Students' Motivation and Attitude towards the Learning of Arabic Language: A Case Study at Selected Nigerian Universities

Kazeem Oluwatoyin Ajape, Arifin Mamat, Ismail Sheikh Ahmad, Ismaiel Hassanein Ahmad[a]

Abstract: The study of students' motivation and attitude in second language (L_2) has recently become an important concept across disciplines of second language acquisition (SLA) and communication. This study sought to validate Gadner's (2009) Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMBT) on a population of Arabic language learners in Nigeria, and to determine their attitudes and motivations for learning Arabic language. The sample comprised two hundred and eighty eight (288) Arabic language students from six (6) universities in Nigeria. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to explore the dimensions of the AMBT in Nigerian context. Twenty three out of the fifty items with factor loading greater than .40 loaded on four factors with eigenvalues greater than   1.0. Four constructs of the questionnaire are: Integrativeness, Attitudes toward the learning situation, Motivation and Instrumentality. The results showed that students had high levels of both integrativeness and attitude towards the learning situation, while their levels of motivation and instrumentality was very low. There was a positive and moderate correlation between integrativenness and attitude toward the learning situation while the correlations between attitude and motivation and integrativeness and motivation were very low. Instrumentality failed to correlate with any of the factors. Multiple regression analysis showed that attitude toward the learning situation was a good predictor of students' integrativeness. Based on these findings, some pedagogical recommendations were provided for the improvement of the students' motivation and attitude towards the learning of Arabic language in Nigerian universities.

a Kulliyyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia. Corresponding author: Arifin Mamat, Email: drarifin@iium.edu.my

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Introduction

The Arabic language has essentially been used for religious purposes since its introduction to Nigeria. The emergence of the language in the history of Nigeria, which dates back to the 7th century C.E., shows that the early Nigerian Muslims gave much recognition to Arabic in order to understand their religion. As a result, Arabic and Islamic studies become a twin subject that cannot be easily separated from each other.

The close relationship between Arabic and Islamic studies puts the language at the disposal of students learning it in this environment. It is against this background that Muslims in Nigeria are committed to learning Arabic and Islamic studies. Wherever there is a Muslim population, some kind of *Quranic* as well as advanced Arabic schools are established in which both Arabic language and Islamic studies are studied simultaneously (Fafunwa, 1984).

However, colonization of Nigeria and other African societies by European countries, coupled with European Missionary activities, which reconated Christian beliefs and secular thoughts, posed a serious threat to the well-organized Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria. As a result of this, the teaching and learning of Arabic language were given little or no attention in the modern systems. The design and development of Arabic curriculum and the methodology of teaching Arabic language became the sole effort and responsibility of the traditional private Arabic teachers.

Students of the language were relegated to the lowest level in the society. They were neither recognised by the government nor allowed to take any post in the government's administration. Thus, learning Arabic was restricted to the study of Islamic religion while the functions of the Arabic language graduates were restricted to dealing with religious matters..

The development of Arabic language has received little or no support from the Nigerian Governments, most especially in the Southern part of the country. Arabic has been regarded as part Islam, thereby requiring to be handled with caution given the multi religious nature of the country.

Consequently, Arabic language in Nigerian universities is considered by many people as a course that is offered solely to those specializing in Islamic studies (Oderinde, 2007; Raji, 2002; Lawal, 2006). Recently, many people have even become apprehensive of Arabic: "Arabic script is perceived as a veritable source of magic and a course learnt by religious militants" (Ogunbiyi, 1987:12)

To make things worse, employment opportunities of Arabic language graduates in Nigeria are threatened by the nature of the curriculum which is still very stagnant. It is yet to actualise the aims and objectives of teaching Arabic as a foreign language in Nigerian universities. This leads to poor enrolment of students into the Departments of Arabic language in many of the Nigerian Universities, especially in the Southern parts of the country.

Many students are not motivated to learn Arabic language, often perceiving learning it as a waste of time, as it does not give them career prospects (Raji 2002; Lawal, 2000). Those who study Arabic in their first degree usually do not want to pursue it at the postgraduate level.

All the above factors necessitate a constructive, and logical analysis of students' attitudes and motivation towards the Arabic language in Nigerian Universities. With these we can determine its relevance and sustainability in the Nigerian system of education.

