

# Writing Skill in Arabic Language Essay in Malaysian Secondary School

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**Abstract**-This study aims to discover factors which affect students in mastering the basic techniques of Arabic writing skills. This research has been carried out in a secondary. In order to know the driving factors, two instruments were used to identify student's strength. Firstly, three students who excel in Arabic Language were interviewed. Secondly, analyzing the two of their essays written by them to test their proficiency in basic Arabic writing techniques. The result shows that there are three main factors that encourage students to master the Arabic Language which are the parents, teachers, as well as the students' interest in the subject. There are also other particular factors that lead students to write well. Students obviously have wide vocabulary; who able to create simple sentences; able to attach the Quranic verses, hadiths and virtuous phrase in their essay; know and able to make use of dictionary; master the techniques of memorizing main ideas of an essay and have group discussions and love writing. The combination of these factors and the driving elements result in students who have shown greater skills in composing Arabic essay. They use various Arabic vocabulary and master in grammar. They are also skillful in using Arabic language to form correct sentences and also know how to utilize paragraphs for each content of the essay. Moreover they know when to use punctuations correctly.

**Keywords**-Learning skills, learning second language, learning Arabic, writing skills and writing essay.

## I. Introduction

Learning language means learning the skills that relate to the language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills must be mastered by student to ensure they master the language itself and can use it well.

Writing skills are considered to be one of the most difficult skills compared to the other four skills [1] because it can only be mastered through learning.

Students who sit in all grade levels strive with writing difficulties including those in elementary school [9]; [10]; [18]. But they possibly do make an effort to give a "good writing" essay as they understand it [9]. According to Etemadzadeh, Seifi, & Far [4], writing skills seems to be difficult for students who study second language because of the less of ideas instead of difficulties in vocabulary use and syntax.

In terms of writing classroom, teacher play as an important role to make sure that the teaching process conducted in appropriate pedagogical approach to create enjoyable and meaningful learning. Thus, the writing process in classroom is a very important because it will help the students to be proficient in writing [8].

Arabic writing skills in a subject of Arabic language is a very crucial skills. It is because it represents 30 percent marks in paper two of Arabic Language in Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM). For those who failed to master the skills will have a problem to get an excellent grade in SPM examination.

In this study, researcher will highlights the elements that lead to the writing skills proficiency by some of students in Arabic subject. The researcher will try to identify what are the factors that encourage the students to construct a good and effective essays in Arabic. Research scopes are within the background of the students, student's school background and the methods of learning and teaching that have been used.

The objective of this research is to identify the elements that encourage the student's proficiency in writing Arabic Language essays for Form 4 students. This research will try to answer the question that is; what are the elements that encourage the student's proficiency in writing Arabic essays?

## II. Writing Skills

General examination system in Malaysia emphasize the aspect of writing as an important component. Therefore, students should be competent and highly skilled in creating the writing techniques, understand the title, knowledgeable about the content, rich in vocabularies and be able to convey or use the good language and not in monotonous writing style.

The degree of student's competence and skills in writing affect the degree of their achievement in the examination. Because of that, when a student learning a language, whether first, second or foreign language, their competency in that language will not be considered unless they are highly skilled and fully mastered in composing an effective essay. In fact, students also will find humongous problem when faced with situations that need to communicate through writing [21].

In conclusion, the great emphasis on composing skills of students in primary and secondary levels have really taken as a serious matter to make them proficient in effective communicative purposes especially in the context of the examination.

Wan Azura et al [20] states in order to master the writing skills in Arabic language, the students should master some of the basic skills as follows:

- Have an ability to create brilliant and strong ideas related to the topic so that the writing produced can have a profound impact on the readers.
- The contents on the subject should be structured logically and in accordance with priorities so that the reader can easily understand what is to be served.
- The contents presented must be related to each other or have a relation between paragraphs. This will keep the attraction of the readers to remain stick on that reading.
- Every effective writing should have a paragraph for introduction which present in a vivid way in respect of the topic to be discussed. Plus, it should be impressive, intelligible and not in convoluted explanation.
- The main ideas or contents must be written in paragraphs from the selected title. This part is so-called as the 'backbone of writing' because it highlights the main ideas regarding the topic.
- Closing paragraph that includes the precise and accurate conclusion about the ideas under discussion and express the views, recommendations or findings regarding the topic.

