



**EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION OF MAHĀRAH AL-KALĀMAT SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY**

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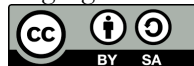
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**ABSTRACT**

Studying *mahārah al-kalām*, or Arabic speaking skills, is fundamental to the Arabic department curriculum. Effective instructional communication between teachers and lecturers is crucial for successful learning outcomes. This study utilizes a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to assess the effectiveness of instructional communication in *mahārah al-kalām* at Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia. The findings reveal a high level of effectiveness in instructional communication, with an overall score of 90.36%. The primary factors influencing the effectiveness of instructional communication include the lecturer's credibility, which encompasses expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. This study contributes to the field of Arabic language education by emphasizing the importance of effective instructional communication in enhancing *mahārah al-kalām* learning outcomes. The results provide valuable insights for Arabic language educators, offering a basis for developing strategies to improve teacher-student interactions. For future research, exploring additional competencies, such as cultural and linguistic aspects, is recommended to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of *mahārah al-kalām* instruction. By addressing these areas, educators can foster a richer and more effective learning environment, contributing to the overall quality of Arabic language education.



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## INTRODUCTION

Arabic holds a special status as the language of the Qur'an and Islam, making it closely tied to Muslims worldwide (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Learning Arabic, like any other language, requires time and focuses on developing four key skills: listening (*mahārah al-istimā'*), speaking (*mahārah al-kalām*), reading (*mahārah al-qirā'ah*), and writing (*mahārah al-kitābah*) (Muna, 2024). Among these, *mahārah al-kalām* is a fundamental and primary goal in foreign language learning (Kuswoyo, 2017). However, students often face linguistic and non-linguistic challenges, such as phonetic issues, historical barriers, and teaching difficulties at the university level (Amiruddin & Fatmawati, 2018; Kosim et al., 2023).

Effective communication and interaction are crucial in learning, particularly for *mahārah al-kalām*. Communication bridges teachers and students, enabling the effective delivery of material and fostering motivation (Alrabai, 2022; M. Kassem, 2019). This research focuses on the effectiveness of instructional communication in *mahārah al-kalām* among students at Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), a leading Malaysian institution for Arabic language education.

Malaysia stands out for its strong emphasis on Arabic language learning, evidenced by the popularity of programs at institutions like UPSI, where innovative teaching approaches and technology-based learning are integral. Students and lecturers have achieved national and international recognition, and matriculation programs help students understand Quranic and Hadith texts. Interviews revealed warm lecturer-student relationships, contrasting with the typically formal interactions in Indonesia.

Despite progress, research on Arabic instructional communication remains limited. Most studies focus on teaching models, neglecting communication competence, an essential component alongside linguistic and cultural competencies (Muradi, 2013). Additional challenges include unsupportive learning environments and limited interest in *mahārah al-kalām*, often linked to inadequate teaching media (Nurlaela, 2020). This study addresses these gaps by exploring instructional communication in *mahārah al-kalām*.

Based on a search using the keyword *mahārah al-kalām* learning, several studies were found measuring its effectiveness with various variables, such as instructional media, techniques, and learning models. However, no study precisely measures the effectiveness of communication in *mahārah al-kalām*. The first study showed that picture story-telling techniques were effective for teaching *mahārah al-kalām* to eighth-grade students at MTS Negeri 1 Sinjai (Kurnia, 2023). The second study found that the direct method was effectively applied in the muhadatsah program at Mamba'us Sholihin Islamic Boarding School (Qomaruddin & Haq, 2023). The third study revealed that a constructivism-based learning model effectively increased students' learning motivation (Hilmi & Bahagia, 2024). The fourth study explored effective strategies for *mahārah al-kalām* in Arabic learning at MTS Al Jauhar Duri. Lastly, a descriptive qualitative study presented strategies to enhance Arabic speaking skills among Islamic boarding school students.

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of instructional communication in *mahārah al-kalām* learning at Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) in Malaysia, focusing on lecturers' communication strategies to enhance students' speaking skills. The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of communication competence in Arabic language learning, a topic less frequently studied than teaching models and techniques. Additionally, it provides insights into the warm lecturer-student relationships and the integration of technology-based

approaches at UPSI. However, the study is limited to a single university. It focuses solely on *mahārah al-kalām* without delving deeply into its connections with other competencies, such as linguistic and cultural skills.

## METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods methodology. According to Sugiyono, mixed-methods research combines quantitative and qualitative research. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in a single study (Sugiyono, 2014). Defines mixed-methods research as research that employs more than one method in a single research activity or more, using quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain quantitative and qualitative data, which serve as empirical evidence in addressing the research problem (Musthafa & Hermawan, 2018). This method can answer more complex research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single research design. This contrasts with qualitative and quantitative methods, which are limited to specific types of data collection instruments. Mixed-methods research encourages researchers to conduct collaborative studies in social, behavioral, and humanistic domains, utilizing various perspectives or paradigms that have not been widely explored in qualitative or quantitative research.

In this study, interviews are used as one of the techniques for data collection, particularly for conducting preliminary studies to identify researchable problems. The researcher also aims to gain deeper insights from the respondents. The type of interview used is semi-structured, which is more suitable for qualitative research than other methods. The characteristics of semi-structured interviews include open-ended questions with thematic and conversational flow constraints, predictable interview duration, flexibility while maintaining control, and using an interview guide as a reference for the sequence, flow, and wording. The interview aims to understand a phenomenon (Musthafa & Hermawan, 2018). The interview informants in this study are faculty members at SU Medan and lecturers teaching *mahārah al-kalām* at UPSI Malaysia's *Focus Group Discussion*.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involves inviting key informants to discuss several concepts related to the data revealed or to answer specific research questions (Susanto et al., 2024). The FGD aims to explore particular issues related to the topic under discussion. This technique prevents the researcher from misinterpreting the problems being studied. The FGD is used to conclude intersubjective meanings that the researcher may struggle to define independently due to the influence of their subjectivity (Samin & Hikmah, 2021). In this study, the FGD is conducted to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the effectiveness of instructional communication in *mahārah al-kalām* at UPSI. The FGD is conducted online using Zoom, and during the FGD, the researcher records the session to obtain more transparent and concrete data. The FGD participants are Arabic language lecturers teaching *mahārah al-kalām* at UPSI.

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and organizing data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation by categorizing the data, breaking it down into units, synthesizing it, arranging it into patterns, selecting which parts are significant, studying them, and drawing conclusions that are easily understood by oneself and others (Sugiyono, 2014). In qualitative research, data consists of interview results, participant observations, field notes, or focus group discussions presented in narrative or descriptive form.

In processing the data, the author employed triangulation techniques. Triangulation is a data collection method that combines various data collection techniques and existing data sources. There are two types of triangulation: technique triangulation and source triangulation. In this study, the author used both. Technique triangulation involves different data collection methods, including interviews and focus group discussions. Source triangulation, on the other hand, refers to collecting data from various sources, such as lecturers teaching *mahārah al-kalām* at UPSI.

In quantitative research, three methods are commonly used: questionnaire, structured interview, and observation. In this study, the researcher used the questionnaire method. A questionnaire is a data collection technique in which respondents are given a set of written questions or statements to answer. A total of 26 questions were distributed via Google Forms to 51 respondents, who are students of the Arabic Language Study Program at UPSI.

Data analysis involves grouping data based on variables and types of respondents, tabulating data by variables from all respondents, presenting data for each variable under investigation, performing calculations to address the research questions, and conducting calculations to test the proposed hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2014). After determining the scores for each answer, the assessment intervals are established as follows.

This study employs data analysis using a quantitative descriptive method with percentages, utilizing the following intervals:

1. Percentage 0% - 20% = Very ineffective
2. Percentage 21% - 40% = Less effective
3. Percentage 41% - 60% = Quite effective
4. Percentage 61% - 80% = Effective
5. Percentage 81% - 100% = Very effective

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Information:

P = Percentage figures

F = Frequency

N = Number of respondents

Research instruments such as questionnaires or tests are developed at this stage, and scoring systems are established for each response. The type of instrument used depends on the variables being studied. It is essential to specify the instruments to be used in the research, the measurement scales for each type of instrument and the procedures for testing the validity and reliability of the instruments (Sugiyono, 2014).

In this study, the researcher uses a questionnaire with a Likert scale comprising four response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Using the Likert scale, the variable to be measured is broken down into variable indicators, which are then used to develop the instrument's items, which may include questions or statements.

