

## BEING MUSLIM AND MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ARABIC: AN INSIGHT FROM THREE DECADES OF STUDY

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### Abstract

This article is a literature review on accessible three decades of publicized studies about student motivation learning Arabic, conducted in different countries and contexts. Due to the importance of Arabic in Islam as the sacred language, those studies 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, a review of those studies still revealed that the researchers mentioned the role of identity in their studies. However, the proper analysis was not supported, 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 reveal a deeper understanding of the role of identity in Arabic language learning. Furthermore, to obtain a more detailed finding on the identity's role in maintaining student motivation, it is suggested to use the approach when addressing student motivation during the Arabic learning process.

**Keywords:** Being Muslim; Motivation; Learning Arabic; Identity

### Abstrak

*Artikel ini adalah sebuah literatur review terhadap penelitian-penelitian tentang motivasi belajar Bahasa Arab sekitar 3 dekade belakangan yang dilakukan pada beberapa negara dengan konteks yang berbeda-beda. Peran Bahasa Arab sebagai bahasa yang penting dalam Islam, seharusnya mengantarkan penelitian yang ada mengungkap adanya aspek-aspek religiusitas dalam pembentukan motivasi belajar. Sayangnya, hal ini tidak mendapatkan perhatian yang cukup dari sebagian besar peneliti. Menariknya kendatipun hal tersebut terjadi, yaitu tidak tertangkapnya aspek religiusitas secara memadai, review terhadap hasil-hasil penelitian tersebut menunjukkan peran identitas religious para siswa tetap terlihat. Hanya saja hal tersebut tidak didukung oleh analisis yang memadai sehingga tidak banyak wawasan yang dapat diperoleh sekaitan dengan peran identitas religious tersebut. Hal ini terjadi karena kebanyakan peneliti tidak menggunakan pendekatan yang memungkinkan mereka mengeksplorasi peran identitas religious siswa dalam pembentukan motivasi belajar secara lebih mendalam, yaitu pendekatan poststructuralist. Dengan demikian, untuk memperoleh temuan yang lebih presisi, studi selanjutnya disarankan untuk menggunakan pendekatan poststructuralist untuk memahami peran identitas religious dalam pembentukan motivasi belajar Bahasa Arab.*

**Kata Kunci:** Menjadi Muslim; Motivasi; Belajar bahasa Arab; Identitas.

### Background

One of the current trends in research on learning a foreign language is implementing the poststructuralist approach in investigating the essence of the learning. Language, in the poststructuralists' perspective, is a system of grammar and a marker of a particular identity and a set of discourses, a symbol of the capital, and a site of identity construction. In terms of

learning a foreign language, this approach leads to research appearances that considered the role of identity in language learning.<sup>1</sup> Norton has been regarded as the first scholar who conducted research based on the approach. At the moment, she investigated learning investment in learning English by Vietnamese immigrant women in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Several years

<sup>1</sup> Aneta Pavlenko, 'Poststructuralist Approaches to the Study of Social Factors in Second Language Learning and Use', in *Portraits of the L2 User* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2018), pp. 277–302 <<https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853595851-013>>.

<sup>2</sup> Bonny Norton Peirce, 'Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning', *TESOL Quarterly*, 29.1 (1995), 9–31 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3587803>>.

later, Norton strongly underlined the importance of studying how language learning and identity shape each other, including identity dimensions such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and sexual.<sup>3</sup> Much research was established on the Poststructuralist basis, such as Norton and Kamal<sup>4</sup>, and Norton and Gao.<sup>5</sup>

The role of religious identity in maintaining students' motivation in learning Arabic is likely a remarkable topic to discuss due to the role of religious identity in influencing people life and the relationship between Arabic and Islam. Religious identity is one of the prominent aspects which plays a significant role in shaping one's perception of self and life, and how he/she act and react<sup>6</sup>. Meanwhile, Arabic is considered as the religious or sacred language of Islam through the use of it in Quran.<sup>7</sup>

The approach behind previous studies only provided little detail on the role of religious identity in shaping students' motivation to learn Arabic due to mainly the used approach. For instance, Belnap's study excluded students' religious background when surveying students' background and motivation in the U.S and Canada.<sup>8</sup> Research by Husseinali in 2004 and

2006<sup>9</sup> and Brosh in 2013 also did not use religious identity as one of the primary considerations in analyzing student motivation and attitude in learning Arabic.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of the problem, I find that their data indicate the role of student religious identity in shaping student motivation in learning Arabic, which I will explain further.