The Role of Attitudes and Motivation

Modern language teaching and learning has emphasised the significance of learners' attitude and motivation towards the acquisition of the target language (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 1990, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Oxford, 1996; Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; and Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Gadner (2009) asserts that before he developed the Language Attitude Motivation Test Battery in the early 1950s, there was not much literature associated with students' attitudes and motivation towards the acquisition of second languages. Since it was generally believed that learning languages was the sign of an educated person, tests of intelligence came to be used as predictors of ultimate success (Gadner, 2009).

Social psychologists were the first to initiate serious research on motivation in language learning because of their awareness of the social and cultural effects on L_2 learning (Dornyei, 2003). Some of the early

models of language motivation include Krashen's (1981) Monitor Model and Schumann's (1986) Acculturation Model. The most commonly used model today is Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model which uses different attitudinal and motivational scales comprising what Gardner called the Attitude / Motivation Test Battery (Doryei, 2003). Gardner's (1985) and was assumed to be the biggest second language motivation research''. Gardner highlighted two kinds of motivation, the integrative and the instrumental with much emphasis on the former.

Integrative motivation refers to learners' desire to at least communicate or at most integrate (or even assimilate) with the members of the target language. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, refers to more functional reasons for learning the language such as getting a better job, getting a higher salary or passing an examination (Gardner, 1985). The model was subjected to a series of criticism from a large number of researchers despite acknowledging the breakthrough that the model made in motivation research about second language education (Dörnyei, 1990, 1994; Oxford &Shearin, 1994; Oxford, 1996; Belmechri& Hummel, 1998; and Crookes & Schmidt, 1991).

Such controversies prompted Gardner to assert that, the AMTB has a definite structure that comprises 11 scales measuring six constructs. They are; Attitudes toward the learning Situation (ALS), Integrativeness (INT), Motivation (MOT), Language Anxiety (ANX), Instrumental Orientation (INO) and Parental Encouragement (PE) (Gardner, 2009). These six constructs reveal that, in general, motivation enhances second/foreign language acquisition, and that learners ranking high on integrative orientation work harder and learn faster than those who are low on integrative motivation (Clèment et al., 1994; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995).

Other studies have also continued the idea that integrative and instrumental orientations are not opposite ends of a continuum (Belmechri & Hummel, 1998; Dörnyei, 1994). Instead, they are positively related and both are affectively loaded goals that can sustain learning. However, some researchers believe that integrative orientation plays a more important role in second/foreign language learning than instrumental or extrinsic motivation (Gardner et al.1987; Gardner et al., 1989; Noels et al, 2001).

Attitude is another important affective factor in learning a second language. The successful acquisition of a second language seems to some extent, contingent upon learners' views of the language learning environment, the learning situation, and how they view the target language and its speakers. The relationship between motivation and attitudes has been considered a prime concern in language learning research. Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that the learner's motivation to learn a second language is determined by his attitudes towards the other group in particular and by his orientation towards the learning task itself.

Arabic language is usually taken as a foreign or second language to non-native speakers in different parts of the world depending on the goals and objectives of acquiring it. In the Nigerian context, where Arabic is studied as a foreign language, it is expected that instrumental motivation should play an important role in its acquisition. The ultimate aim of learning Arabic, according to the Nigerian system of Education is to equip students with adequate training for jobs in the fields of teaching, translation and interpretation, administration, journalism and diplomatic service (BMAS, 2007). Against this background, it is worthwhile to investigate Nigerian students' motivation and attitudes towards the learning of Arabic language, since not many empirical studies have been conducted on this issue.

The Present Study

This study aimed at investigating students' motivation and attitudes towards the learning of Arabic language at Nigerian Universities. Specially it aimed to 1) determine the levels of students motivation and attitudes towards learning the Arabic language, and 2) determine the relationship among the factors of attitude and motivation in learning Arabic language as perceived by the students. To achieve those objectives, it sought to answer the following research questions: 1) How do students perceive their attitudes and motivations towards the learning of Arabic language in Nigerian universities? What are the relationships among the factors of attitude and motivation towards the learning of Arabic language?

Method

A questionnaire based on Gadner's (1985) Attitude Motivation Test Battery was administered to 288 students of Arabic language at six Nigerian universities. In order to ensure a fair representation of the target population in terms of ownership/proprietorship of the universities in Nigeria, the selected universities were based on Federal, State and Private owned universities. The existing six geo-political zones were utilised using the stratification adopted in the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette of 19 December 1997, vol.84, No 74 that categorised the 36 states in Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory into six geo-political zones.

