BEING MUSLIM AND MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ARABIC; AN INSIGHT FROM THREE DECADES

Isral Naska

Prodi PBA F&AI Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat

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Abstract

This article is a literature review on accessible three decades publicized studies about student motivation learning Arabic which was conducted in different countries and contexts. Due to the importance of Arabic in Islam as the sacred language, those researches are expected to reveal the religious aspects in maintaining and shaping student motivation in learning Arabic. Unfortunately, the issue did not likely obtain adequate attention from most of the researchers. Interestingly though, review on that studies still managed to reveal that the researchers apparently mentioned the role of identity in their studies. However, it was not supported by the proper analysis which made only little can be recognized from the role of religious identity in shaping the motivation. This circumstance likely has taken place since most of the researchers did not use the poststructuralist approach which may bring them to reveal a deeper understanding of the role of identity in Arabic language learning. Furthermore, in order to obtain the more precise finding on the role of identity in maintaining student motivation, it is suggested to use the approach when addressing student motivation during Arabic learning process.

Keywords: Motivation, Learning Arabic, Identity

Background

One of the current trends in research on learning a foreign language is the implementation of poststructuralist approach in investigating the essence of the learning. Being different with a conventional approach, poststructuralist views language a not only the system of grammar, phonology, and lexicon or as a marker of certain identity but also a set of discourses, a symbolic of capital and a particular site in which an identity is constructed. In terms of learning a foreign
language, this approach leads to the appearances of research which considered the role of identity in language learning. Norton has been regarded as the first scholar who conducted a research based on the approach. At the moment, she investigated learning investment in learning English by Vietnamese immigrant women in Canada. Several years after, Norton strongly underlined the importance of investigating how language learning and identity shape each other, which involved identity dimensions such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity and sexual orientation as well. Until present, there are many research has been established on the role of religious identity in shaping students’ motivation in learning Arabic due to mainly the used approach. For instance, a study by Belnap did not take students’ religious background into account when conducting a survey on Arabic course students’ background and motivation in the U.S and Canada. A study by Hussein and Brosh in 2013 also did not use religious identity as one of the main consideration in analyzing student motivation and attitude in learning Arabic. Interestingly, the role of student religious identity in shaping the motivation is still can be identified in some part of their analysis, which I will explain in a particular part of this article.

Indeed there were some studies in which student religious background or identity was considered as one of the aspects that may drive students’ motivation such as a study by Seymour-Jorn in 2004 and Bakar et al in

12 Seymour-Jorn, C., “Arabic Language Learning among Arab Immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin: a
2010. However not all of them provided adequate information on how identity shapes the motivation. A study by Bakar et al, for instance, only suggested the attachment of religious motivation into motivational component introduced by Noels in 2000.

This article is actually for presenting my review on all the accessible publications about motivation in learning Arabic. Since the issue of religious identity is inextricably intertwined with learning Arabic, it is interesting to recognize how the researchers responded to the role of student identity in shaping student motivation.

Before it goes, I think it is essential to show my understanding to some terms that I used in this part. The first relates to the approaches may use (structuralist and poststructuralist) for investigating language learning. The second connects with the potent relationship between Arabic and Islam. The last associates to the term of religious identity.

**Sociopsychological and Poststructuralist Approach**

Recently, there are two salient approaches have been used in researching the psychological and social dimension in learning a foreign language including learning Arabic namely Sociopsychological and Poststructuralist approach. Classifying research as the result of the understanding each concept of both of them will lead us to understand the findings. A brief explanation on both of them will be found in order at subsequent paragraphs.

The Sociopsychological approach in language learning is considered as an approach came earlier compared to the other. It was introduced widely in early 70's when Gardner and Lambert published their intensive research on student motivation and attitude in learning English among French-speaking student and vis-a-versa in Canada. The social and psychological aspect of learning in Gardner and Lambert theory is completely described through their classifications on student motivation which are integrative and instrumental motivation.

Integrative motivation is a term used for describing the student learning effort which comes from their desire to become integrated into a community which its language they are learning it. Whereas, the instrumental motivation is a term used for describing an effort of reaping the instrumental advantages of using that language such as getting a job, improving career, and aiming at particular academic purposes. Since this theory is extremely influenced, researchers who implement it are called Gardnerian, which is the term is was introduced by Dörnyei.