The following is the matrix for the development of instruments or the instrument grid used in this study:

**Table 2. The Instrument Grid**

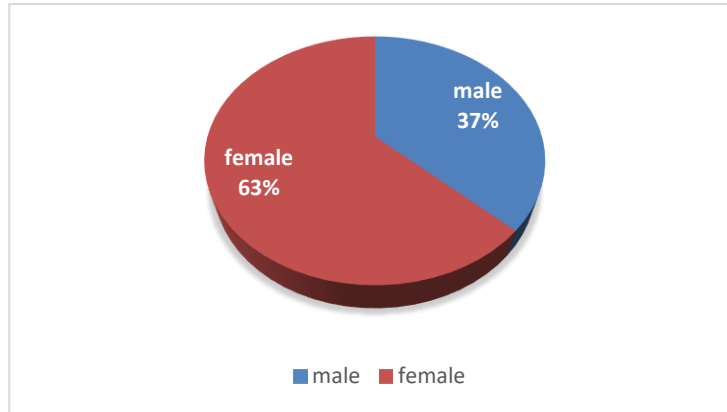
| Variable                    | Indicator | Item  | Item Number    |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---|----------------|
| Instructional communication | Respect   | Speaking in a friendly and sociable manner  | 1<br>2         |
|                             |           | Listening well  | 3              |
|                             |           | Respecting students' opinions or efforts in the teaching and learning process                     |                |
|                             | Empathy   | Asking how students are doing before starting the lesson  | 4              |
|                             |           | responding to students' difficulties  | 5,6            |
|                             |           | trying to understand the conditions and feelings faced by students                                | 7              |
|                             |           | communication between lecturers and students outside the classroom                                | 8,9,10         |
|                             | Audible   | provide learning materials with a clear voice   | 11             |
|                             |           | explain the material in easy-to-understand language   | 12,13          |
|                             |           | use media or teaching aids  | 14             |
|                             | Clarity   | provide material clearly  | 15,16          |
|                             |           | cover matters related to how much the lecturer has mastered the material in front of the students | 17             |
|                             |           | ensure that students have understood and mastered the material given                              | 18,19          |
|                             | Humble    | responding when students make mistakes  | 20,21<br>22,23 |
|                             |           | responding when students need help  | 24,25          |
|                             |           | motivating students   | 26             |
|                             |           | responding when students give assessments of lecturers  |                |

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Instructional communication is transferring ideas from one individual to another to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in delivering the intended message (Ghufron et al., 2023). According to Jumriyah & Rusuly, instructional communication is an activity that can provide significant stimulation or contribution to understanding and practicing interaction and encourage action among all individuals involved in education (Jumriyah & Rusuly, 2021)

*Mahārah al-kalām* (speaking skills) encompasses articulating sounds, pronunciations, and words to express, state, or convey intentions, ideas, thoughts, and feelings. These skills must be organized and developed according to the listeners' needs to ensure the message is clearly understood. In a broader context, speaking is a system of signs that can be heard and seen, utilizing various muscles and body tissues to convey thoughts and meet communication needs (Taubah & Hadi, 2020).

UPSI has two outputs that require students to perform micro-teaching twice at different schools. However, before starting, they prepare lesson plans. This micro-teaching activity is conducted by students in their 7th and 8th semesters. *Mahārah al-kalām* is taught in the first semester (SEM I) because listening is the first skill to become active in developing psychological language growth. Subsequently, with development, the second stage in conversation. Reading and writing are the following stages, acquired through formal practice. This represents the sequence of learning these four language skills.



**Figure 1. Respondent Character**

This study offers significant contributions by presenting data on the effectiveness of *mahārah al-kalām* communication strategies, which can serve as a valuable reference for advancing *mahārah al-kalām* instruction in Indonesia.

a. Results of Validity Testing

The validity test results indicate that the questionnaire items used in this study are valid. With a sample size of 51 respondents, all students from the Arabic Language Study Program at Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), the calculated  $r$  value for each question exceeds the critical  $r$  table value of 0.271. This confirms that all items in the questionnaire can accurately measure the intended constructs. The instrument's validity ensures that the data collected reflects the phenomena under investigation, making it a reliable tool for analyzing students' perceptions and experiences in Arabic language learning.

b. Results of Reliability Testing

The reliability test results confirm that the questionnaire used in this study is a dependable measurement tool. The instrument demonstrates high internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.920, significantly exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.60. This indicates that the items within the questionnaire are well-correlated and effectively measure the intended construct. The strong reliability score ensures that the responses collected are consistent and dependable across different samples or conditions. As a result, the questionnaire can be confidently utilized for further analysis, contributing to the validity and robustness of the research findings.

**Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Answers**

| No | Question  | Answer Frequency |    |    |    | Score | %     | Exp.           |
|----|---|------------------|----|----|----|-------|-------|----------------|
|    |   | STS              | TS | S  | SS |       |       |                |
| 1  | The lecturer speaks in a friendly and welcoming manner with the students.                                 | 0                | 1  | 11 | 39 | 191   | 93.63 | Very effective |
| 2  | Lecturers always listen well when students speak  | 0                | 1  | 7  | 43 | 195   | 95.59 | Very effective |
| 3  | Lecturers appreciate students' opinions and efforts in the teaching and learning process.                 | 0                | 0  | 11 | 40 | 193   | 94.61 | Very effective |
| 4  | The lecturer asks the students how they are before starting the lesson.                                   | 0                | 1  | 8  | 42 | 194   | 95.10 | Very effective |
| 5  | The lecturer asks about the difficulties or complaints faced by students.                                 | 1                | 0  | 14 | 36 | 187   | 91.67 | Very effective |
| 6  | Lecturers always listen carefully to the difficulties or complaints faced by students.                    | 1                | 1  | 14 | 35 | 185   | 90.69 | Very effective |
| 7  | Lecturers try to understand the conditions and feelings faced by students well.                           | 1                | 2  | 12 | 36 | 185   | 90.69 | Effective      |
| 8  | Lecturers greet students inside and outside the classroom after they greet them first.                    | 1                | 1  | 12 | 37 | 187   | 91.67 | Very effective |
| 9  | Lecturers provide opportunities for students to ask questions about things outside the learning material. | 1                | 2  | 9  | 39 | 188   | 92.16 | Very effective |
| 10 | Lecturers invite students to discuss related subject matter or outside the subject matter.                | 0                | 2  | 9  | 40 | 191   | 93.63 | Very effective |
| 11 | The lecturer delivers learning materials with a clear voice   | 1                | 2  | 7  | 41 | 190   | 93.14 | Very effective |
| 12 | The lecturer explains the material in easy-to-understand language.  | 0                | 2  | 10 | 39 | 190   | 93.14 | Very effective |
| 13 | The lecturer explains the material with good body language  | 0                | 2  | 8  | 41 | 192   | 94.12 | Very effective |
| 14 | Lecturers use media or teaching aids in teaching  | 1                | 2  | 6  | 42 | 191   | 93.63 | Very effective |
| 15 | Lecturers try to provide learning materials clearly   | 0                | 2  | 6  | 43 | 194   | 95.10 | Very effective |
| 16 | The lecturer gives examples to students regarding the   | 0                | 2  | 12 | 37 | 188   | 92.16 | Very effective |

| No | Question   | Answer Frequency |    |    |    | Score  | %     | Exp.           |
|----|--|------------------|----|----|----|--------|-------|----------------|
|    |  | STS              | TS | S  | SS |        |       |                |
| 17 | material both verbally and non-verbally.<br>The lecturer does not cover matters related to how much the lecturer has mastered the material in front of the students. | 0                | 2  | 9  | 40 | 191    | 93.63 | Effective      |
| 18 | The lecturer ensures that students have understood and mastered the material given.  | 1                | 1  | 14 | 35 | 185    | 90.69 | Very effective |
| 19 | The lecturer asked the students whether the lecturer's teaching methods had been well received.  | 1                | 2  | 15 | 33 | 182    | 89.22 | Very effective |
| 20 | Lecturers are not angry with students who have been absent several times   | 4                | 6  | 19 | 22 | 161    | 78.92 | Effective      |
| 21 | Lecturers respond quickly when students need help with course material or outside the material.  | 3                | 3  | 14 | 31 | 175    | 85.78 | Very effective |
| 22 | Lecturer forgives students who make mistakes   | 13               | 1  | 11 | 26 | 152    | 74.51 | Effective      |
| 23 | The lecturer praises students who have mastered the material.  | 1                | 0  | 9  | 41 | 192    | 94.12 | Very effective |
| 24 | The lecturer provides motivation and advice to students who do not grasp the material well.  | 1                | 2  | 6  | 42 | 191    | 93.63 | Very effective |
| 25 | Lecturers want to know about student problems outside of learning materials  | 12               | 2  | 9  | 28 | 155    | 75.98 | Effective      |
| 26 | Lecturers give positive responses to student suggestions or assessments about lecturers  | 2                | 7  | 16 | 26 | 168    | 82.35 | Very effective |
|    |  | Average          |    |    |    | 184.35 | 90.36 | Very effective |

