

**ARABIC TEACHING METHODS IN BORNEO: A CASE STUDY OF
MUHAMMADIYAH NURSING COLLEGE
SAMARINDA – EAST KALIMANTAN – INDONESIA**

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Abstract

This study was aimed to identify the feasibility of Arabic teaching methods in Borneo by a case study of Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan– Indonesia. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) were used as benchmarks to evaluate the Arabic teaching methods in the college. This is a qualitative study where the researcher collected data by interviewing an Arabic expert who is teaching Arabic course in the college above. The research result found that Arabic lesson in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan– Indonesia used selective teaching method, it is meaning the lecturer decided which method suited students' situation and needs and wasn't bound to any particular method. However, in terms of percentage, translation method was the most dominant. The students were trained to master all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) when they studied Arabic, however reading and writing skills dominated other skills. The language of instruction in teaching Arabic is Indonesian Language. Excessive usage of translation and the usage of Indonesian Language as the language of instruction could affect student's skill in communicating in Arabic.

Keywords: Methods, teaching, Arabic, Nursing, College, Muhammadiyah.

Introduction.

This study aimed to identify the feasibility of Arabic teaching method in Borneo by a case study in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan– Indonesia and by using the communicative approach as benchmarks. This was a qualitative study where the researcher collected data by interviewing an Arabic expert who is teaching Arabic course in the college above.

Language Teaching Method in the light of communicative approach

The communicative approach is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language, for example: practising question forms by asking learners to find out personal information about their colleagues is an example of the communicative approach, as it involves meaningful communication. In the classroom, activities guided by the communicative approach are characterised by trying to produce meaningful and real communication, at all levels. As a result there may be more emphasis on skills than systems, lessons are more learner-centred, and there may be use of authentic materials (<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/communicative-approach>)

Communicative language teaching (CLT), or the communicative approach, is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. Language learners in environments utilizing CLT techniques learn and practice the target language through interaction with one another and the instructor, study of "authentic texts" (those written in the target language for purposes other than language learning), and use of the language in class combined with use of the language outside of class. Learners converse about personal experiences with partners, and instructors teach topics outside of the realm of traditional grammar in order to promote language skills in all types of situations. This method also claims to encourage learners to incorporate their personal experiences into their language learning environment and focus on the learning experience in addition to the learning of the target language. According to CLT, the goal of language education is the ability to communicate in the target language. This is in contrast to previous views in which grammatical competence was commonly given top priority. CLT also focuses on the teacher being a facilitator, rather than an instructor. Furthermore, the approach is a non-methodical system that does not use a textbook series to teach English but rather works on developing sound oral/verbal skills prior to reading and writing (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communicative_language_teaching)

McLaren (2005) said that the latter views language learning as the product of the diverse subcompetences comprised within the general concept of communicative competence; that is, not merely linguistic or grammatical competence, as in previous methods, but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. Hence, the primary goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence, to move “beyond grammatical and discourse elements in communication” and probe the “nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language” (Brown, 1994: 77).

Consequently, learners are expected, not so much to produce correct sentences or to be accurate, but to be capable of communicating and being fluent. Classroom language learning is thus linked with real-life communication outside its confines, and authentic samples of

language and discourse or contextualized chunks rather than discrete items are employed. Students are hence equipped with tools for producing unrehearsed language outside the immediate classroom.

This general goal of CLT can be viewed in two ways, since, as Howatt (1984: 279) points out, it has both a “weak” and a “strong” version. The weak version “stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching”. On the other hand, the strong version “advances the claim that language is acquired through communication”, so that language ability is developed through activities simulating target performance and which require learners to do in class exactly what they will have to do outside it.

But let us characterize CLT further, beyond its central aim, by examining its theory of language and learning, its syllabus, activity types, and materials, as well as its teacher and learner roles. At the level of language theory, the Communicative Approach is based, in line with what we have already mentioned, on Hymes’ and Canale and Swain’s view of communicative competence, on Halliday’s theory of language functions, and on Widdowson’s view of the communicative acts underlying language ability.

Muhsin Ali Atiyyah (2008) wrote that this approach is based on the purpose that language is part of life, as it fundamentally focused on simplification of communicative procedure among the societal individuals since the means of linguistic communication is language through its written and verbal vocabularies. Also, the meanings indicated by those vocabularies portray the motive while the reaction of the receiver depicts the response. Meanwhile, all of them constitute the result of reasonable and functional activities between the two parties of the communicative procedure.

Therefore, communication commences when the sender develops interest in sending a message which may be out of a response to a specific inducement or out of initiation through the posing of another exciting impulse in the domain of verbal or written communication. That means the role of the sender is manifested in the symbolic constructions. In contrary, the receiving party is perceived in a trying effort to understand the spoken illustrations or written symbols which are contained in the message with an attempt to comprehend it in the light of his capacities and experiences. The meaning of that is that the role of the receiver is manifested in the emancipation of these symbols. Based on that, it is inferred that communication may be either spoken or written, direct or indirect. Whatever category of communication that may be engaged, man is always in need of it, and he is therefore mandated to study Arabic Language Teaching from this angle.