The use of Sociopsychological approach in the studies of motivation became more common after 1980. Dörnyei in 1994 introduced the L2 Motivation Construct which involved three components; language level, learner level and learning situation level. Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels also introduced

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the role of self-confidence and group cohesion in the foreign language classroom in maintaining student motivation. The term heritage learner which has been used widely in several research such as by Hussein Ali is also considered as the part of the long development of the approach. Some researchers also found some new types of motivation as the complementary of instrumental motivation introduced by Gardner and Lamber; a utility for traveling, maintaining national security and imitating purposes.

While in Poststructuralist approach, language is viewed in a broader and deeper way compared to Psychological approach viewed language. Language is a set of discourses which is used and shaped through the use in a highly contextual way. Language is also a symbol of capital which can be used for aiming certain future purposes. In addition, language is a site in which human identity is constructed. The implementation of this approach has pulled in many life’s aspects into language research such as economics, politics, religion, gender, and even sexual orientation. One of the salient characters of this approach which make it distinct is the use of ethnography method in collecting data instead of a quantitative instrument which is being prominent in Sociopsychological approach.

The implementation of Poststructuralist approach in addressing a foreign language learning has been provided new understanding of the language learning process particularly on the role of identity in learning. According to Norton, since language is considered not as an independent form separated from its speakers and the use of language is highly social, how a speaker learn and use a language which is undoubtedly inextricable with a social context become an aspect that is highly relevant to discuss. As cited by Norton from Bakthin, according to this approach language learning is a process in which student struggle to acquire a language in order to be able to participate in a new community. The struggle also appears when students have to use the learned language as a tool that has been used long before. From this point of view, by referring to Hammacks work in identity formation, the intended participation could be shaped by certain meta-narrative of identity and a particular person-narrative as well. Due to the social dimension of identity formation, understanding the role of student identity in language learning has involved the analysis of the broader social aspects which means learning process is not only related to the classroom activities.

Considering both approaches, I tend to think that the poststructuralist approach is the better way to address the process of language learning. Students in a foreign classroom have different backgrounds and aims which constitute altered condition in language learning. In terms of learning motivation, through using the approach a researcher may reveal the broader picture of how the motivation is formed, shaped and sustained.

Arabic and Its Relationship With Islam

As cited by many Arabic linguists such as-Thawab and Wafi from the work of Schlozer, Semitic Languages, which divide

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itself into two big parts; East Semitic and West Semitic, is a particular language family where Arabic becoming a language of. They explained that “Semitic” is a word which refers to one of Noah’s son namely Sam which became the ancestor of some nations in a certain region after the huge flood of Noah which are Aramaic, Hebrew, Finiqiya, Yemen, Asyuriyyah and Arab. The Arabic linguists also noticed that, even though the name represents a blood relationship, the classification was also related to cultural, political, and geographical links. As the result of the approach, Lydiens and Elemeens, which basically came from the different ancestor, are also considered as part of Semitic since the appearance of the close relationship of both of them in the aforementioned aspects with the other Semitic nations.26

Among the Semitic Languages which contained tens of language, Arabic is a subordinate, together with the Ethiopian Language, of Western-South Semitic which has been recorded as one of the living Semitic languages. Arabic is divided into two languages; South Arabic and East Arabic. While the aforementioned language is found the form of inscription, the East Arabic is still considered as living language nowadays, and it is widely known as the al-Arabiyyah al-Fusha or The Standard Arabic 27. It is, to be underlined, Arabic what we are discussing about.

In terms of how Arabic was developed, a variety of theories are found. Thawwab (1999) stated there are several theories came from western scholars on the origin of Standard Arabic. Noldeke stated that Arabic was developed based on the varieties of dialects found in the Arabian Peninsula which were differentiations among them are minor. Meanwhile, Guidi stated that the Standard Arabic was the mixture of several dialects used by neighboring tribes of the peninsula as well as Nallino who stated that Arabic was developed on the several united-dialects found in the era of Kingdom-tribes of Kindah which was located in the Peninsula. Fischer stated that Standard Arabic is identical with a particular dialects, but he did not explain what was the dialect is. If a more detailed explanation of Fisher on the dialect are unable to find, Harmann and Vollers definitely stated that Arabic was developed in the dialect of Badui. Regarding the differentiation, most of the Arabic scholars, as stated by Thawwab and Wafi as well, agree that Standard Arabic is Badui’s dialect emerged and has been used in Makkah which is the home country of an Arabic tribe namely Quraisy.

