



STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE TOWARD THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LEARNING FOR ARABIC LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

The 21st century is characterized as a century of openness or globalization. Life also develops over time, especially in terms of language and technological advances. English is an international language because English has become a universal language in this era. Studying English is one of the various factors to support the students in the university. Every major should have an English general class for the first semester to provide students with English basic skills. Related to the issue researchers plan to design research entitled "Students' Perspective toward the Importance of English Learning for Arabic Education Students". The research aims to determine students' perspective of what they learn related to English class and how it affects their English basic. The participants of this research were second-semester Arabic education students who had taken an English class. The participants were chosen by using purposive sampling. This research was conducted at Tarbiyah Faculty of UIN Raden Fatah located at Jalan Prof. K. H. Zainal Abidin Fikri, Palembang, South Sumatera from December to January 2024. This research design used qualitative research. The data was collected by using a questionnaire and interview and analyzed simultaneously using Creswell's theory about data analysis spiral to get accurate results about the issue.

Keywords: English learning, Arabic student's perspective, the importance of English

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, English is one of the most important languages in the world. As we know that English is an international language. English is used as the language of instruction even though these countries do not speak English. Therefore, each education level has English subject especially in Indonesia, at least the students know English basically. English basic competence includes speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Although English is considered as a foreign language which means that English is not a dominant language. English as an international language has been widely studied, with scholars highlighting its role in global communication and professional advancement. The significance of English proficiency is underscored in educational contexts, where it enhances students' academic performance and career prospects (Ilyosovna, 2020). However, the perspectives of students, especially those in non-English-speaking disciplines like Arabic education, remain relatively unexplored.

However, the students should learn English to transfer and communicate the information. According to Elttayef & Hussein (2017) said that English is the primary language used in the internet, scientific journals, and other digital resources. Tillayeva (2020) mentions that English is also crucial in education, as it is the primary language used in many international academic programs and research collaborations. It provides students with access to a broader range of educational resources, research opportunities, and international networking. Arabic students who are proficient in English have access to a vast array of information and resources that can enhance their knowledge and skills. Generally, the students in Indonesia only have passive English skill. In the same line, Cooper (2015) mentions that the productive skills are those which enable language learners to communicate meaning effectively to others. The processes of production are speaking and writing. As well as, a study of Zhang (2009) who argued that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and they are still incompetent in communicating orally in English. English serves as a bridge between cultures, facilitating communication and understanding between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It enables Arabic students to engage with the global community, access a vast array of cultural resources, and participate in international events and activities (Al-Shboul, 2022).

In the field of education, lecturers face the challenge of bridging education which first relies on significant theory and practice. Beside that the students at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang require all the first semester to take English subject. The students should study English to face the world of technology so that students will not get left behind as the world develops. In fact, Arabic language education students have several difficulties when they learn English. The common problems are shy and unconfident to speak English due to English is not their second language. Although they prefer to use Arabic language but, they always try to learn speak English. Although it is not easy to do, the researcher explained that this practical activity will train students to master English and is very useful for the future.

Nevertheless, there are several students who like to study English because when they were in Islamic boarding school, they also use English not only Arabic. In line with Lestari (2019) the Islamic boarding school emphasizes practicing language in daily communication not only in the classroom but also outside from the class. They try to use Arabic and English in daily communication every day wherever they are. They must use both of the language. In addition, Hijazi (2012) argues there are other reasons that lead to difficulties in learning English by university students such as: their background knowledge in English after ending the school stage and before joining the university, their English materials taught to them at the university level and their instructors of English and the methodology they follow while teaching. Unfortunately, based on pre-observation, which researcher conducted, it was found that some of students were not able to use English in class. In another hand, Al-Shboul (2022) found that the students' attitudes towards the use of Arabic in the classroom are also influenced by their awareness of English as a global language and its importance in their future careers. Many students recognize the value of English in securing better job prospects and travel opportunities, which motivates them to prefer English as the medium of instruction. This preference is not necessarily a reflection of a negative attitude towards Arabic, but rather a recognition of the practical benefits of

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English in their lives.

