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Factors Influencing Demotivation to Learn Arabic Among Students of Arabic Language Education Program

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Abstract

The study of motivation typically examines the reasons behind an individual's actions or behaviors, with a focus on identifying factors that either hinder or enhance enthusiasm for learning. This research aims to uncover commonalities in the challenges faced by students to propose a more effective and efficient learning process. The study sample consists of first and third-semester students enrolled in the Arabic Language Education program at UIN Jakarta during the 2021/2022 academic year. Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed to students and through direct observations of the learning process. Findings indicate that intrinsic factors, particularly self-confidence, play a crucial role in motivating students to learn a second language. Despite facing various challenges, students demonstrated resilience and a continued effort to maintain their motivation in learning Arabic. This research highlights the importance of fostering self-confidence and addressing demotivating factors to enhance the overall learning experience.

Keywords: *Motivation, Demotivation, Arabic Learning*

Abstrak

Kajian tentang motivasi biasanya berkaitan dengan alasan seseorang melakukan suatu tindakan atau perilaku, termasuk faktor-faktor yang menghambat atau mendukung semangat belajar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan titik temu antara kondisi nyata yang dihadapi mahasiswa untuk menyajikan proses pembelajaran yang lebih baik dan efisien. Sampel penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa PBA UIN Jakarta semester 1 dan 3 tahun ajaran 2021/2022. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah angket yang dibagikan kepada mahasiswa serta observasi langsung selama proses pembelajaran. Dari data yang diperoleh, terlihat jelas bahwa faktor intrinsik seperti rasa percaya diri menempati posisi paling penting sebagai faktor motivasi dalam belajar bahasa kedua. Meski menghadapi berbagai tantangan, para mahasiswa menunjukkan ketekunan dan upaya untuk tetap menjaga motivasi dalam belajar bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya penguatan rasa percaya diri dan penanganan faktor-faktor penghambat untuk meningkatkan pengalaman belajar secara keseluruhan.

Kata Kunci: Motivasi, Demotivasi, Belajar Bahasa Arab

Introduction

Motivation is often discussed in everyday life. The study of motivation is usually related to why a person performs an action or behavior. The students feel they will not be able to continue learning Arabic which they find difficult to comprehend. This phenomenon is commonly known as demotivation. In L2 learning, motivation has been a major factor in student success, with several studies showing that less motivated students are less likely to succeed. Therefore, motivation in learning plays an important role in arousing and encouraging students' interest in learning. Often found in learning Arabic, both at school and in college. Students who have graduated from public high schools often feel less confident in choosing Arabic majors. They feel they will not be able to continue learning Arabic which they find difficult to learn. However, this cannot be generalized, because many new students still register or have majors in Arabic even though they are not graduates of Islamic boarding schools or Islamic boarding schools. Some students take Arabic courses only to neglect their obligations because these courses are taught in all study programs at Islamic tertiary institutions.

Motivation is a concept that often appears in everyday speech. Motivation can be described as the driving force that energizes and directs human behavior. In simple terms, the study of motivation focuses on the reasons a person engages in a behavior (Jenni Muhonen: 2004). Hermawan said that motivation is a powerful and refreshing machine that can direct human actions and behavior (Acep Hermawan: 2015).

Oxford and Nyikos state that motivation is important for students in determining their own learning strategies (Oxford and Nyikos: 1989). According to Gardner, motivation is not a simple construct that can be measured on a single scale, and many things can affect motivation, but motivation plays an important role in learning a second language. For that, it can be found by asking individuals to provide reasons why language learning is important to them (Oxford and Nyikos: 1989).

A person's motivation can only be felt and known by the person himself. Factors outside that can only affect the trend. Will the motivation be positive or vice versa? As mentioned by Guntur and his friends in their research, motivation is a state that arises in a person in a certain situation as a result of several internal factors in addition to several external factors in that situation (Laode Abdul Wahab: 2013), including motivational internal conditions (Lathifah al-Qibtiyah: 2016).

Fakhrourazi and Mahyudin stated that two important factors greatly influence the process of learning foreign languages, including Arabic, which includes linguistic and non-linguistic factors. These two factors are two factors that can be found in learning Arabic. Nonlinguistic factors are more complex and varied. Learned by students, but has a more important role, influencing the success and failure level in language learning. This factor includes psychological factors, namely motivation, and interest in learning (Aziz Fahrurrozi dan Erta Mahyudin: 2012). Therefore, researcher feel the need to raise this theme in a study on a national scale.

On the other hand, there are factors inhibiting motivation and enthusiasm for learning. There is a phenomenon that must be considered. Consideration by teaching practitioners of internal factors and external factors that are the cause of this phenomenon is commonly known as demotivation. Therefore, this article aims to reveal the demotivation of learning Arabic among Arabic Language Education (PBA) students at UIN Jakarta.