On this basis, the concerned people in Arabic teaching have agitated for its inclusion in teaching module in the light of the concept of communication theory and its parts. In addition, the agitators appealed for necessary study of communication activities on the basis that it is an integrated system in which various elements are mutually overlapping, interacting and interpenetrating in the sphere of the targets of the communication procedures. The linguistic communication is constituted from major elements which are collectively integrative in order to realize the objective for the sake of which the communication is made available. These elements are: Sender, Receiver, Linguistic message, Sending Channel, Linguistic code and Communication environment. Each element must necessarily be featured with inevitable conditions in order to insure the success of linguistic communication procedure.

According to the Traditional Teaching Methods, language curriculum development and selection of its contents were made on the basis of principles and linguistic patterns, but

according to this modern communicative approach, selection of contents is outstandingly based on the commutative attitudes, not on linguistic principles

Nihaad Al-Musa (2003) said, it is not necessary for teacher to dictate a poetical or prosodic portion or Quranic verses, in repetition, for the purpose of memorization in spite of the fact that the meaning is neither comprehended nor used to. It is not a good attitude in Language Teaching whereby teacher is expected to dictate on his students, portion which is not envisaged by them. It is not a linguistic teaching attitude as well, the method where student is required to write an expression in truncation with imperfect meaning in beautiful handwriting..... This is because all such attitudes and the likes will restrict language to vocal expression or written symbol only, whereas language is never like that. Vocal is nothing except as an instrument and nothing is symbol except as a means; both are instruments and means in a connotative explanation or establishment of feeling or expression of a situation.

For student, impossible for them to speak while still consulting dictionary first to be provided with vocabularies needed in that particular situation, then proceeds to consulting grammatical principles so as to understand how to operate and consult sentences, rather the expression is expected to be perfectly prompt, integrative and correlative (Sa'eed Muhammad Muraad: 2002) .

A historical Perspective on the Communicative Approach

Celik, (2014) mentioned that until the latter part of the 20th century, the theoretical foundations of language education were firmly anchored in behavioural psychology and structuralism, which held that learning mainly took place through a process of repetition and habit forming. language teaching was typically divided into four skill categories, including the active skills of speaking and writing, as well as the passive skills of listening and reading (Savignon: 1991); and foreign language lessons often centred on rehearsing a fixed repertoire of grammatical patterns and vocabulary items until they could be reproduced easily and precisely, with a low tolerance for error. However, Richards (2006) points out that because the focus of learning was primarily confined to accuracy of production, rather than meaningful interaction, individuals taught according to this approach frequently experienced considerable difficulty in real-life communicative encounters.

Noted linguist and social theorist Noam Chomsky (1965) criticized this aspect of language instruction, arguing that: Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (p. 3). this criticism of the traditional view of language learning as a sterile, intellectual exercise, rather than as a practical undertaking resulting in skills that may be applied in real-life situations, was echoed by scholars such as Habermas (1970), Hymes (1971), and Savignon (1972), who based their understanding of language on the psycholinguistic and socio-cultural perspectives that meaning is generated through a collaborative process of “expression, negotiation and interpretation” (Savignon, 1991, p. 262) between interlocutors. Hymes (1971), in particular, stressed the need for language learners to develop communicative competence, which suggests that successful communication requires “knowing when and how to say what to whom” (larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 115); in his view, knowledge of grammatical structures and vocabulary were not sufficient to enable communication on a functional level.

Hymes' (1971) ideas were supported by an evolving understanding of how communication occurs. Research on language and communication revealed that the so-called "passive" language learning skills – reading and listening – in fact require active engagement on the part of the learner; as a result, these skills were re-conceptualized as receptive activities, while the skills of speaking and writing were reclassified as productive (Savignon, 1991). Furthermore, it was recognized that communication consists not only of production (message-sending) and reception (message-receiving), but negotiation of meaning, or collaboration between senders and receivers. Added to the dramatic shift in the international social and political climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with the expansion of global English, this changing viewpoint brought recognition of the need to reframe our conception of language education from that of teaching a language to teaching students how to use the language (Nunan, 1989). Principles of Communicative Language Teaching unlike many of the other instructional techniques covered in this book, communicative language teaching does not constitute a method in itself. Rather, CLT is a set of principles framing an overarching approach to language teaching which may be carried out according to a variety of different methods (some of these, including Content-based instruction (CBI) and task-based instruction (TBI) will be dealt with in separate chapters later on). These principles have been summarized by Berns (1990) as follows:

1. Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication. That is, language is seen as a social tool that speakers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing.
2. Diversity is recognized and accepted as part of language development and use in second language learners and users, as it is with first language users.
3. A learner's competence is considered in relative, not in absolute, terms.
4. More than one variety of a language is recognized as a viable model for learning and teaching.
5. Culture is recognized as instrumental in shaping speakers' communicative competence, in both their first and subsequent languages.
6. No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed.
7. Language use is recognized as serving ideational, interpersonal and textual functions and is related to the development of learners' competence in each.
8. It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with language— that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes in all phases of learning (p. 104).