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of English language learning in various contexts. For instance, Al-Shammari and Al-Shammari (2017) found that students' motivation and attitudes towards English language learning play a significant role in their language proficiency. Similarly, a study by Gardner and Lambert (1972) revealed that students' instrumental motivation, which refers to the desire to learn English for practical purposes, is a strong predictor of language learning success. A study by Dörnyei (2005) found that students who have a clear goal and motivation for learning English tend to be more successful in their language learning journey. Similarly, a study by Williams and Burden (1997) revealed that students' reasons for learning English, such as to improve their career prospects or to access international education, influence their language learning behavior and outcomes.

In the context of Arabic education, research has shown that English language learning is essential for students to access academic resources and participate in international academic discourse (Al-Hazmi, 2011). However, there is a lack of research on the impact of English language learning on students' skills and perspectives in this field. Other study investigated the relationship between students' goals and reasons for learning English and their language learning outcomes. Based on the background and problem stated, researchers focus on exploring students' perspective toward the Importance of English Learning. This research tried to reveal what students perceive toward the course that they have learned. However, the relevance and impact of English learning on students, particularly those in specialized fields such as Arabic education, warrant investigation. This research tried to uncover whether they to their reason in learning and their goal in learning. Finally, this research intended to see whether the course affect their English skill. Therese research was conducted in first semester students of Arabic language education, Tarbiyah Faculty of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang in academic year 2023/2024.

METHOD

Research Design and Participant

This research was qualitative research design. Then, involved the first semester students were studied at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, South Sumatera which taken Arabic language Education in academic year 2023/2024. There were some reasons why researchers chose the research setting. First, researchers saw a problem in the research setting which inspires this research. Next, researchers had a wide opportunity since they are lecturers in Arabic language education of State Islamic University Raden Fatah Palembang. Third, this major provides course in teaching English as mandatory subject. This research gathered data using several instruments. There were observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The observation was conducted in a class. Then the researcher interviewed 24 students, and questionnaires were given to 24 students. In addition, the questionnaire was adapted Brown and Abeywickrama's speaking assessment rubric categories.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the observation result, the students were asked to give a group presentation. There were four groups and each group has six members. Then each group has presented their own materials. As expected, the result showed that students could converse in English. Even though, they were not really fluent but they attempted to speak English. Some students spoke English well and used longer sentences despite some of them being shy because they were not confident to speak English and sometimes offering quick answers to inquiries. Additionally, based on Elttayef and Hussein (2017) found that providing learners with opportunities to practice their language skills in authentic communicative situations, such as through role-plays and group discussions, can help them develop the skills they need to communicate effectively in English.

Somehow, the student's compare between Arabic and English language when they forgot English vocabulary during the presentation. As well as a study of Alzamil (2019) who argued that another significant issue is the use of Arabic in the English language classroom. While some studies suggest that using Arabic can facilitate learning, others argue that it can hinder the development of English language skills. In another hand, Dmour (2015) mentions that the debate surrounding the use of the first language (L1) in the second language (L2) classroom is ongoing, with some researchers arguing that it can be beneficial for learners, while others believe it can create confusion and hinder the acquisition of the L2.

Then after group presentation, they made individual videos by using English language. Students describe something as a final assignment, according to the material they have studied in the English course. During the students made the final exam there were several challenges based on the questionnaire results. The difficulties to pronounce unfamiliar words when they were described something. However, due to advice from the lecturer to remain confident when speaking in English, they were enthusiastic about speaking in front of the camera. This statement supported by Utami (2018) Teachers can guide students to say English sentences word by word when they find their students' wrong pronunciation. This approach can help students feel less pressured and more confident in their speaking abilities, as they receive feedback and correction in a supportive manner.