Method

The method used in this research is an interactive qualitative method. Case studies were selected as a type of this interactive qualitative method. This is because the theme of demotivation is still a new thing in the realm of research, and it is also a factor of incomplete availability of theory. This qualitative method aims to find descriptive information about the factors that cause demotivation. The data that is the main source for this study are students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program in the first and third semester. In this study, the researcher wanted to reveal how demotivated PBA students at UIN Jakarta in semesters 1 and 3 in the 2021/2022

academic year felt and what efforts they made to deal with this demotivation. This aims to find common ground between the real conditions faced by students to present a much better and more efficient learning process. Based on the phenomenon of their decreasing motivation in learning Arabic as the Language of Religion for us Muslims in Indonesia. The research instrument includes a questionnaire distributed to students who are still studying online in semesters 1 and 3 in the 2021/2022 academic year. In addition, researcher also made direct observations during the learning process. Because researcher as well as correspondence. After the data is collected, the researcher presents it in the form of diagrams and percentages, which are then analyzed in depth and presented with an analytical description.

Result and Discussion

Several studies on demotivation have been conducted in various countries, especially in Europe, America, and Asia. In Hungary, for example, by using structured interviews with 50 high school students suspected of being moderately demotivated, Dörnyei (1998) discovered some factors. These factors include teacher factors, school facilities, lack of confidence, negative attitudes towards foreign languages and their communities, the obligation to learn foreign languages, group attitudes, and textbooks used in class. Then Dörnyei (1998) surveyed frustrated students in Budapest and identified several common factors among frustrated students. The order from most common to least is (1) teacher (character, commitment, competence, teaching method); (ii) school facilities (group size, grade, teacher turnover); (3) confident (experiencing failure or failure); (4) negative attitude towards L2; (5) the mandatory nature of second language education; (6) other learning disorders FL; (7) negative attitude towards the L2 community; (8) attitude of group members; (9) Textbooks (Evans and Tragant, 2016).

Dornyei's research inspired further research on demotivation in learning foreign languages. In Japan, Falout and Maruyama designed a questionnaire based on the demotivating factors suggested by Dornyei. Both concluded that there are high proficiency levels compared to learners with low proficiency levels. In learners with low abilities, internal factors such as lack of self-confidence are more dominant in causing demotivation.

In other research in Japan, Hamada and Kito also found five demotivating factors in foreign language learning, namely the learning environment, teacher style and competence, low intrinsic motivation, non-communicative teaching methods, and teaching materials (Hamada & Kito, 2007). Still in Japan, Kikuchi and Sakai identify five demotivating factors: teaching materials, teacher competence and style, inadequate school facilities, lack of intrinsic motivation, and test scores (Falout & Maruyama: 2004).

Meanwhile, through his research in Taiwan in 2013, Chen stated that internal factors dominated by a lack of self-confidence became the main trigger for the emergence of demotivation in learning foreign languages, especially English or Arabic.

According to Hermawan in Islam, learning Arabic is known as two systems, namely the Theory of Unity (*all in one*) where learning Arabic is seen as a lesson consisting of integrated parts that are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Meanwhile, on the other hand, there is also teaching Arabic which is taught partially. This second system is also known as branch theory (*nadzariyah al-furu'*), in which Arabic is seen as a separate group of subjects that are independently separated. Besides that, it is also known as a combined system, which means combining the two by taking advantage of the advantages and overcoming the existing deficiencies (Buhori, 2016). This model is usually used in Islamic boarding schools and universities in Arabic Language and Arabic Literature study programs.

Therefore, in the context of learning, motivation plays an important role in fostering learner interest. Each student's motivation to learn Arabic varies, all of which can be influenced by the surrounding environment and personality. The environment that influences students' motivation to learn Arabic can come from friends, family, and places of study in this case can be schools, Islamic boarding schools, courses, and the like, can be personal things that affect motivation in the form of

interests, enthusiasm, hobbies, etc. For students with low initial abilities, internal factors such as lack of self-confidence are the most dominant causes of obstacles (Islam, 2017).

Other internal factors related to the inhibition of motivation according to two eyes, include: students' initial ability to introduce Arabic, textbooks, Arabic teacher's rights, learning Arabic which focuses on the language learning side rather than the language acquisition side, which makes learning less interesting, less interactive and less communicative, and ignores the use of result-based learning methods and evaluation models rather than processes (Ainin, 2011). Some external forces that can reduce or hinder motivation are called factors that can come from the environment, friends, family, institutions, systems in place, curriculum, and supporting infrastructure. These factors are found in many studies, especially in learning Arabic. However, the internal factors of the students themselves are no less dominant in causing a decrease in motivation to learn Arabic, one of which is students' interest in learning Arabic itself (Evans and Tarigan, 2020).