Indeed, some studies in which student religious background or identity was considered one of the aspects that may drive students' motivation, such as a study by Seymour-Jorn in 2004<sup>11</sup> and Bakar et al in 2010.<sup>12</sup> However, not all of them provided adequate information on how identity shapes motivation. A study by Bakar et al., for instance, only suggested the attachment of religious motivation into motivational components introduced by Noels in 2000.<sup>13</sup>

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

<sup>3</sup> Bonny Norton and Claire Kramsch, *Identity and Language Learning: Extending the Conversation, Second Edition* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2013), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Bonny Norton and Farah Kamal, 'The Imagined Communities of English Language Learners in a Pakistani School', *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 2.4 (2012), 301–17 <[https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0204\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0204_5)>.

<sup>5</sup> Bonny Norton and Yihong Gao, 'Identity, Investment, and Chinese Learners of English', *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 18.1 (2008), 109–20 <<https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.18.1.07nor>>.

<sup>6</sup> Lori Peek, 'Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity', *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*, 66.3 (2005), 215–42 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/4153097>>.

<sup>7</sup> R.A Al-Tawwab, *Fushul Fi-Fiqh Al-Lughab* (Al-Qahirah: Maktabah al-Khaniji, 1999), p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> R.K Belnap, 'Who's Taking Arabic and What On Earth For? A Survey of Students in Arabic Language Programs', *Al-'Arabiyya*, 20.1 (1987), 29–42.

<sup>9</sup> Ghassan Husseinali, 'Who Is Studying Arabic and Why? A Survey of Arabic Students' Orientations at

a Major University', *Foreign Language Annals*, 39.3 (2006), 395–412 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2006.tb02896.x>>.

<sup>10</sup> H Brosh, 'Motivation of American College Students to Study Arabic', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3.19 (2013), 27–38.

<sup>11</sup> Caroline Seymour-Jorn, 'Arabic Language Learning among Arab Immigrants in Milwaukee, Wisconsin: A Study of Attitudes and Motivations', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 2004 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1360200042000212205>>.

<sup>12</sup> Kaseh Abu Bakar, Nil Farakh Sulaiman, and Zeti Akhtar Muhammad Rafai, 'Self-Determination Theory and Motivational Orientations of Arabic Learners: A Principal Component Analysis', *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 10.1 (2010), 71–86.

<sup>13</sup> Kimberly A. Noels and others, 'Why Are You Learning a Second Language? Motivational Orientations and Self-Determination Theory', *Language Learning*, 50.1 (2003), 57–85 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.53223>>.

student identity's role in shaping student motivation.

Before it goes, I think it is essential to understand some terms that I used in this part. The first relates to the approaches (structuralist and poststructuralist) in investigating language learning. It is also fundamental to address the potent relationship between Arabic and Islam. The last is associated with the term of religious identity.

### **Sociopsychological and Postructuralist Approach**

Recently, two salient approaches have been used in researching the psychological and social dimension in learning a foreign language, including learning Arabic, namely the Sociopsychological and Postructuralist approach. Classifying research as a result of understanding each concept will lead us to understand the findings. The subsequent paragraphs will explain both approaches.

The Sociopsychological approach in language learning is considered as an approach that came earlier compared to the other. It was introduced widely in the early '70s when Gardner and Lambert published their intensive research on student motivation and attitude in learning English among French-speaking students and vice-versa in Canada. The social and psychological aspect of learning in Gardner and Lambert's theory is thoroughly described through their classifications on student motivation, which are integrative and instrumental motivation.<sup>14</sup> Integrative motivation is a term used to describe the

student learning effort, coming from their desire to become integrated into a community whose language they are learning.<sup>15</sup> Instrumental motivation is a term used to describe an effort to reap the instrumental advantages of using that language, such as getting a job, improving career, and aiming at particular academic purpose.<sup>16</sup> Since this theory is extremely influenced, researchers who implement it are called Gardnerian, which is the term is was introduced by Dornyei.<sup>17</sup>