Because the communicative approach does not comprise a standardized framework for teaching, curriculum design is largely up to individual institutions and the language instructors who teach according to these principles. However, regardless of the specific techniques employed, any teaching methods that can be classified as truly communicative share these assumptions.

Instructional Practices in Communicative language Teaching

As Richards and Rodgers (2001) stress, communicative learning activities are those which promote learning through communication itself; therefore, the range of instructional practices that may be employed in CLT is bounded only by the creativity of curriculum designers and classroom instructors in developing authentic communicative tasks. Breen (1987) described these as structured activities which "have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning

– from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision making” (p. 23).

Designing Communicative Tasks Nunan (1989) enumerates six basic elements that should be taken into account in designing communicative tasks, including:

1. Learning goals;
2. Linguistic input;
3. Classroom activities;
4. The teacher’s role;
5. The role of the students; and
6. The setting in which the activity is situated (p. 49), as illustrated in Figure 1.

Learning Goals

According to Nunan’s (1989) understanding, the learning goals of a communicative exercise denote the range of outcomes that are expected as a result of carrying out a specified learning task. In terms of communicative language learning, these goals entail “establishing and maintaining relationships” (p. 50); exchanging information; carrying out daily tasks; and obtaining and utilizing information from a variety of sources (such as the internet, television, newspapers, public announcements, research materials and so on).

Linguistic Input

The input of a communicative task refers to any type of information source on which the exercise is centred. For instance, depending on the learning objective and the needs of the students, a teacher might design an activity framed around a newspaper article, a class schedule, a recipe, a feature film, a schematic of a computer circuit, or a map

Activities

Learning activities in a communicative context are drawn from the relevant input in order to develop competencies such as interactional ability in real-life settings, skills building, or fluency and accuracy in communication (Nunan: 1989). These should be designed to mirror authentic communicative scenarios as closely as possible, and “methods and materials should concentrate on the message, not the medium” (Clarke & Silberstein, 1977, p. 51). Özsevick (2010) and Richards (2006) suggest the use of information-gap and problem-solving exercises, dialogs, role play, debates on familiar issues, oral presentations, and other activities which prompt learners to make communicative use of the target language; in doing so, they develop the skills that they will need to use the language in unrehearsed, real life situations.

Role of the Teacher

The teacher’s role in implementing a communicative learning exercise is somewhat malleable in comparison with other, more instructor-oriented approaches to language learning. In traditional language classrooms, the instructor is generally the dominant figure; the focus of the class is on the teacher, and students may assume a passive role as they receive direct instruction. In the communicative classroom, on the other hand, the focus is on interaction between students. Richards and Rodgers (2001) emphasize the teacher’s role in this setting as that of a “needs analyst” who is responsible for “determining and responding to learner language needs” (p. 167) within a specific learning context. In this case, the teacher serves

mainly as a facilitator, designing activities that are geared toward communication and monitoring students' progress, as well as stepping in as necessary to resolve breakdowns in communication. Beyond this, the instructor may take on the role of a participant in a given exercise, or even act as a co-learner herself, as students express themselves during the course of a communicative task (Nunan, 1989, p. 89). When errors occur, the instructor may note them without comment so as not to disrupt the flow of the activity, instead addressing the issues that appear to cause difficulties at a later time (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). As Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest, teachers who lack specialized training may find classroom development to be challenging in such a learning environment, as they strive to find a balance between providing structure to the learning process while still maintaining a natural flow of communication.

Role of the Students

Within the framework of a communicative approach, students are the focal point of classroom activity, assuming primary responsibility for their own learning. As it is assumed that using a language is the most effective way to learn it (Richards, 2006), students are encouraged to work together to negotiate meaning in order to accomplish a given communicative task; thus, learning activities are highly interactive and may take place in smaller groups or with an entire class. In this context, learners are responsible for choosing which forms of the language they use to convey their messages, rather than following a prescribed lexis (Belchamber, 2007).

Setting

Finally, Nunan (1989) notes the significance of the setting in which communicative learning takes place. While the classroom is the most typical venue for language learning, communicative tasks may also be carried out in venues as diverse as occupational settings, online instruction or in the community at large; therefore, activities designers should consider the specific requirements of the learning context in developing learning tasks.