Muhbib said in Saepul Islam that psychological factors, including low motivation and interest in learning, were the cause of the difficulty of learning Arabic in addition to educational and social factors (Islam, 2017). Demotivation is a frequent and common phenomenon in L2 learning. The results of previous studies have not only discovered some of the true nature of demotivation but also pointed out some effective strategies for reducing demotivation. Previous studies' results have revealed some of the true inhibitory properties and demonstrated some effective strategies to reduce inhibition (Tabatabaei & Molavi, 2012). It can be concluded that inhibition is a phenomenon that must be considered. Consideration by Teaching Practitioners Internal factors and external factors are the two main factors that cause the phenomenon of hampered enthusiasm for language learning. This is what we usually know as demotivation (Ainin, 2011).

Dörnyei and Ushioda stated that demotivation is several negative influences that can thwart growing motivation. A demotivated learner is someone who was once motivated but then lost his commitment or interest in learning for some reason (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010). Greater attention especially in teaching English as a foreign language is more focused on demotivation. Demotivation directly impacts the learning process learning outcomes and even achievement. Demotivation is an area of research that ought to receive more attention, considering that it has direct educational implications. Therefore, in line with Mohinon (2004) who considers it important to do research related to demotivation (Muhnenon, 2020). Especially during the corona two years ago when the education system changed drastically it affected teaching and learning activities and others.

The negative influence that often thwarts increased motivation is called inhibition. Motivated people then lose enthusiasm and interest in learning and commitment for several reasons, which means that the learner is frustrated, especially about foreign language teaching (Guntur, 2017). Dörnyei and Ushioda define inhibition as any number of negative influences that can hinder current and developing motivation (Clare, Renandya & Ring, 2019). Dörnyei & Ushioda (2013) define barriers as certain external forces that can reduce or eliminate the initial motivation of the ongoing behavioral intention or action (Islam, 2017).

In second language (L2) learning, motivation has become a major factor in student success, with numerous studies showing that less motivated students are less likely to succeed. In L2 learning, motivation has been a major factor in student success, with several studies showing that less motivated students are less likely to succeed. One of the reasons why someone learns a language is his need for that language, so he needs to learn it, especially for adults, or maybe because he likes the language, which encourages him to learn and explore it.

Low interest and motivation to learn is one of the challenges in the development of Arabic language education. Muhbib stated that the factors causing difficulties in learning Arabic were more due to psychological, educational and social factors. This is based on the results of research conducted by Jamsuri Muhammad Syamsuddin and Mahdi Mas'ud which showed that the causes of difficulties in learning Arabic were not entirely in the substance or material of Arabic, but in a lack of interest (100%), no background in learning Arabic (87%), material/ college curriculum (83%), difficulty understanding Arabic material (57%), and an uncondusive classroom environment (50%).

Demotivation has become a phenomenon that often occurs in foreign language learning. The phenomenon of low motivation to learn Arabic also occurs among madrasas (Abdul Wahab, 2008).

Ainin mentioned that in the context of learning Arabic in Indonesia, recently there has been a phenomenon of demotivation in learning Arabic at the primary and secondary education levels, especially at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA). The phenomenon of demotivation is something that needs to be considered by teaching practitioners. This is a complex issue and not many contemporary studies have discussed this. From a psychological perspective, Ainin emphasized that if the demotivating phenomenon is allowed, then learning Arabic at the primary and secondary education levels, especially in MI, MTs, and MA will remain names without meaning. In the context of education in madrasas, which are based on Islamic values, Arabic subjects should be the main subjects in achieving the vision and mission of the madrasah.

Demotivation External Factors:

Language factor

Many factors cause demotivation. Both from within and outside the language itself. For example, demotivating factors from within the language are characteristics possessed by the Arabic language. Arabic is a language that has unique characteristics and is different from other languages in the world. The characteristics and uniqueness of the Arabic language include derivation (*ishtiqaq*), rich in sound, rich in form (*sighah*), *tasrif*, *i'rab*, language rich in expressions, various sentence techniques, syntactically rich language (*nahw*) and others. Arabic has approximately 13 knowledge clusters including *ilm al-lughah*, *al-nahw*, *sarf*, *al-ishtiqaq*, *al-arud*, *al-qawafi*, *al-shi'r*, *al-khat*, *al-insya*, *al-muhadarah*, *al-badi'*, *al-bayan* and *al-ma'ani*. While Al-Zamakhshari divides the study of Arabic into 12 knowledge clusters, namely: *al-lughah*, *al-abniyah*, *al-ishtiqaq*, *al-i'rab*, *al-arud*, *al-qawafi*, *al-shi'r*, *al-insha*, *al-natsar*, *al-kitabah*, *al-badi'*, *al-bayan*, *al-ma'ani* and *al-muhadarah*.