Thus, the respondents were selected from six (6) universities, taking into consideration the ownership and the location of the universities within the six geo-political zones. The Federal universities were University of Maiduguri from Borno State (North-East), Bayero University Kano from Kano State (North-West), University of Ilorin from Kwara State (North-Central) and University of Ibadan from Oyo State (South-West). The State University was Lagos State University (South-West) while the private University was Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State (North-Central).

The total number of students studying Arabic language as a course in all the selected universities during the 2012/2013 academic session was 1,148. Of these 288 respondents were randomly chosen as a sample that cut across all the selected universities. This satisfied the sample size criteria of Krejcie, & Morgan (1970).

Demographic report

Of 288 participants, 214 (74.3%) were male and 74 (25.7%) were female. The number of male participants was greater than female in this population. 65 Students (22.6 %) were between the ages of 18 and 25years, 176 students (61.1 %) were between the ages of 26 and 30 years, while the remaining 47 students (16.3 %) were above 30 years of age. Almost all the participants had good background in the study of Arabic language before joining the university. 273 (94.8 %) of the participants indicated that they had learned some Arabic language before their university education, while 15 (5.2 %) participants did not

have any background in Arabic language before joining the university. All of the respondants were Muslims.

Instrument

In this study, the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 1985) was adopted alongside the four constructs of Gardner's (2009) in order to explore the Arabic students' attitude and motivations toward the learning of Arabic language in Nigerian institutions of higher learning, the constructs are: **Integrativeness**; it reflects an individual's inclination to interact or identify with the L2 community. **Attitudes toward the learning situation**; it subsumes the individual's evaluation of the language teacher and the L2 course. **Motivation;** it is the L2 learners' desire to learn the L2, the effort invested and the attitude towards learning. **Instrumentality;** it refers to more functional reasons for learning the language.

Data Analysis Procedures

A five-point likert- type scale was employed with the following categories (1 =   Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Neutral 4 = Agree, and 5= Strongly agree). Statistical Software Package SPSS for Windows (Version 16) was used for data analysis. Exploratory factor analysis using Principal components analysis was conducted to determine the dimensions of the instrument (Table 1) while Chronbach alpha was employed to measure internal consistency. Descriptive statistics analyses of frequencies, means and standard deviation of each item were used to determine the students' level of attitude and motivation towards the learning of Arabic language. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the four factors, while multiple regression analysis was performed to establish the influence of the remaining three factors on the level of students' intrgrativeness.

Table 1. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Items	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
INT4			.735	
INT5			.696	
INT6			.750	
INT7			.752	
INT8			.692	
INO15		.795		
INO16		.869		
INO17		.850		
INO18		.779		
INO19		.641		
ALS21	.749			
ALS22	.752			
ALS23	.753			
ALS24	.646			
ALS25	.696			
ALS26	.711			
ALS28	.740			
ALS29	.730			
ALS30	.687			
MOT34				.769
MOT37				.749
MOT42				.871
MOT43				.806
Eigenvalues	6.851	3.135	2.505	1.573
% of total variance	29.786%	13.632%	10.891%	6.837%
Items extracted	9	5	5	4

RESULTS

Validity and reliability of the AMBT

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with a Varimax (orthogonal) rotation was conducted on the data gathered from two hundred and eighty eight (288) participants of the fifty (50) survey questionnaire measuring the attitude and motivation of the Arabic students. An examination of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy suggested that the sample was factorable (KMO=.874) and Bartlett's test was highly significant (p < 0.0001). The results of an orthogonal rotation of the solution as shown in Table 1 indicated that when loadings < 0.40 were excluded, the K1-criterion analysis yielded a four-factor solution with Eigen value >1.0 and a simple structure (factor loadings =>.30). The first factor, Attitude towards the Learning Situation (ALS), had nine items accounting for 29.786% of the total variance explained. The second factor, Instrumental Orientation (INO), had five itemsaccounting for 13.632% of the total variance explained; the third factor, Intergrativeness (INT), had five items accounting for 10.891% of the total variance explained. The forth factor, Motivation Intensity (MOT), had four items accounting for 6.837% of the total variance. Together, the four factors accounted for 61.146% of the total cumulative variance. Moreover, the internal consistency reliability of each item was determined through the measurement of the Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha values of the four factors were as follows: Attitude towards the Learning Situation (ALS) α = .902; Instrumental Orientation (INO) α= .859; Intergrativeness (INT) α= .841; Motivation Intensity (MOT) α=.825. All of the dimensions had Chronbach alpha values greater than .70.