The table above shows that the communication of learning *mahārah al-kalām* at UPSI achieved a score of 90.36%, which falls within the 'very effective' interval. Most students reported that the lecturers are very friendly and approachable, categorized as 'very active,' while students' statements regarding lecturers' efforts to understand students' emotional states fall into the 'effective' category.

To identify the supporting and hindering factors affecting the effectiveness of instructional communication, the researcher conducted interviews and focus group discussions with lecturers teaching Arabic at UPSI, specifically regarding *mahārah al-kalām*.



## Supporting and Hindering Factors of the Effectiveness of *mahārah al-kalām* Instructional Communication at UPSI.

Some supporting factors for the success of effective communication in a learning environment include the following:

### 1) Communicator Factor (Lecturer)

As a communicator, the most essential thing in a lecturer is credibility. "*The Source Credibility Theory States that people are more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible*" (Avruch, 2022). This statement can be concluded that a credible source or communicator will find it easier to influence others, so if the expert communicator can be trusted, the communicant will be easier to influence to follow the communicator's goals. Several components are the benchmark for the credibility of a communicator, namely:

#### a) Skill

Communicator expertise is related to being knowledgeable, intelligent, experienced, possessing specific authority, and mastering reliable skills (Albantani & Madkur, 2019). Communicators have power through their characteristics, which makes their statements trustworthy. Communicator expertise also involves their ability to control the emotions of the communicant and their strength in argumentation. Based on interviews and focus group discussions (FGD), the researcher found that Arabic lecturers, especially those teaching *mahārah al-kalām*, possess good skills and expertise, as evidenced by their years of teaching experience, including teaching in several countries other than Malaysia (Khoiriyah, 2019). Their strong performance in teaching is also reflected in the thoroughness of lesson plans prepared by the lecturers. Not only are there standard syllabi, but the lecturers also prepare various learning tools or media, such as modules and applications that support the learning process, including Kahoot for creating Arabic quizzes (Mira et al., 2020). The utilization of technology and innovation is a focus for the lecturers, as reflected in the *mahārah al-kalām* syllabus development based on Bloom's taxonomy, as mentioned by one of the informants: "*I prepare the syllabus and specific and general objectives in teaching based on Bloom's taxonomy, including innovation.*"

#### b) Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the audience's impression of the communicator about their character. A trustworthy communicator is perceived as honest, sincere, moral, fair, polite, or ethical (Iqbaluddin & Aisa, 2020). According to Amer & Al-Rababah, trustworthiness or the honesty of the source largely depends on the audience's perception of the source's intentions. The audience will trust the communicator based on the character of the communicator or the source itself (Amer & Al-Rababah, 2020). If the communicator is considered honest and sincere in conveying information, moral, fair, and ethical, and demonstrates politeness in making statements and acting, then the audience will trust them (Rahmadi et al., 2023). Based on the research findings through interviews and focus group discussions (FGD), the researcher concludes that *mahārah al-kalām* lecturers possess trustworthiness among students, as evidenced by the high level of morality and politeness exhibited by the lecturers both inside and outside the classroom, as reflected in the following interview excerpt:

*"The relationship between lecturers and students is established through appreciation and respect. Both parties must reciprocate appreciation and respect. I always listen to students' concerns, smile, and maintain a friendly demeanor rather than creating fear and anxiety among students. Affection and understanding will lead students to respect and honor their lecturers."*

This is consistent with previous research indicating that respect from lecturers towards students is an essential factor in instructional communication (Haesum et al., 2023). Lecturers also strive to maintain a close and warm relationship with students, demonstrating a high level of care, as evidenced by the informants' statements about their willingness to discuss and assist students with academic and non-academic matters. Lecturers emphasize the importance of building a positive relationship with students to ensure they feel comfortable and can easily understand the material.