Role of the Target Language

because the goal of language learning in a communicative context is, by definition, developing the ability to communicate in the target language, nearly everything is done with this in mind, as it is essential to make it clear to students that the language is not only a subject to be mastered, but a means for real interaction. Accordingly, not only learning tasks, but classroom management and direct instruction are carried out in the target language whenever practicable, with teachers turning to the students' native language only when required to ensure comprehension. Activities are focused on authentic use of the target language, utilizing "games, role-plays and problem-solving tasks" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 123), to approximate real-life situations in which the language may be used. In addition, the use of teaching materials – restaurant menus, greeting cards, music videos, comic strips, tv episodes, concert tickets, newspaper articles and travel guides – that showcase authentic functions of the language underscores its communicative nature and helps students to develop the skills they need to interact in real-life situations.

Role of the Native Language

Unlike some modern approaches to language instruction, such as the direct Method, the use of the students' mother tongue is not prohibited in CLT (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). However, in order to emphasize the communicative aspect of the target language, use of the mother tongue should be kept to a minimum and used only as needed for issues such as

classroom management or giving complex instructions that are beyond the students' level of proficiency in the target language.

Arabic Teaching Methods in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan – Indonesia

Teaching Method

This study found that Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan – Indonesia used selective teaching method, meaning the lecturer decided which method suited students' situation and needs and wasn't bound to any particular method. However, in terms of percentage, translation method was the most dominant. This was found by the researcher in the interview:

“Arabic Teaching in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan aims to make students master basic Arabic. It's expected to be beneficial for them if they get job opportunity in Middle East. Meanwhile, the method is mixed method, considering most students have never had Arabic lesson before, in which case we teach them from the very start. Usually, to make students understand Arabic text, they're asked to translate it into Indonesian language”.

From the description above, it was understood that the Arabic teaching method in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan – Indonesia didn't only use one particular method and ignore other methods. However, translation was the most common method. In the modern trend of Arabic teaching, translation isn't forbidden. However, if it's too dominant it may cause students to get used to translating anything into Indonesian language and have difficulty understanding Arabic directly (without translating). Similarly, when speaking or writing, they will translate from Indonesian language into Arabic before speaking or writing.

Training Four Arabic Language Skills in Arabic Teaching Methods

Every language has four skills in it which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Actually, every Arabic lesson anywhere must consider them and make training language skills as the main activities of the language lesson. This study found that Arabic lesson in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan – Indonesia contained trainings of Arabic skills, but reading and writing skills dominated the lesson. The interview below was consistent with the description above:

“All Arabic language skills are taught here. The students are strained to understand Arabic texts in books, as well as writing Arabic, just as they're trained to understand when listening to Arabic and to be able to speak Arabic. However, because most of them are beginners in Arabic, reading and writing lessons are more numerous than listening and speaking”.

It's clear from the interview above that all Arabic language skills were taught in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan – Indonesia. As stated in the interview, reading and writing skills dominated other skills, therefore it was predicted that the students in this campus had better reading and writing skills than listening and speaking skills. All Arabic language skills should be taught evenly so that students have all the language skills since no one language skill is more important than the others.

Language of Instruction

The language of instruction in Arabic lesson in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan is Indonesian language. This was found in the interview:

“Ideally, the language of instruction of Arabic lesson is Arabic, but in our campus, Arabic lesson uses Indonesian language as the language of instruction. It's because most students don't have previous Arabic lesson, so if Arabic is used as the language of instruction, they'll have difficulty understanding”

The usage of mother tongue as the language of instruction in Arabic lesson is justified in the modern trend of Arabic lesson, but excessive usage when teacher doesn't use much Arabic or never uses Arabic will cause students to have poor listening and speaking skills. It's because they rarely hear Arabic from their lecturer and don't receive any example of speaking in Arabic. Student who just starts learning Arabic will have difficulty understanding spoken Arabic, but over time they will understand it. Similarly, if lecturer often speaks in Arabic, student will be encouraged to follow and find example and role model in speaking in Arabic, so that although it's difficult for them to speak in Arabic at first, with practice they will be able to speak Arabic fluently. Therefore, it didn't matter that the lecturer in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan considered using Arabic as the language as instruction making it difficult for students to learn and used Indonesian language as the language of instruction in the beginning. However, the usage of Indonesian language should be reduced slowly so that students can practice their listening and speaking skills with the lecturer.

Conclusion.

Arabic teaching method in Muhammadiyah Nursing College of Samarinda – East Kalimantan used selective teaching method, meaning the lecturer decided which method suited students' situation and needs and wasn't bound to any particular method. However, in terms of percentage, translation method was the most dominant. The students were trained to master all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) when they studied Arabic, however reading and writing skills dominated other skills. The language of instruction in teaching Arabic was Indonesian Language. Excessive usage of translation and the usage of Indonesian Language as the language of instruction could affect student's skill in communicating in Arabic.

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