Perceived students' attitude and motivation towards the learning of Arabic language

Integrativeness

The results showed that students' level of integrativeness was very high and they are positively influenced by integration with the native speakers. The mean scores of the five items on integration intensity showed a high tendency of the students in integrating with the native speakers. The items with the highest mean score is item 4, (M=4.4, SD=.77) to

which 261 (90%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the more they get to know the Arabians, the more they want to be fluent in their language. The same applies to item 8, (M=4.4, SD=.81), 261 (90%) whereby students agreed or strongly agreed that *studying Arabic can be important for them because it will enable them to better understand and appreciate Arabic art and literature* and item 6, (M=4.4, SD=.81), 259 (89%) students agreed or strongly agreed that *studying Arabic can be important to them because it will allow them to be more at ease with Arabic speakers*. Item 7 (M=4.3, SD=.84) 247, (84%) shows that students agreed or strongly agreed that studying Arabic can be important for them because *it will allow them to meet and converse with more and various Muslims*. Lastly, item 5, (M=4.1, SD=.89), indicates that 225 (77%) students agreed or strongly agreed that they *always admire the Arabs*.

Table 2: Integrativeness

No	Items	Agreed (n)	Disagreed (n)	Neutral (n)	Mean	S.D
4	The more I get to know the Arabians, the more I want to be fluent in their language.	261 90%	07 2.4%	20 6.9%	4.4	.77
5	I have always admired the Arabian people.	225 77%	14 4.9%	49 17.0%	4.1	.89
6	Studying Arabic can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with who speak Arabic.	259 89%	11 3.8%	18 6.2%	4.4	.81
7	Studying Arabic can be important for me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and various Muslims.	247 84%	10 3.4%	33 11.5%	4.3	.84
8	Studying Arabic can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate Arabic art and literature.	261 90%	11 3.4%	16 5.6%	4.4	.81

Table 3 Attitudes toward the learning situation

No	Items	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)	Neutral (%)	Mean	S.D
21	Many of my Arabic teachers are competent	249 82.9%	25 9.0%	22 7.6%	4.15	.97
22	Many of my Arabic teachers are approachable	226 78.5%	30 10.4%	32 11.1%	4.07	1.1
23	Many of my Arabic teachers are pleasant	226 78.5%	28 9.7%	34 11.8	4.17	1.0
24	Many of my Arabic teachers are intelligent	238 83%	23 8.0%	27 9.4%	4.17	1.0
25	Many of my Arabic courses are meaningful	241 83%	21 7.2%	26 9.0%	4.03	.95
26	Many of my Arabic courses are enjoyable	228 89.2%	30 10.4%	30 10.4	4.07	1.0
28	Many of my Arabic courses are pleasant	118 76%	31 10.8%	38 13.2%	4.0	1.0
29	Many of my Arabic courses are rewarding	209 72.5%	40 13.9%	39 13.5%	3.87	1.1
30	Many of my Arabic courses are educational	232 80.6%	26 9.0%	30 10.4%	4.1	1.0

Attitudes toward the learning situation

Students showed a positive response toward their attitude to their teachers and the Arabic course. 139 (82.9%) (M=4.15, SD=.97) agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers are competent; 226 (78.5%) (M=4.10, SD=.1.1) agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers are approachable; 226 (78.5%) (M=4.07, SD=1.1) agreed or strongly agreed that their

teachers are pleasant; while 238 (83%) (M=4.17, SD=1.0) agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers are intelligent. On their attitude towards their Arabic courses, 241 (83%) (M=4.3, SD=.95) agreed or strongly agreed that their Arabic courses are meaningful; 228 (79.1%) (M=4.07, SD=1.0) agreed or strongly agreed that their Arabic courses are enjoyable; 118 (76%) (M=4.0, SD=1.0) agreed or strongly agreed that their Arabic courses are pleasant; 209 (72.5%) (M=3.87, SD=1.1) agreed or strongly agreed that their Arabic courses are rewarding; and 232 (80.6%) (M=4.1, SD=1.0) agreed or strongly agreed that their Arabic courses are educational.