This aligns with the view that teachers who care about and pay attention to their students will encourage students to engage in discussions about various topics (Dos Santos, 2020). Lecturers with students also conduct various extracurricular activities to support the learning process, such as visiting museums and malls while learning new vocabulary. Lecturers even make time to exercise with students, as demonstrated in the following interview excerpt:

*"Lecturers become close partners outside the classroom, for example, doing sports with students outside of class hours, such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, etc."*

Based on the interviews and focus group discussions (FGD), it is evident that the lecturers' honesty and willingness to acknowledge their shortcomings in front of students, especially regarding technology, is apparent. Lecturers are not hesitant to seek students' help because, as they explain, students are more knowledgeable in these areas, as illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

*"There are sometimes things I do not know, and I am not embarrassed or unwilling to admit it. For instance, with current technology, students are more proficient than lecturers. If there is technology that I cannot use, I will ask students to handle it."*

This aligns with studies highlighting the importance of lecturer characteristics such as openness, humility, and trust in fostering effective student communication (Obeidi et al., 2010).

### c) Attractiveness

Attractiveness is an essential factor that influences the formation of a communicator's credibility, as it can determine the effectiveness of the communicator's persuasion. Attractiveness is not limited to physical appearance but can also include psychological appeal, which consists of similarity, familiarity, or liking. Similarity refers to the idea that people are drawn to communicators who share demographic characteristics such as language, religion, region of origin, or ideology. Familiarity means the audience more readily accepts a well-known communicator than someone unfamiliar. Communicators recognized for their expertise will be more readily accepted, as the audience will not doubt their ability and honesty. Liking implies that a communicator who shares commonalities or is known will ultimately be held in higher regard by the audience

(Amer & Al-Rababah, 2020). Lecturers of *mahārah al-kalām* also possess expertise in the Arabic language, as they are native speakers from Sudan, thereby eliminating any doubts about their Arabic language proficiency. Based on this, the researcher concludes that the *mahārah al-kalām* lecturers have a significant level of attractiveness.

#### Message Factors (Content of the Lesson)

Education communication involves transmitting messages from the source to the recipient through specific media. The message must be designed to align with the recipient's characteristics for the learning process to be effective. Learning messages are crafted in education to meet the learners' learning objectives and characteristics. Messages are constructed based on two factors: the content of the message and the language (symbols).

##### 1) Message content

The principles of composing messages for effective instructional communication are:

##### a) Readiness and Motivation

Readiness and motivation suggest that the outcomes will be more favorable if learners have high readiness and motivation in message delivery. "Readiness" means preparedness based on prerequisite knowledge and mental and physical readiness. Based on the research findings, instructors put effort into preparing students for the learning and teaching process. The informants indicate that the instructor always requests students to take turns leading a prayer before starting each class. Additionally, the instructor ensures that students feel comfortable before beginning the lesson by inquiring about their well-being, feelings, and readiness to receive the Arabic-speaking material, as illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

*"At the beginning of each class, students take turns leading the prayer, regardless of gender. I ask about the student's well-being and feelings, whether they are happy or sad, and if they are ready to receive the lesson."*

The instructor also frequently motivates students to practice continuously to master the Arabic language. The forms of motivation provided are not limited to academic matters; the instructor also attends to students' psychological aspects, such as addressing issues they may face at home or with peers. The instructor willingly helps provide solutions and advises students to improve their learning outcomes, as reflected in the following interview excerpt:

*"For every student who needs assistance, I generously provide support to the best of my ability. The instructor never belittles students who struggle with learning. If necessary, I advise to help students overcome their difficulties."*

This aligns with Wang's assertion that teachers also serve as mentors and role models, enabling students to develop their abilities to handle personal issues and rapidly changing situations. Juditha also states that a good relationship between teachers and students affects academic performance and student motivation (Juditha, 2021). This is consistent with Hassan's view that students' learning motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors (Hassan et al., 2024).