Obviously, as stated by most Arabic linguists and other as well such as and Holes28 Mukherjee29, Ernst30 Islam through the Quran and Hadis has huge and notable responsibility in promoting Quraisy dialect to became one of the most important language in the World. Since the Quran and Hadis have been as the main sources of Islamic teachings and laws, the use of this dialect in both of them possed the urgency of this dialect among all Arabic dialects found the Arab Peninsula. Other Arab tribes, who had submitted to Islam at that moment, had to accept the language becoming more influenced than ever had before. Islam has strengthened the position of Quraisy

dialect since this dialect had been used among Arabian before Islam as the al-Lughah al-Musytarakah or the lingua franca among Arab tribes lived in the peninsula. Among many scholars, this version of Arabic is called classical Arabic.

Recently, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) which is a modern style of Classical Arabic is also commonly used as lingua franca throughout the Arab world. As a lingua franca, the language widely used for several purposes such as a means of instruction in school and also used in radio, television, newspapers, and magazines. MSA is also used as an official language with five other languages of United Nations. In addition as also considered as the official language and co-official language of Algeria, Bahrain, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Mauritania, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.31

Religious Identity

If it refers to Erikson, who is considered to be the first person to talk about the conception of identity, identity is narrated as the thing that delivers a person being different or unique. Using the biography of George Bernard Shaw, Erikson implicitly explains that identity is formed through the experience of one's life. In the case of Shaw, his uniqueness as a writer was formed through life experiences which were intertwined in it the way of thinking and family, social, economic and political background. Thus, identity is described as something that is not fixed but undergoes a process of changing from one stage to the next stage in a certain path.

Experience and change have become two aspects that unseparated from the discussion of the definition of identity.32 Recently, the questions of identity includes not only the individual scope but also the social scope. Individual identities such as gender and sexual orientation as well have been equipped with something communal such as religious identity, race, ethnicity, and nationality. Race, for instance, may become notable influencing factors for every individual. The influence may lead to making them being different from other people who come from difference races.

Religious identity is one of the salient aspects of human identity. Peek found that identity drives American Muslims to improve and enhance knowledge about their religion which is Islam.33 The willing to learn about Islam already led them to experience moving from the ascribed identity to the chosen identity and finally come to the declared identity. Seymour-Jorn also found that the awareness of being Muslims has led Arab-American Muslim more respecting Arabic language compared to Arab-American Christian and learn it to maintain their identity.34

Up to this point, the identity has been understood as something inherent in the human being which consists a physical aspect represents the surface, and the inner aspect manifests in the form of certain outcomes which involves many things such as the way of thinking and acting, expression, motivation, and vision as well.

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Review on Studies on Motivation of Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language in Three Decades Span of Time.

In this part, I will do a brief review of some research on student motivation in learning Arabic conducted in some places. There are some established research in order to address student motivation in the learning. It begins with research by Belnap 35 which is in a form of a survey of addressing the motivation of universities student motivation in the US and Canada. After more than one decade, the research on student motivation particularly in the U.S became reintensified triggered by the rise of the amount of university students who enroll to the Arabic course after 11 September event, such as research by Husseinali 36, 37, Taha, Brosh 38 and Nichols 40. Being different with other studies, a study by Nichols is unique since it applied to Arabic students who were the U.S Iraq war veteran. In Malaysia, some research toward student motivation were also conducted such as research by Bakar et al 41 addressed quantitatively Malaysian student motivation in learning Arabic and Aladdin 42, 43 addressed non-Muslim Malaysian student motivation and demotivation factor in learning Arabic. One research was conducted in Indonesia by Chandra et al 44, addressed the student motivation in learning Arabic in Madrasah Aliyah, which is a form of Islamic senior school in Indonesia, and its implication to schools counseling activity. Africa has offered two research on student motivation; Genghesh 45 and Ajape et al 46. Genghesh examined the relationship between age and motivation and Ajape et al addressed motivation of Nigerian university students.

Some of these research, directly and indirectly, indicated that student Islamic identity plays a role in shaping their motivation in learning Arabic. I will focus on research by Belnap, Husseinali (both research), Seymour-Jorn, Bakar et al, Brosh and Aladdin since the findings already indicate the role of student religious identity on their motivation in Arabic learning. Supporting the review of previous

research, a research conducted by Al Osaimi and Weddel (2012) examined student belief in Arabic learning. This research shows that student identity drives Muslims students’ belief in the urgency of Arabic in Islam and thus, it is an important language to learn.