Motivation

The result of the motivation intensity showed that students were not so well motivated to learn Arabic language. The mean scores of the 5 times tended to the middle side of the scale between M=2.2, and M=2.9. The highest mean were for item 34 (M=2.9, SD=1.4) which stated that "*When I have a problem understanding something we are learning in Arabic class, I only seek help just because of exam*". 126 (43%) students strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement; 30 (10.4%) remained neutral; while 132 (45.8%) students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 189 (65.6%) (M=2.2, SD=1.4) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they *don't like people to know that they are studying Arabic in the university;* 17 (5.9%) remained neutral; while 82 (28.5%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 155 (53.8%) (M=2.5, SD=1.1) disagreed or strongly disagreed that *"if it were up to them whether or not to take Arabic, they would drop it";* 89 (30.9%) students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement; while 44 (15%) remained neutral. The last item on motivation is item 43 which states that "*If there were Arabic-speaking families in my neighborhood, I would never speak Arabic to them*". 167 (58%) (M=2.5 SD=1.4) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement; 100 (34%) strongly agreed or agreed with it while 21 (7.3%) remained neutral.

Table 4 Motivation

No	Items	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)	Neutral (%)	Mean	S.D
34	When I have a problem understanding something we are learning in Arabic class, I only seek help just because of exam.	132 45.8%	189 65.6%	30 10.4%	2.9	1.4
37	I don't like people to know that I am studying Arabic in the College/University	82 28.5%	189 65.6%	17 5.9%	2.2	1.4
42	If it were up to me whether or not to take Arabic, I would drop it.	89 30.9%	155 53.8%	44 15%	2.5	1.1
43	If there were Arabic-speaking families in my neighbourhood, I would never speak Arabic to them.	100 34%	167 58%	21 7.3%	2.5	1.4

Instrumental Orientation

The results of the students' instrumental orientation were mostly negative, except on item 19 which states that *"studying Arabic can be important for me because I want to become a great Islamic scholar"* **(M=3.1, SD=1.3).** 107(37.1%) students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement; 109 (44.8%) agreed or strongly agreed with it while 52 (18.1%) students remained neutral. 172 (59.7%) (M=2.5 SD=1.4) disagreed or strongly disagreed that *Arabic language can be important for them only because they will need it for their future career*, 71 (24.7%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 45 (15.6%) students remained neutral. 171(59.3%) students disagreed or strongly

disagreed that *studying Arabic can let them become a knowledgeable person* (M=2.7, SD=1.2), 86 (29.9%) agreed with the statement while 31 (10.8%) remained neutral. 182(63.2%) students disagreed or strongly disagreed that learning Arabic language will make them *to get a good job*, 67 (24.3%) students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement; while 39 (13.5%) remained neutral. 142 (49.3%) students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that *other people will respect them more if they have the knowledge of a foreign language*. 91(29.6%) (M=2.7, SD=1.2), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement while 53 (18.1%) remained neutral.

Table 5 Instrumental Orientation

No	Items	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)	Neutral (%)	Mean	S.D
15	Studying Arabic can be important for me only because I'll need it for my future career.	71 24.7	172 59.7%	45 15.6	2.5	1.4
16	Studying Arabic can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.	86 29.9%	171 59.3%	31 10.8%	2.7	1.2
17	Studying Arabic can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.	67 24.3%	182 63.2%	39 13.5%	2.4	1.2
18	Studying Arabic can be important for me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of a foreign language.	91 29.6%	142 49.3%	53 18.1%	2.7	1.2
19	Studying Arabic can be important for me because I want to become a great Islamic scholar	109 44.8%	107 37.1%	52 18.1%	3.1	1.3

Relationship between Students' Attitudes and Motivation towards Learning Arabic

A correlation analysis using Pearson product moment was conducted to explore the relationships between the four factors of students' attitudes and motivation. As shown in the Table 6 below, of all the four factors, integrative orientation and attitude towards the learning situation had moderate and positive correlation ($r = .596$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that the more the students' positive attitude towards their teachers and their courses the more they want to integrate and interact with the native speakers. There was a low and negative correlation between integrative orientation and motivation ($r = .-179$, $p < 0.01$), the same applied to attitude and motivation ($r = .-146$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that the more students integrate with the native speakers the lower their motivation. The same applied to the relationship between attitude and motivation. Instrumental orientation did not correlate with any of the other factors.