According to Gambrell et al [5] literacy instruction consider to be high in quality with the components made up by profound and thoughtful reading, effective writing and also critical thinking. Wan Azura et al [20] stated writing process needs critical thinking to express brilliant and logical ideas so that it would be something meaningful to read. There are some suggestions to help students master the skills of writing:

- Reading various types of material and scientific literature that shaped as a hobby and enjoyable activities. According to Korat & Schiff [9] in model developed by Shanahan and Lomax, writing knowledge has a small or almost no effect on reading but reading knowledge has a very enormous effect on writing. It shows that reading is a vital component on giving the greater impact on writing skills.
- Alert and focus on the key issues that discussed in the reading material.
- Understand and find the main ideas or contents obtained so that it can be used as a guide for future writing when necessary.
- Noting the beautiful language structures and the variety of sentences used. Especially in Arabic, it is important to learn the language in terms of its style.
- Practice what has been noted in terms of the contents aspect, style or new vocabularies in our own writing.

## III. Research Methodology

The design of this study was based on case study to explore the level of student's skills in constructing and composing Arabic essays. According to Kerlinger [11] study design serves as a guideline to find a clear answer to the questions of the study. Since the study is about the factors that encourage the student's skills in writing Arabic essays then the study design was constructed based on the research question regarding the writing essay in Arabic.

This is a qualitative study in which the data were collected through interviews and document analysis. It was aimed to describe the phenomenon that occurs that is, the factors that lead the student in mastery of Arabic writing, therefore it shaped as descriptive study[3].

### A. Validity

To increase the validity of this qualitative study, the researcher describes the information collected objectively without the influence of his own feelings. Thus, researcher have focused on a few

things to make this study credible. Such matters include the location of the study, elite students selected and a clear understanding of the concept.

This study was conducted in location which is believed that the elements to be studied were existed and appropriate. The researcher have explained to the participants about the concepts or the things that needs explanation from the participants. Therefore, there is nothing conceptual distinction occurred between researcher and the participants.

### **B. Reliability**

In order to avoid the bombardment questions about the research reliability, the researcher used some strategies that is triangulation method to increase the reliability of the study. The methods used are doing research on different times, feedback survey participants, friends examining, use the device as a data recorder and using personal documents.

Researcher has requests feedback from the participants and make discussion with them after the data has been collected to ensure that all of the information obtained agreed by them.

The researcher had also talked to some of the Arabic teacher to get their views and comment on the findings obtained. Discussion with the supervisor is also done to obtain the information necessary for the improvement of the results.

Interview forms were used which contain things that need to be answered by the participants by noting the interview results. It is used as proof of the reliability of the study.

In the analysis of the document, the researcher took the original paper of essay writing exercises which are their Arabic writing essays manuscripts provided by the teacher. Thus, researchers can examine the ins and outs of the real way they are composing Arabic essay.

## **iv. Selection Of The Participants**

In this case study, the selection of the participants must be purposive or meaningful. The selection of participants carried out according to the researcher's expectation that they were able to give the most information.

The purpose of the study is to look at skills of students in writing Arabic essays. Students who have been selected are the three students who have obtained grade A in Arabic language in the examination.

## **v. Data Collection Techniques**

The data collection was carried out by the researcher are using two techniques, namely structured interview and document analysis. The interviews that had been conducted with 3 students in a purpose of gathering clearer and accurate information. Document analysis is analyzing any types of written or printed documents containing information on the phenomenon we wish to study [2]. In this study, two documents of Arabic essays for each students to be analyzed which represent two different topics.

## **vi. Findings**

The findings of this study was to explore the factors that empower the students to compose an effective Arabic essays which has become as a foreign language in their school. The findings indicated that factors such as students, families, teachers, school environment and interests play as important role in their mastery of Arabic writing. This can be summarized in the following details:

### **1. Excellent students**

Based on the examination performance of the three subjects, they can be categorized into outstanding students. They also learned Arabic since enrolled in kindergarten and primary school. This early exposure make them more familiar with the Arabic language and have had a lot of vocabularies in Arabic.

Educated parents also be considered to be one of the factors that lead the student's achievement since all of their parents are bachelor's degree holders. The students indeed must be showered with the abundance of encouragement from their parents to learn Arabic language since in primary school.

In conclusion, students who are proficient in Arabic writing is because of their exposure to the Arabic language since in childhood and yielded support given by both parents. They also rich in Arabic vocabularies and this will enable them to compose effective Arabic essays.

### **2. The great interests and enthusiasms in Arabic language.**

Enthusiasm is one of the positive attribute that should be included on students to master something that have been learned. Typically, a person will complete doing works better and vigorously if they admire and love doing that things. Therefore, students should strive and work hard to cultivate deep interests in themselves in order to acquire this language.

In conclusion regarding this point is, the three students were very interested in the subject of Arabic with due to their parent's support which contribute to the fostering the deep interests in learning this language. This interests arises from their Arabic language learning since in primary school as well. When the interests exist, they do not consider it as a burden but as an enjoyable learning. Thus, when the interests have been nurtured then the composing skills will successfully form as well.