## b) Use of Attention-Centering Tools (attention-directing devices)

This principle asserts that using attention-focusing tools in message delivery will enhance learning outcomes. This is based on the notion that attention, which involves a mental focus on a particular object, plays a crucial role in successful learning. The more attention is given, the more successful the learning; conversely, the less attention is given, the more likely the learning will fail. According to the research findings, the instructor is highly sensitive to and aware of the importance of utilizing technology as a learning medium. The instructor actively employs various teaching media, from Arabic language magazines to Arabic news on YouTube. Additionally, the instructor assigns tasks to students to create videos in Arabic to sharpen their skills. This was conveyed by the informant in the following interview excerpt:

*"Other media include TV or YouTube, where students watch Arabic news, listen to it, and write down what they do not understand to discuss it with the instructor, who then explains what was not understood. Arabic language magazines also serve as media for this language skill. Students are asked to note down unfamiliar vocabulary."*

This aligns with the notion that students are more motivated to learn in the learning process, which encourages them to write, speak, and imagine, leading to more developed thinking patterns. Learning media makes the educational process more effective, and a good relationship can be established between the teacher and students (Tafonao, 2018).

## c) Active participation of students

Active and interactive participation of students in learning activities can enhance learning outcomes. Student activities include mental activities (such as thinking about answers, reflecting, imagining, and feeling) and physical activities (such as practicing, answering questions, composing, writing, and completing assignments). Research findings from interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) indicate that instructors strive to encourage students to participate in class actively. For example, instructors in the Arabic language skill course require students to bring their dictionaries to every session. The instructors assert that by building a close relationship with students, they will not feel embarrassed and will be more willing to ask questions, even if their Arabic is not yet proficient. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

*"This relationship will become close, and students will not be embarrassed to speak in Arabic. Although their language may not be perfect, courage and motivation to speak are crucial for encouraging communication."*

## d) Repetition

Repetition of instructional messages enhances learning outcomes. This repetition is carried out in various ways. Repetition can also be achieved by providing a brief overview at the beginning of a lesson and a summary or conclusion at the end. According to the research findings, the instructor employs specific strategies to deliver lesson content effectively, resulting in improved learning outcomes. These strategies include directing students to list any words they observe in the classroom, recording these words in a dedicated notebook, and translating them into English or Malay. Once the words are recorded, the instructor asks students to state five of these words and use them in

sentences, whether as synonyms or antonyms, in both simple and complex forms. According to the instructor, this method helps develop their speaking skills, as most students have not previously studied Arabic.

e) Feedback

Learning outcomes will improve if feedback is provided during the delivery of messages. Feedback is information given to learners about their learning results. If incorrect, corrective feedback is provided, and if correct, confirmative feedback or reinforcement is given. Learners will become more confident if they receive corrections when wrong and confirmation when right. Based on the research findings, it was observed that the lecturer actively provides exercises to students to practice speaking both inside and outside the classroom, even using applications like Kahoot in the classroom. The lecturer also mentioned correcting students when they make mistakes. After each class session, the lecturer instructs students to create a summary or resume to obtain student feedback. This is reflected in the following interview excerpt:

*"After the lesson, I ask students to create a summary or conclusion of what they learned that day to assess their understanding. This includes evaluating whether the methods used were engaging. If students have questions or issues they did not understand from the material or beyond, I will address them."*

This aligns with Katayama's study, which investigated the attitudes of 249 students and found that students prefer their mistakes to be corrected by teachers. This is because students want to improve their accuracy in Japanese. Therefore, lecturers must pay attention and develop strategies for correcting students (Katayama, 2017).

f) Language (symbol)

Language is crucial for facilitating instructional communication. Factors influencing the learning process function effectively when language is used to communicate. Based on the research findings, it is evident that the instructor uses easily understandable language to convey material. In addition to verbal language, the instructor also employs non-verbal language to help students grasp Arabic vocabulary, as indicated in the following interview excerpt:

*"All material provided is aimed at helping students understand it using body language occasionally or through media. Body language is significant in teaching kalam, as some vocabulary (mufradat) can be understood through body language when students do not comprehend it. Analogies in the form of movements, known as amaliyah at-tamsil, are also methods to help students understand."*

Other non-verbal language forms, such as smiling, are also used by the instructor to ensure that students are not tense or fearful, making it easier for them to grasp the learning material. This aligns with Barmaki's assertion that non-verbal communication is related to students' academic success (Barmaki, 2014). Students interested in learning more about a course subject are linked to the teacher's smile nods, and eye contact (Al Usman et al., 2023).