The use of the Sociopsychological approach in the studies of motivation became more common after 1980. Dornyei, in 1994 introduced the L2 Motivation Construct, which involved three components; language level, learner level, and learning situation level.<sup>18</sup> Clement, Dornyei, and Noels also introduced the role of self-confidence and group cohesion in the foreign language classroom in maintaining student motivation.<sup>19</sup> The term heritage learner, which has been used widely in several research sites such as by Husseinali, is also considered part of the approach's long development.<sup>20</sup> Some researchers suggested some new motivations type besides instrumental motivation; a utility for traveling, maintaining national security, and imitating purposes.<sup>21</sup>

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

<sup>14</sup> Edward D. Allen, R. C. Gardner, and W. E. Lambert, *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*, (Newbury: House Publishers, 1974), p. 32 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/339475>>.

<sup>15</sup> Allen, Gardner, and Lambert.

<sup>16</sup> Allen, Gardner, and Lambert.

<sup>17</sup> Z Dörnyei, 'Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom', *The Modern Language Journal*, 78.3 (1994), 273.

<sup>18</sup> Dörnyei.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Clément, Zoltán Dörnyei, and Kimberly A. Noels, 'Motivation, Self-confidence, and Group Cohesion in the Foreign Language Classroom', *Language Learning*, 44.3 (1994), 417-48 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1994.tb01113.x>>.

<sup>20</sup> Husseinali.

<sup>21</sup> Brosh.

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.<sup>22</sup> 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.

Implementing the Poststructuralist approach in addressing foreign language learning has led to a new understanding of the language learning process, particularly on identity. As Norton cited Bakhtin, this approach views language learning as a process of struggling that students expect to help them participate in a new community. From this point of view, by referring to Hammack's work in identity formation, the intended participation could be shaped by a certain meta-narrative of identity and a particular persona-narrative as well.<sup>23</sup> Due to the social dimension of identity formation, understanding the role of student identity in language learning has involved analyzing the broader social aspects, which means the learning process is not solely limited to the classroom activities.

Considering both approaches, I tend to think that poststructuralism is a 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, a researcher may reveal the broader picture of how the motivation is

formed, shaped, and sustained by using the approach.

### Arabic and Its Relationship with Islam

Many Arabic linguists such as-Thawab and Wafi from the work of Schlozer, *Semitic Languages*, divide itself into two significant parts; East Semitic and West Semitic is a particular language family where Arabic is a language. They explained that "Semitic" is a word that refers to one of Noah's sons, namely Sam, which became the ancestor of some nations in a particular region after the vast flood of Noah, which are Aramaic, Hebrew, Finiqiyya, 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 a result of the approach, Lydiens and Elemeens, which came from different ancestors, are also considered part of Semitic since their close relationship in the aspects mentioned earlier with the other Semitic nations.<sup>24</sup>

Among the Semitic Languages, which contained tens of language, Arabic is a subordinate. Scholars categorized Arabic into two languages; South Arabic and East Arabic. While the South is found in the form of inscription, East Arabic has still considered a living language nowadays. It is widely known as the *al-Arabiyyah al-Fusha* or The Standard Arabic.<sup>25</sup> It is, to be underlined, kind of Arabic what we intend to discuss.

There are some theories on the development of 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 noted that the Standard

<sup>22</sup> Alastair Pennycook, 'Towards a Critical Applied Linguistics for the 1990', *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 1.1 (1990), 9.

<sup>23</sup> Phillip L. Hammack, 'Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity', *Personality and Social*

*Psychology Review*, 12.3 (2008), 223 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868308316892>>.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Tawwab.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Tawwab.

Arabic was the mixture of several dialects used by neighboring tribes of the Peninsula. Nallino stated that Arabic was developed on the several united-dialects found in the Kingdom-tribes of Kindah. Fischer stated that Standard Arabic is identical to a particular dialect, but he did not explain it. Harmann and Vollers said that Arabic was developed in the dialect of Badui. Regarding the differentiation, most Arabic scholars, as Thawwab and Wafi, agree that Standard Arabic is Badui's dialect that emerged and has been used in Makkah, the home country of an Arabic tribe, Quraish.