It starts with a wide-range survey conducted by Belnap in the U.S and Canada addressed “who are taking Arabic and what on earth for”. Belnap implicitly stated that information collected through the survey which covered 26 universities may lead to reorganizing the curriculum of Arabic learning like English learning curriculum had been organized well. The survey came up with some dimensions of student background minus religious backgrounds such as student ages, nationality, academic standing, and their number of years in studying MLA (Modern Standard Arabic). Unfortunately, I think the information regarding the approach or theoretical framework used in organizing items of the survey is unavailable which may lead to a disability in collecting all related facts.

Regardless of its shortcoming, the survey revealed for the first time some essential information on student motivation in learning Arabic including any information indicated religious motivation. The survey showed that students from physic, science, and math contributed 12.5% (71) of students who took the Arabic course which is the highest in number compared to other fields. Among the proportion, there are 16 Arabs, 12 Middle Eastern Descent and 12 South East Asian who take the Arabic course. As Belnap stated the majority of them took the course for religious reasons, but he did not explain in detail what religious reasons are that. However, Belnap survey showed that 16.7% (95) of students already stated that being able to read the Quran or religious texts is the reason for taking Arabic course. Despite some flaws, finding of this survey indicated the existence of religious dimension within student motivation in learning Arabic.

Another research indicated the religious dimension of student motivation was conducted by Husseiniali. This research was conducted to investigate the student orientation of learning Arabic and factors which kept them being motivated. Data related was collected from three respondents through observation and deep interview. In order to understand the motivation based on the context of Arabic learning being addressed, Husseiniali used to replace the construct of integrative motivation which had been commonly used in the field with a new construct namely positive motives to obtain a broader picture of Arabic student orientation and motivation. As stated by Belmechri and Hummel, who found and suggested it, it is much more suited to the motivation’s concept in its a broader sense since its ability to encompass the particular type of orientation found in particular context of learning.

As the result of applying a new construct, Husseiniali managed to explore and find broader student religious orientation and motivation. One participant namely Donia is a female Muslim student who took the Arabic course in order to be able to say a prayer and

reading the Quran beside being encouraged by her cultural identity as a Pakistan descent. Husseiniali also stated that Donia had a particular spiritual attraction which leads her to believe that Arabic is a great language. Regarding Donia case, in spite of the existence of religious orientation within herself, as Husseiniali stated, Donia more being motivated in learning Arabic by a cultural factor. This finding leads us to acknowledge that orientation and motivation might be multifaceted. Apparently, cultural and religious orientation and motivation may come at one time to determine student in learning Arabic.

Different research approach which is quantitative had been used by Husseiniali in addressing student motivation in learning Arabic in the U.S’s major universities. In spite of the unavailability of the theoretical framework of identity in this research, Husseiniali used to take into account student cultural and religious background as factor determines student motivation. It could be acknowledged through the identification of Arabic learner into the non-heritage learner for those without any affiliation with Arabic and heritage learner for those who have any affiliation with Arabic, culturally and religiously (Muslim student). Different from Belnap survey, Husseiniali followed up the identification by doing comparative analysis between non-heritage learner and heritage learner through a t-test.

In terms of heritage learner, Husseiniali found that they were more motivated to learn Arabic for identification reasons which were “understanding Arabic”, “interest in my own culture”, “interest in my Islamic heritage”, “Islam as a world religion, and “use Arabic with Arabic-speaking friend”. Obviously, Identification reasons is a particular term came from Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1994) who used it to classify two reasons of Hungarian students in learning English; “think/behave as UK/US people” and “be similar to UK/US people”. Unfortunately, they did not come with any clear definition. This term refers to a sense of belongingness come off every time an individual realizes that their relationship to a referent (group, object, or individual) is essential for their self-definition. According to this, identification reasons in learning Arabic appear when a learner somehow thinks that he has a potent relationship with Arabic. Since Arabic is the language of Quran and Islamic daily rituals, it comes a potent relationship between Muslims and Arabic.