Many of them even describe a place while showing the location using English as best they can. In short, it seems they have an improvement in speaking English. As we know that most of the students were graduated from Islamic boarding school. As we knew that there were several kinds of boarding school that implement bilingual both English and Arabic in certain moment. For those students who study bilingual they have basic English and easy to speak English. According to Fitriana's (2023) research result that the integration of English language teaching (ELT) into Islamic boarding schools is a crucial aspect of modern Islamic education to prepare students for the challenges of the contemporary world by combining traditional and modern systems. English, are used as the language of everyday life in Islamic boarding schools, a foreign language that students must master. *Santri* (students living in Islamic boarding schools) are more familiar with how to read *Hijaiyah* letters than other foreign languages.

However, English is an international language, and people who cannot speak English will be left behind in today's world affairs, especially in the face of the free market era, which allows the flow of international community mobilization to visit each other and interact. According to Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011) emphasize the complementary relationship between Arabic and English proficiency, noting that bilingualism enhances cognitive



abilities and intercultural competence. Furthermore, English proficiency equips Arabic education students with the necessary skills to engage with diverse educational materials and instructional approaches.

Moreover, the result of the interview was most all research subjects answered the same that they said that they could speak English well. But there were also those who answered doubt that they can speak English but sometimes they forgot vocabulary. Therefore, students may face some unique challenges due to the differences between the two languages during learning English in the classroom, particularly in terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, four basic of language skill, cultural differences, even motivation and persistence. Arabic grammar differs significantly from English grammar. As well as Elttayef and Hussein (2017) point out that one of the primary challenges faced by Arab learners of English is the lack of exposure to the target language in their daily lives, which can hinder their ability to develop the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is particularly true for students in countries like Iraq, where English is not a widely used language in everyday communication, and students may not have the opportunity to interact with native speakers.

Arabic is a Semitic language with a different word order and verb conjugation system compared to English. Arabic students sometimes struggle with articles (a, an, the), verb tenses, and prepositions in English. It's essential to study English grammar systematically and practice using it in context. Arabic and English have different vocabularies, with many words having no direct translation between the two languages. Arabic students should build their English vocabulary systematically by learning common words and phrases and using them in sentences. Vocabulary lists, and context-based learning can be helpful strategies. For pronunciation, Arabic and English have different phonetic systems, leading to pronunciation challenges for Arabic learners. This statement supported by Ashour (2017) said that the pronunciation systems of Arabic and English exhibit significant differences, which can pose challenges for Arabic speakers learning English. One of the main differences is that English is a stress-timed language, whereas Arabic is a syllable-timed language. Therefore, Elyas (2015) mention that Teaching and learning English in the Arabic-speaking world is a complex and multifaceted process that involves various challenges and opportunities.

Moreover, there were other unique factor about cultural differences between Arabic and English. Especially for Arabic education students. They said that learning English may encounter cultural differences that affect language usage and communication styles. It's essential to learn about English-speaking cultures and customs to communicate effectively and avoid misunderstandings. Additionally, Chenowith (2014) mentions that cultural differences can lead to indirect marginalization, making it challenging for students to integrate into the mainstream culture and understand the language. Quo and Lay (2006) further indicated that language and culture are intertwined, and one can significantly affect the other. This is particularly important for second language learners, as they need to understand the cultural context of the language they are learning.

CONCLUSION

The students should practice pronunciation regularly by listening to native speakers, mimicking their speech, and using pronunciation guides or apps. This study also provides valuable insights into Arabic education students' perspectives on English learning. By acknowledging the nuances of language education within specialized fields, educators can develop more effective strategies to support students' academic and professional growth in an increasingly interconnected world. English learning holds significant importance for Arabic education students in the contemporary global context. By acquiring English proficiency, students enhance their academic and professional prospects while fostering intercultural competence. The proposed research aims to contribute to existing literature by elucidating students' perspectives on the importance of English learning, thereby informing pedagogical practices and curriculum development in Arabic education contexts.

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