Table 6 *Correlations between Students' integrativeness, Attitude, Motivation and Instrumental orientation*

	Integrativeness	Instrumental	Attitude
Instrumental	.076	1	
	.200		
	288		
Attitude	.598**	.062	1
	.000	.297	
	288	288	
Motivation	-.179**	-.059	-.146*
	.002	.319	.013
	288	288	288

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Instrumental orientation, Attitude and Motivation as predictors of Integrative Orientation

Moreover, in order to examine the predictive power of the other factors on integrative orientation, multiple regression analysis was performed. The regression analysis revealed that attitude towards the learning situation is the only significant predictor of integrativeness $R^2 = .367$,

F (3, 284) = 54.99, p < .001. This implies after controlling all other variables, students with good attitude to the Arabic courses and teachers will be more integrated with the native speakers. Motivation and instrumentality were not good predictors of integrativeness.

Pedagogical implications and conclusion

This research has clearly shown that Arabic students in Nigerian universities have a high integrative orientation. It also showed that they not only have good relationships with their teachers are also highly interested in many of the Arabic courses. However, they did not believe that the Arabic program could fetch them a good job or give them the opportunity to achieve their aims and objective in their future careers. The only area they believed that the language will be helpful and useful is for their better understanding of Islam as a religion. As a result, they were not motivated to learn the language, leading, their efforts and morale in learning the language to be very low.

It is pertinent to say that many of the students of Arabic in Nigerian universities are products of Arabic schools (the *Madrasah system*). Many of these schools are either owned by individuals in both North and South Nigeria or by the State governments in the North. Since Madrasah certificates are not recognised by the government, the products of these Arabic schools need to sit for recognised examinations and pass the requisite subjects before they can gain admission into the university. So when they gain admission into the university to specialize in the Arabic language, their orientation in the *madrasah* continues to influence their attitudes and motivation towards the study of the language. They usually see the courses as very enjoyable and pleasant as they are a continuation of what they have learnt in the Arabic schools. More so, the good rapport and respect they have for their teachers, most especially the Arab native speakers, is manifest in their attitude towards the learning situation, which also influences their level of integrativeness in studying the language in the university.

However, most of the students get demoralized in following the program when they realize that most of the courses taught in the university only prepare them to become Arabic teachers in either primary or secondary schools. The design of the program and the methodology used in teaching the language to non-native speakers

is not tailored toward practical skills and specific purposes. Previous studies found that the teaching and learning of Arabic language to non-native speakers has not been designed in such a way that will make the students to be self-reliant so as to face their future challenges in the aspect of economic, social, political, technological and intellectual advancement. (Ismail 1993; Oladosu, 1986; Raji, 1996; Bidmos, 1996; Oloyede, 2003; and Oloyede, 2012).

Abdul-Halim (1982) maintains that the teaching of Arabic in general, unlike the teaching of other foreign languages especially English, has always been designed without making due reference to results and findings from research experiments and scientific studies carried out in the field of language teaching and learning. Oloyede (2003) asserts that the curriculum of the Arabic language and Islamic studies as twin subjects is unwittingly made abstract and theoretical, instead of its real nature as a practical way of life. Oloyede, (2012) expresses further that advanced training in Arabic or Islamic studies should incorporate some conventional disciplines such as the official language of the immediate community of the learner, economics, elementary mathematics, political science, international relations, status and situation of Muslims in different parts of the world as well as the use of the computer.

Among the problems of teaching Arabic language is that the development of Arabic programmes for non-native speakers does not take into account the needs and objectives of teaching and learning the language. Most Arabic programmes adopt structural syllabuses and use the grammar translation method as their means of teaching the Arabic language. This view was also upheld in the communiqué of the 4th International Conference on Arabic Language and Literature organised by the Department of Arabic language, International Islamic University, Malaysia. The conference noted that it is high time Arabic language should be studied for specific purposes. Therefore, the conference advised experts in the field of Arabic language to equip themselves with new methods of teaching modern languages for specific purposes, most especially the different aspects involved in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The conference concluded that this idea will go a long way in helping Arabic language to be studied for different purposes (ICALL, 2013).

In conclusion, it is recommended that the curriculum of the first degree programme in Arabic language in Nigerian universities should be redesigned in conformity with the language settings of the country. The curriculum should be more comprehensive and tailored towards specific purposes. We could have programs like Arabic for Academic Purposes, Arabic for Vocational Purposes and Arabic for Islamic Studies. Students will have the opportunity to choose from variety of courses related to their area of specialisation and further the study in his/her post graduate programme. This will also boost the morale of the students and change their negative perspective about learning the Arabic language in universities.

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