As stated by most Arabic linguists and others as well, such as Holes and Holes,<sup>26</sup> Mukherjee,<sup>27</sup> Ernest.<sup>28</sup> Islam through the Quran and Hadis has huge and notable responsibility in promoting Quraisy dialect to become one of an essential language in the World. Since the Quran and Hadis have been the primary sources of Islamic teachings and laws, the use of this dialect in both sources possessed the urgency of this dialect among all Arabic dialects found in 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 strengthens the Quraish dialect position since this dialect had been used among Arabian before Islam as the al-Lughah al-Musyarakah or the lingua franca among Arab tribes lived in the peninsula. Among many scholars, this version of Arabic is called classical Arabic.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), a modern style of Classical Arabic, is also commonly used as lingua franca throughout the Arab world. As

a lingua franca, MSA is widely used for several purposes, such as instructional language in schools, and is used in radio, television, newspapers, and magazines. MSA is also among an official language together with five other languages of the United Nations. Besides, it is 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.<sup>29</sup>

### 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.<sup>30</sup>

Recently, the questions of identity include not only the individual scope but also the social scope. Individual identities such as gender and sexual orientation have been equipped with something communal such as religious identity,

<sup>26</sup> Alan S. Kaye and Clive Holes, *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions and Varieties* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 1997), p. 13 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/416614>>.

<sup>27</sup> S Mukherjee, 'Reading Language and Religion Together', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 20.2 (2013), 1–6.

<sup>28</sup> Carl W. Ernst, 'The Global Significance of Arabic Language and Literature', *Religion Compass*, 7.6

(2013), 191–200 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12049>>.

<sup>29</sup> I., Thompson, (n.d.). Arabic (Modern Standard) | About World Languages. Retrieved November 14, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Erik Homburger Erikson, 'The Problem of Ego Identity', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4.1 (1956), 56–121 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/000306515600400104>>.

race, ethnicity, and nationality. Race, for instance, may become notable influencing factors for every individual. The influence may lead to making them is different from other people who come from different 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.<sup>31</sup> The willingness to learn about Islam led them to experience moving from the ascribed identity to the chosen identity and finally coming to the declared identity. Seymour-Jorn (also found that the awareness of being Muslims has led Arab-American Muslims more respecting the Arabic language compared than Arab-American Christian and learn it to maintain their identity.<sup>32</sup>

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

### **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 to learn Arabic in some places. There are some studies aimed to address student motivation in learning. It begins with research by Belnap which is in the form of a survey addressing the motivation of universities student motivation in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>33</sup> After more than one decade, the research on student motivation, particularly in the U.S., became reintensified triggered by the rise of the number of university students who enroll the Arabic course after the 11 September event, such as research by Husseinali,<sup>34</sup> Taha,<sup>35</sup> Brosh,<sup>36</sup> and Nichols.<sup>37</sup> Unlike other studies, Nichols' study is unique since it applied to Arabic students who were the U.S. Iraq war veteran. Quantitative research by Bakar et al.<sup>38</sup> addressed Malaysian student motivation in learning Arabic and Aladdin<sup>39</sup> addressed non-Muslim Malaysian student motivation and demotivation factor in learning Arabic. One research conducted in Indonesia by Chandra et al.,<sup>40</sup> addressed the student motivation in learning Arabic in Madrasah Aliyah, a form of a senior Islamic school in Indonesia, and its implication to school counseling activity. Africa has offered two research on student motivation;

<sup>31</sup> Peek.

<sup>32</sup> Seymour-Jorn.

<sup>33</sup> Belnap.

<sup>34</sup> Husseinali.

<sup>35</sup> T. A Thaha, 'Arabic as Auto Critic Foreign Language in Post-9/11 Era: A Study of Students' Attitudes and Motivation', *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 34.3 (2007), 150–61.

<sup>36</sup> Brosh.

<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Nichols and Kenyon College, 'The Arabic Language Fog of War: Exploring Iraq War Veterans' Motivations to Study Arabic Language and Culture Post-Deployment', *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, 15.2 (2014), 71–86.

<sup>38</sup> Bakar, Sulaiman, and Rafaii.

<sup>39</sup> Ashinida Aladdin, 'An Investigation into the Attitudes of the Non-Muslim Malaysian Learners of

Arabic (NMMLA) toward Learning of Arabic as a Foreign Language', *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 21.1 (2013), 183–96; Ashinida Aladdin, 'Non-Muslim Malaysian Learners of Arabic (NMMLAs): An Investigation of Their Attitudes and Motivation towards Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language in Multiethnic and Multicultural Malaysia', in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2010, p. 12 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.404>>.