## Factors Hindering Effective Communication in Learning

Communication barriers can affect the smoothness of the communication process and even obstruct it. Communication barriers can occur with the communicator, the message, the media, or the environment during the communication process. According to Kaharuddin, communication barriers can take the following forms (Kaharuddin, 2018).

### 1) Semantic Disturbances

Based on the research findings, it is evident that students have varying levels of proficiency in Arabic because some come from pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and others from general schools. Consequently, students experience semantic disturbances that can hinder the learning and teaching process.

### 2) Motivation Disturbances

The research indicates that not all students have high motivation to learn Arabic, and once students are outside the classroom, it is difficult to monitor them. This is reflected in the following interview excerpt:

"Arabic may not be *important* to them, especially when they are at home where Arabic is not used."

This is consistent with Wlodkowski & Ginsberg's assertion that self-related factors contribute to low student motivation (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017).

## Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of *mahārah al-kalām* instructional communication at Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI). The questionnaire's high validity and reliability scores, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.920 and all items exceeding the critical  $r$  table value, underscore the robustness of the data collection instrument. These results confirm that the questionnaire effectively measures the intended constructs, ensuring the accuracy and dependability of the findings. This adds credibility to the conclusions drawn from the study, allowing for a more reliable assessment of the student's perceptions and experiences in learning Arabic.

The findings show that the communication of *mahārah al-kalām* at UPSI achieved a high effectiveness score of 90.36%, categorizing it as 'very effective.' Most students reported that lecturers were friendly and approachable, which aligns with the 'very active' category. However, there were varying responses regarding lecturers' efforts to understand students' emotional states, which were classified as 'effective.' These insights highlight the importance of a supportive and engaging teaching environment in enhancing instructional communication effectiveness.

Interviews and focus group discussions with lecturers teaching Arabic at UPSI revealed supporting and hindering factors affecting the effectiveness of *mahārah al-kalām* instructional communication. Supporting factors included the lecturers' expertise, approachable demeanor, and engaging teaching strategies that foster a conducive learning environment. On the other hand, hindering factors included challenges related to student motivation, the need for continuous professional development for lecturers, and issues with the physical

learning environment. These findings provide important considerations for educators and policymakers to enhance the quality of *mahārah al-kalām* instruction at UPSI and similar institutions.

Future research should explore additional competencies, such as cultural and linguistic aspects, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of *mahārah al-kalām* instruction. Further studies are also recommended to investigate the long-term impact of instructional communication strategies on students' Arabic language skills and the influence of different teaching methods and learning environments on instructional effectiveness. These directions will contribute to advancing the quality of Arabic language education and the effectiveness of *mahārah al-kalām* instruction in Indonesia and beyond.

## CONCLUSION

The research results indicate that the communication in teaching *mahārah al-kalām* (speaking skills) in the Arabic language program at UPSI achieved 90.36%, which falls within the highly effective interval. Based on findings from interviews and focus group discussions (FGD), the supporting factors for communication effectiveness in teaching *mahārah al-kalām* at UPSI are, first, the lecturers as communicators with credibility. In building credibility, the lecturers possess adequate components: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. The second supporting factor is the message as the content of the lesson. The research shows that the lecturers meet essential elements in designing the message, including readiness and motivation, attention-capturing tools, active student participation, repetition, and feedback.

Regarding language usage, lecturers also employ verbal and non-verbal language to enhance teaching communication. The inhibiting factors, on the other hand, are semantic interference and students' motivational issues. The limitation of this study lies in the distribution of the questionnaire, which was conducted during the student's vacation period, resulting in a limited number of respondents. For future research, it is recommended that research instruments be developed that are more specific and capable of effectively measuring communication effectiveness in Arabic language learning.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

(FY) This study's leading researcher, data collector, and author of this journal article. (EMEAH) and (MF) were the main contributors in providing information and data, both primary and secondary. [ANB] is the data manager and analyzer. As a research mentor, [MT] offered valuable advice on the research design and helped shape the conceptual framework.

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