a positive learning environment which leads to greater academic achievement for all group members, as well as developing important social skills, improving communicative ability, and providing a positive model for lifelong learning [6].

Interestingly, the findings of this quantitative study consistent with previous studies as was previously highlighted. The result of analysis shows that cooperative learning approach had positive perception by the lecturers to improve students' language skill, academic achievements, and social interaction. This finding suggested that when cooperative learning approach used effectively, it might compensative the lack of language milieu in Malaysian higher institutions. The approach encourages learners to participate in learning discussions and eager to use target language which would eventually contribute to their language proficiency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is based on the research project entitled "Cooperative learning Approach in Arabic Teaching for Non- Native Speakers at Universities in Malaysia". The authors would like to extend their gratitude to the Research Management and Innovation Centre (RMIC), Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) for the University Research

Grants (code: 2018-0013-107-01) that helped fund the research.

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