<sup>40</sup> Yasrial Chandra, A. Muri Yusuf, and Yahya Jaya, 'Motivasi Belajar Siswa Madrasah Aliyah dalam Mengikuti Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Arab dan Implikasinya dalam Layanan Bimbingan dan Konseling (Studi Pada Siswa Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Sungai Penuh Yang Berasal dari Sekolah Menengah Pertama)', *Konselor*, 5.2 (2016), 83–92 <<https://doi.org/10.24036/02016526544-0-00>>.

Genghesh<sup>41</sup> and Ajape et al.<sup>42</sup> Genghesh examined the relationship between age and motivation, and Ajape et al. addressed Nigerian university students' motivation.

Some of these research, directly and indirectly, indicated that Islamic student identity plays a role in shaping their Arabic learning motivation. I will focus on Belnap, Husseinali (both research), Seymour-Jorn, Bakar, et al., Brosh, and Aladdin since the findings already indicate student religious role identity their motivation in Arabic learning. Supporting the review Al-Osaimi<sup>43</sup> examined student belief in Arabic learning. This research shows that student identity drives Muslim 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<sup>44</sup> 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 Arabic learning curriculum. 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. There are 16 Arabs, 12 Middle Eastern Descent, and 12 South East Asian who take the Arabic course. As Belnap stated, most of them took the course for religious reasons, but he did not explain what religious reasons are. However, Belnap survey showed that 16.7% (95) of students already stated that reading the Quran or religious texts is why taking an Arabic course. Despite some flaws, the finding of this survey indicated the existence of a religious dimension within student motivation in learning Arabic.<sup>45</sup>

Another research indicated the religious dimension of student motivation was conducted by Husseinali.<sup>46</sup> His research was conducted to investigate the student orientation of learning Arabic and factors that kept them motivated. Data was collected from three respondents through observation and in-depth interviews. Husseinali used to replace the construct of integrative motivation that 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<sup>47</sup>, who found and suggested it, it is much more suited to the motivation's concept

<sup>41</sup> P Ghenghesh, 'The Motivation of L2 Learners: Does It Decrease with Age?', *English Language Teaching*, 3.1 (2010), 128–41.

<sup>42</sup> Kazeem Oluwatoyin Ajape, Arifin Mamat, and Yusuf Abdul Azeez, 'Students' Motivation and Attitude towards the Learning of Arabic Language: A Case Study of Arabic Students in Nigerian Universities', *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 21.1 (2015), 51–69 <<https://doi.org/10.31436/ijes.v3i1.59>>.

<sup>43</sup> Saleh Al-Osaimi and Martin Wedell, 'Beliefs about Second Language Learning: The Influence of

Learning Context and Learning Purpose', *Language Learning Journal*, 42.1 (2014), 5–24 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2012.661753>>.

<sup>44</sup> Belnap.

<sup>45</sup> Belnap.

<sup>46</sup> Husseinali.

<sup>47</sup> Faïza Belmechri and Kirsten Hummel, 'Orientations and Motivation in the Acquisition of English as a Second Language among High School Students in Quebec City', *Language Learning*, 48.2 (1998), 219–44 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.00040>>.

in a broader sense since its ability to encompass the particular type of orientation found in a particular context of learning.

One participant, namely Donia is a female Muslim student who took the Arabic course to say a prayer and read the Quran besides being encouraged by her cultural identity as a Pakistani descent. Husseinali also stated that Donia had a particular spiritual attraction, which leads her to believe that Arabic is a great language. Regarding Donia case, despite the existence of religious orientation within herself, as Husseinali stated, Donia more being motivated to learn Arabic by a cultural factor. This finding leads us to acknowledge that orientation and motivation might be multifaceted. Cultural and religious orientation and motivation may come at one time to determine students' learning Arabic.<sup>48</sup>

A different research approach, which is quantitative, was used by Husseinali<sup>49</sup> to address student motivation in learning Arabic in the U.S's major universities. Despite the unavailability of the theoretical framework of identity in this research, Husseinali used to consider student cultural and religious background as a factor determining student motivation. It could be acknowledged by identifying Arabic learner as the non-heritage learner for those without any affiliation with Arabic and heritage learner for those who have any association with Arabic, culturally, and religiously (Muslim student). Different from Belnap's survey, Husseinali followed up the identification by doing a comparative analysis between non-heritage learner and heritage learner through a t-test.<sup>50</sup>