### 3. Rich in Arabic vocabularies.

As we know, vocabulary is essential elements in every language to construct meaning in mind. Students will face difficulties in understanding the content if they are unable to understand the word itself [19]. A lot of vocabularies preserved in mind can help students to master the skills of writing. This will help students to construct words into a simple and comprehensible sentences. In order to get a lot of vocabularies, students should be aware of what is read, seen and heard in learning process.

As much as we know that vocabularies play as the very important role in composing essays, thus students must have had vocabularies which are compatible with their own level too. This will help them to convey their own thoughts and ideas intelligibly in writing process.

### 4. Use understandable sentences

According to Wan Azura et al [20], the basic training in Arabic writing is processing words and sentences that have been produced into a short excerpt or passage. Students also are worth to be knowledgeable about the use of conjunctive sentences in Arabic.

In Arabic language, the simple sentences without any grammatical errors in syntax and morphology systems are considered to be the complete and correct one. This is what had been applied by those participants in this study when composing the Arabic essays.

### 5. Use the verses from the Holy Quran, Hadith and Hikam wa Amsal (Arabic Proverbs)

The effective Arabic writing is written accompanied with the emphasis of the verses directed from the Holy Quran, Hadith and the Arabic proverbs. In this study, the students used this technique to make the sentences longer with adding these kind of words. It has been agreed by Wan Azura et al [20] which stated that students can add the Arabic proverbs, Al-Quran verses, Hadith or famous poetry to support the discussion of the writing.

### 6. Diligence in referring to dictionary and Arabic text books.

Quality of the dictionary used by the students who study a foreign language is important to provide accurate and clear meaning of the words. This is because most of the words using by the students are limited within the textbooks and their teacher's utterances only. Thus, sometimes students should search the words from dictionaries and like what Hulstijn [7] said there are some of the lexical should be looked up and should be ignored.

The chance of the new words to be retained is when students become conscious and perceive about it and lead them to look up to the dictionaries [14]; [15]. But according to Ghabanchi and Ayoubi [6], when students reading text above their level, at that time dictionaries should be used to grasp threshold of the text which roughly 95% covered. Referring to all of these participants in this study, it is proved that they use the dictionary more often as they wanted to complete their Arabic writing essays.

### 7. Memorizing the contents.

Memorizing is well-known method and very synonym in the field of teaching and learning process since a long time ago. Memorizing process is actually easier to be applied for children compared to the adults due to their childlike innocence and pureness of the mind and far from the environment distractions [20].

Therefore, sometimes the teacher asked the students to memorize the contents of the Arabic essays to facilitate them in writing and indeed no mistakes will be discovered. For those who are excellently applied this method will make them easier in composing effective Arabic essays. It is because by memorizing the contents, students can ensure that they are typically free from doing errors. Despite of that, this is certainly affects their marks in the examination. Regarding the participants, they also agreed much that they sometimes used this method of memorization to recall the contents back.

### 8. Group discussion about the contents.

Michaels et al [13] state that productive group can be measured through the accountable topic they discussed. It will certainly benefit the students because this method will make them worked with the new knowledge they had for particular topics and utilize that to the next step in writing process. The process of 'brain storming' will extract new and brilliant ideas which will contribute to the enrichment of their knowledge. Students do not need to think alone to search the contents of the writing or making a sentences because definitely the group members are

going to help and correcting the perceived errors that exist.

### 9. Consider the writing as the enjoyable activity.

Undoubtedly, when a student feels enjoyable with what he/she learned automatically will become highly motivated to complete the tasks given by the teacher. In study carried out by Lucardie [12] found that the role of fun and enjoyment in adult learning do exist. Here the teacher plays as an important role in creating pleasurable and exciting environment in the class regarding the process of writing activity. Even though this is not an easy task but the highly skilled teacher will be able to make it in reality. As a results, students will not feel burdened and they can perform it smoothly and happily.

## VII. Conclusion

In this study, we can conclude that many factors influenced the students to be excellently become as a good writers in composing Arabic essays. The factors such as the students itself, families, teachers, school environment and deep enthusiasms which become as the important roles in achieving success in the process of writing. It might be have any factors which can contribute to the student's achievement in writing that needs for the further research regarding Arabic language course in school.

Despite on that, teachers need to take into account these factors so that they can use appropriate methods and strategies in teaching. Even though there are no specific methods of teaching to be declared as the most effective but the creative teachers can make the subject matter something that is exciting and the students feel quite easy learned on it [16]. The teachers designed the methods and teaching materials because they concerned about the students enthusiasms, expectations, capabilities, behaviors, backgrounds, feelings, and notions[17]. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to give attentions on that particular things to make the students become highly skilled in learning the target language especially Arabic.

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