Seymour-Jorn’s research which used the combination of survey and interview in collecting data was likely conducted on the Poststructuralist basis which pays a great attention to the role of identity in language learning. Instead of talking about the social context of learning activities, this research made student cultural identity the point of departure in addressing student motivation and attitude in learning Arabic. This study which involved university and school students as participants were generally aimed at how Arabic learning activities being a form of maintaining of cultural identity.


This research already provided some information which is essential in expanding the conversation on the role of student religious identity in maintaining student motivation in learning Arabic. About 50% of students among 15 respondents agreed that their reasons learn Arabic comes from the desire to read the Quran and to be able to make their own interpretation of the texts of Quran. Regarding that, through an interview, one respondent informed that she already has felt a lot of pressure of being a Muslim and has to struggle for it. In spite of that, he stated clearly that it would never stop her to learn Arabic until she may obtain an ability to interpret the Quran for herself. Both qualitative and quantitative totally related to the role of identity in learning Arabic. One of salient finding is compared to Christian Arabic descent, American Muslim Arabic descent highly motivated in learning Arabic and appreciated the language. Bakar et al. addressed student motivation of learning Arabic from the perspective of self-determination theory which is commonly known by its 7-factor structure of the motivational component. This study was aimed to restate the structure of motivational component characterized Anglo-French learner of English to Arabic learner of Muslim. Amount of participant of this quantitative research is 228 students from several countries in South-East Asia, South Asia, Far East, Russia and Africa, only 6.7% of the had ever lived or visited particular Arabic speaking countries.

Taking the student's identity as a Muslim into consideration led this study to reveal a new aspect could be integrated into the existence motivational component which had been introduced by Noels namely “amotivation and religious motivation”. This particular type of motivation interestingly covers both type of motivation; the intrinsic motivation and the extrinsic motivation. This study demonstrates that student religious identity as Muslim plays an important role in maintaining their motivation in learning Arabic which as the scared language of Islam. This study also has asserted that it is being essential for a researcher to take into account the student religious identity in investigating their motivation in learning a sacred language such as Arabic and Hebrew as well. This study also has suggested that the future study may be conducted in three settings; “highly religious setting”, “less religious setting”, and “non-religious affiliated support”.

Brosh conducted a quantitative study of American student motivation in learning Arabic. Even though Arabic still had been considered as LCTL (less commonly thought language) in the U.S, the number of students who had taken the Arabic course increase dramatically since the Gulf War, even more after 11 September event. Both moments had come complicated perceptions and views among Americans toward the Arabic language. This study was conducted to examine how the perceptions and views play their role in shaping student motivation in learning Arabic. Varieties of theoretical frameworks are used in

regarding student motivation in learning Arabic.

Motivation related to religious interest was revealed in this study even though it was regarded as a minor finding of this research. Being different with other findings which were identified as a particular type of motivation such as integrative orientation, economic utility, academic utility, and the need for establishing national security, the religious related motivation was classified as a part of the ethnic heritage. Data showed that 12.2% respondents had wanted to read the Quran and other religious texts and 2.2% of them interested to be part of Muslim. I tend to think this number should be regarded as meaningful in terms of the role of religious identity on student motivation since 10% of respondents were Muslim.62

Al Osaimi and Weddel63 established a study to investigate to the extent of student belief on Arabic motivate them in learning. This research is aimed to challenge a traditional assumption which has promoted communicative competence as a primary goal of learning a foreign language. As a primary goal, according to the assumption, student's motivation will be increased every times activity aimed to shape their ability to communicate using foreign language is held such as speaking directly to a native speaker. Instead of considering the communicative competence, this research made student's beliefs as an aspect which also maintains student motivation. Combining between quantitative and qualitative data, this research was able to demonstrate that student’s beliefs about Arabic learning are also applicable in maintaining and establishing student motivation in learning Arabic besides the traditional assumption.

Finding of the research is interesting since it has indicated the role of student religious identity as Muslim in the learning Arabic. Student’s belief about Arabic which maintains their motivation in learning Arabic is extremely shaped by student identity. Most students identify themselves as a “knowledge seeker” which is a particular term adopted from Prophet Muhammad words. As knowledge seekers, learning Arabic is part of a process of serving Islam and calling people for implementing Islamic teachings. Most students believe that Arabic is essential for learning Islam. Some students stated that the privilege of Arabic relies on its status as Quranic language and its widened-use in mostly Islamic classical references. There is some students expression describes the close relationship between Arabic and Islam such as “the bridge between Muslim and Islam”, “holy language” and “Arabic and Islam are like twins” This identification comes after recognizing the close relationship between Arabic and Islam. In terms of calling others to Islam, student state that learning Arabic is significantly helpful for being accurate in disseminating Islamic teachings. Students state that the accuracy is an aspect in which error should be perfectly avoided since every error come a hereafter-consequence such as burned in the fire.64