In terms of heritage learners, Husseinali found that they were more motivated to learn Arabic for identification reasons: "understanding Arabic," "interested in my own

culture," "interest in my Islamic heritage," "Islam as a world religion, and "use Arabic with Arabic-speaking friend". Identification reasons is a particular term that 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 precise definition. This term refers to a sense of belongingness that comes off every time individuals realize that their relationship to a referent (group, object, or individual) is essential for their self-definition.<sup>51</sup> According to this, identifying reasons for learning Arabic appears when a learner somehow thinks that he/she has a potent relationship with Arabic. Arabic is the Quran's language and daily Islamic rituals; it comes with a full connection 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 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, was generally aimed at how Arabic learning activities maintain cultural identity.<sup>52</sup>

This research already provided some essential information in expanding the conversation on student religious identity in maintaining student motivation in learning Arabic. About 50% of students among 15 respondents agreed that understanding Arabic comes from the desire to read the Quran and be able to make their interpretation of the texts of

<sup>48</sup> Belmechri and Hummel.

<sup>49</sup> Husseinali.

<sup>50</sup> Husseinali.

<sup>51</sup> Belmechri and Hummel.

<sup>52</sup> Seymour-Jorn.

the Quran. Through an interview, one respondent informed that she already had felt a lot of pressure to be a Muslim and have to struggle for it. Despite that, he stated that it would never stop her from learning Arabic until she may obtain an ability to interpret the Quran for herself. Both qualitative and quantitative are related to the role of identity in learning Arabic. One of the salient findings is that American Muslims of Arabic descent are highly motivated to learn Arabic and appreciate the language compared to Christian Arabic descent.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>. This study aimed to redesign motivational components that more fit for Arabic learners of Muslim. The participants of this quantitative research are 228 students from several countries in South-East Asia, South Asia, Far East, Russia, and Africa; only 6.7% of them 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 that could be integrated into the existing motivational component introduced by Noels<sup>55</sup> namely "amotivation and religious motivation." This particular type of motivation interestingly covers both types of motivation; intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. This study demonstrates that students' religious identity as Muslim plays an important role in maintaining their motivation to learn Arabic, which is Islam's sacred language. This study also has asserted that it is essential for a researcher to consider the student's religious identity in investigating their motivation to learn a sacred language such as Arabic and Hebrew. This study

also has suggested that future research may be conducted in three settings; "highly religious setting," "less religious setting," and "non-religious affiliated support."<sup>56</sup>

Brosh conducted a quantitative study of American student motivation in learning Arabi.<sup>57</sup> 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 the 11 September event. Both moments had come complicated perceptions and views among Americans toward the Arabic language. This study was conducted to examine how perceptions and opinions play a 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. Unlike other findings that were identified as a particular type of motivation, such as integrative orientation, economic utility, academic utility, and the need to establish national security, the related religious motivation was classified as a part of the ethnic heritage. Data showed that 12.2 % of respondents wanted to read the Quran and other religious texts, and 2.2% of them were interested in being part of Muslim. I tend to think this number should be regarded as meaningful in terms of religious identity's role on student motivation since 10% of respondents were Muslim.<sup>58</sup>

Al-Osaimi and Weddel established a study to investigate the extent to which student belief in Arabic motivates them to learn.<sup>59</sup> This research aimed to challenge a traditional assumption that has promoted communicative

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<sup>53</sup> Seymour-Jorn.

<sup>54</sup> Bakar, Sulaiman, and Rafeai.

<sup>55</sup> Noels and others.

<sup>56</sup> Bakar, Sulaiman, and Rafeai.

<sup>57</sup> Brosh.

<sup>58</sup> Brosh.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Osaimi and Wedell.

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 time an activity aimed to shape their ability to communicate using a foreign language is held, such as speaking directly to a native speaker. Instead of considering communicative competence, this research made students' beliefs, an aspect that maintains student motivation. After combining quantitative and qualitative data, this research demonstrated that students' beliefs about Arabic learning are also applicable in maintaining and establishing student motivation in learning Arabic besides the traditional assumption.

The research finding is interesting since it has indicated the role of student religious identity as a Muslim in 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," a particular term adopted from Prophet Muhammad's words. As knowledge seekers, they were learning Arabic to serve Islam and to make them able to call people to implement 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. 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, students state that learning Arabic is significantly helpful in disseminating Islamic teachings. Students stated that accuracy is an aspect in which error should be perfectly avoided since every mistake come a hereafter-consequence such as burned in the fire.<sup>60</sup>

## 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 studies. As the result of adopting both approaches has some distinctive aspects, such as the theoretical frameworks used in approaching phenomena, the method in collecting and analyzing data, and 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 at the beginning of the 70s, Gardner and Lambert's social-educational approach has had notable influence. Even though in the 90s some researchers such as Crookes and Schmidt,<sup>61</sup> Oxford and Shearin,<sup>62</sup> and Dörnyei<sup>63</sup> 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<sup>64</sup> and Aladdin<sup>65</sup>. He emergence of other theories has also been found since the period, such as the role of identity in maintaining student motivation started to introduce by Norton.<sup>66</sup> He emergence of other theories has also been found since the

<sup>60</sup> Al-Osaimi and Wedell.

<sup>61</sup> G. Crookes and R. W Schmidt, 'Motivation: Reopening the Research Agenda', *Language Learning*, 41.4 (1991), 469–512.

<sup>62</sup> Rebecca Oxford and Jill Shearin, 'Language Learning Motivation: Expanding the Theoretical Framework?', *The Modern Language Journal*, 78.1 (1994), 12–

28 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1994.tb02011.x>>.

<sup>63</sup> Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels.

<sup>64</sup> Ajape, Mamat, and Azeez.

<sup>65</sup> Aladdin.

<sup>66</sup> Bonny Norton Peirce.

period, such as the role of identity in maintaining student motivation started to introduce by Norton.<sup>67</sup> Hence, it can be underlined that student motivation and attitude in LAFL is not as simple as Gardner and Lambert introduced it in 1972. The multifaceted sides of motivation and attitude have triggered many discussions, resulting in evolving this field.

Even though the discussions have taken place in nearly five decades, a particular dimension has not been considered intensively. One of the shortcomings 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 Arabic, this language has deep, prominent relation with Islam as Muslim LL and the Quran and Hadith's language. A study by Al-Osaimi and Wedell<sup>68</sup> noted that Arabic and Islam's connection leads students to think that learning Arabic is an implementation of religious observance. Thus, I assumed that Arabic and other LL's spiritual dimension 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 publications have concentrated on languages such as English, French, Spanish, and German.<sup>69</sup> 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 that identity leads to any consequences in almost every mental activity in language learning.<sup>70</sup> Norton argued the research of identity in language learning is hugely relevant for several reasons. She also recommended addressing the role of identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in a language learning process. Meanwhile, as Peek noted, religious identity is the most salient and central aspect of the human self. Some research likely has identified Arabic religious dimension and religious identity exposure to the student's attitude of motivation in LAFL. The absence of detailed qualitative information in the studies due to the use of the quantitative approach has left some critical questions around the issue. Hence, an analysis of the role of religious identity in determining student motivation and attitude, especially in LAFL, is a need.

### Conclusion

As a result of reviewing previous research, student religious identity indicators in maintaining student motivation in learning Arabic as a foreign language have been identified. Some students' purposes of Arabic learning, such as reading and interpreting the Quran, understanding Arabic sentences used in the Islamic daily submissions, and identifying Arabic learning as a form of Islamic observance, are closely related to student religious identity as a Muslim. Furthermore, some research revealed that the purposes belonged to Muslim students and Muslim students have particular respect for Arabic than students affiliated with other religions.

However, in general, it has been unable to assert conclusively that student religious identity as Muslim plays an essential role in establishing

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<sup>67</sup> Noels and others.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Osaimi and Wedell.

<sup>69</sup> Nichols and College.

and maintaining their motivation in learning Arabic. It happens since intensive research that addresses Muslim students' identity in learning Arabic has not been conducted. It led to the under-presenting and under-theorizing of the role of religious identity in learning Arabic. Other aspects of identity, such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and even sexual orientation, have been promoted better.

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