Discussion

Looking deeply into the research, in terms of the approach used, they can be divided into two groups; post-structuralist based research and non-post-structuralist based research. As the result of adopting both approaches there some distinctive aspects, such as the theoretical frameworks used in

62 Brosh, H., “Motivation of American College Students to Study Arabic”……., p. 32.
approaching phenomena, the method in collecting and analyzing data, and also the findings, between two groups of research that are highly interesting to discuss.

After nearly five decades, theories in addressing student motivation and attitude in learning Arabic have been evolved. Since its appearance in the beginning of 70s, social-educational approach conducted by Gardner and Lambert has had notable influence. Even though in the 90s some researchers (Crookes and Schmidt 65; Oxford and Shearin 66, Dornyei 67) started to argue Gardner theory and promote some new possibilities in addressing student motivation and attitude in learning Arabic, some researchers still used to apply AMTB (Attitude and Motivation Test Battery) in their project such as Ajape et al. 68 and Aladdin 69. In addition to that, the emergence of other theories has been also found since the period, such as the role of identity in maintaining student motivation started to introduce by Norton 70 and contextual model of extrinsic, extrinsic and integrative orientation introduced by Noels 71. Hence, it can be underlined that student motivation and attitude in LAFL is not as simple as Gardner and Lambert introduced it for the first time in 1972. The multifaceted sides of motivation and attitude have been trigger many discussions which resulting in evolving this field.

Even though the discussions have taken place in nearly five decades there is a particular side which has not been taken into account intensively. One of a shortcoming of the theories is a lack of consideration of the role of LL (Liturgical Language) in determining student motivation and attitude in the learning of it. In the case of Arabic, this language has deep prominent relation with Islam as Muslim LL, and also the language of Quran and Hadith. A study by Al Osaimi and Wedell 72 noted the relation between Arabic and Islam leads students to think that learning Arabic is an implementation of religious observance. Thus, I assumed that the religious identity of Arabic and other LL’s should generate a particular type and character of student motivation and attitude. Meanwhile, there is a lack of consideration of the role of LL in the previous language learning motivation and attitude theories since, as noted by Nichols many of publications have concentrated on languages such as English, French, Spanish, and German 73. In and after 2010, several researchers have published many papers about student and attitude motivation LAFL. But, the research probably was not addressed the role of Arabic religious dimension in determining student motivation and attitude intensively.

Considering the religious identity becomes relevant in a study towards student

motivation and attitude in LAFL since a deep relation between Islam and Arabic, as the previous explanation, and the role of individual identity in FLL. Dornyei noted identity leads in appearing any consequences in almost every mental activities in language learning. Norton argued the research of identity in a language learning is extremely relevant for several reasons. She also recommended for addressing the role of identities such as gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation in a language learning process. Meanwhile, as noted by Peek religious identity is the most salient and central aspect of human self. Some research likely has identified the exposure of Arabic religious dimension and religious identity to the student's attitude of motivation in LAFL But, the absence of detailed qualitative information in the studies due to the use of quantitative approach has left some critical questions around the issue. Hence, a study of the role of religious identity in determining student motivation and attitude especially in LAFL is a need.

Conclusion

As a result of reviewing aforementioned research, indicators of student religious identity in maintaining student motivation in learning Arabic as a foreign language have been identified. Obviously, some student's purposes of Arabic learning such as reading and interpreting Quran, understanding Arabic sentences used in the Islamic daily submissions, identifying Arabic learning as a form of Islamic submission are closely related to student religious identity as a Muslims. Furthermore, some research revealed that the purposes were belong to Muslim students as well as Muslims students have a particular respect to Arabic compared to students affiliated to other religions.

However, in general it has been unable to assert conclusively that student religious identity as Muslim plays an important role in establishing and maintaining student motivation in learning Arabic since an intensive research which addresses the role of muslim students identity in learning Arabic has not been conducted. It led to the under-presenting and under-theorising the role of student religious identity in learning Arabic while others aspect of identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality and even sexual orientation have been promoted better.

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