Arabic complexity is one of the elements of language that becomes a demotivating factor. So far, the general public considers Arabic to be the most difficult and complex language. It is common knowledge that Arabic is a language that is considered difficult to learn because of the uniqueness and height of its language style. Especially when discussing the language of the Qur'an, which contains a lot of grammar, such as *majaz*, *kinayah*, *isti'arah*, and other elements of *Balaghah*. Therefore, many people who just hear the word Arabic will immediately feel dizzy and have difficulty. Even though, according to observers and Arabic learners themselves, Arabic is not as difficult and complicated as most people think. It is true, that Arabic is the most special language in the world, especially for Muslims. On the other hand, Arabic has a very real simplicity, even simpler than other world languages. This is stated in one of the Balaghah science studies, especially in the study of *al-ijaz*.

A report released by The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) found that Arabic is difficult for English speakers to learn. Arabic is categorized into one class: Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, and Korean. This reinforces Thomas Irving's findings, which show several difficulties in learning Arabic. Among these difficulties are the many sound systems that differ from other languages, including Indo-European ones. The next difficulty lies in the complexity of the derivation system (*isytiqâq*). Furthermore, there are many changes in the form of words and also the number of vocabulary that need to be mastered in the learning process.

Non-language factor

Many factors influence the smooth success of language learners when learning a foreign language. Learning environment factors, the characteristics of the language being studied, the quality of the teachers who teach, and others are external factors that support student learning success. However, what is even more important in the learning process is the factor from within the student or what is called the self-factor of the language learner. These factors include age,

motivation, language talent, intelligence, first language learning language, and environment. The age difference can cause differences in the quality of the learner's language acquisition results. The results of the study show that children can absorb foreign languages better. In the early stages, adults receive more input, but in the end, the children can beat them. This is because the effective filters in adults have been condensed so that the input it receive is reduced.

One of these non-language factors is the psychological factor of students, in this case, PBA students at UIN Jakarta, where the most important factor and determining success in learning a second language is the confidence factor. Confidence is the most important thing anyone has, including foreign language learners. because in truth, language is practice. without having to feel afraid of pronouncing the wrong words and being burdened by grammar that seems complicated. One of the psychological factors in this research study is inhibition. Molavi and Tabatabaei also said that inhibition is a common and recurring phenomenon in L2 learning. This study tries to reveal the extent to which PBA students are demotivated during online learning and what efforts they make to anticipate demotivation within themselves. The sample in this study is PBA students in semesters 1 and 3 of the 2021/2022 school year with the following details:

Table 1. Factors can cause demotivation in learning Arabic (students perspective)

No	Non-language factor	Respondent (Percentage %)
1	Less varied learning methods	87 (32.8)
2	Difficult to learn Arabic grammar	95 (35.8)
3	Not interested in learning Arabic	29 (10.9)
4	Never studied Arabic	34 (12.8)
5	Too much vocabulary so difficult to memorize	45 (17)
6	Lack of understanding of the purpose of learning Arabic	29 (10.9)
7	Lack of support from family/friends	22 (8.3)
8	Lack of confidence	146 (52.1)
9	The lecturer's explanation is not understood	53 (20)
10	There is no Arabic-speaking environment	142 (50.7)
11	Less effective online learning	127 (47.9)
12	Less or inappropriate study time	46 (17.4)
13	Lack of learning support facilities	62 (23.4)
14	Lack of learning media	34 (12.8)
15	Lack of attention and motivation to students	37 (14)
16	p.s. Difficulty in translating	117 (44.2)
17	Too many tasks	78 (29.4)
18	Difficult pronunciation of letters	22 (8.3)
19	Lack of socialization that Arabic is important	39 (14.7)
20	Don't know Arabic learning strategy	75 (28.3)
21	Lecturers are not passionate about teaching	11 (4.2)
22	The lecturer seemed fierce	21 (7.9)
23	other	27 (10.2)

Less varied learning methods, in this section, 87 students or 32.8% of the correspondents' answers were obtained. this shows that more than 1/3 of students consider the Arabic language learning method to be less varied. Of course, this is a whip as well as motivation for PBA lecturers to make teaching and learning more varied. It is difficult to learn Arabic grammar, in this point, 95 students answered difficult. This is also an internal factor among students who think Arabic grammar is indeed difficult to learn, even up to 35.8%. Not interested in learning Arabic, there is a possibility that students who enter PBA are students from the wrong study program. This is proven by the presence of several students who answered that they were not interested in learning Arabic, as many as 29 students (10.9%). Educational background is also a supporting factor and even a determinant of learning success. This can be seen in their answers, which amounted to 12% having never studied Arabic. Moreover, 17% of them think that there is too much vocabulary to be

memorized. Even 10.9% of them do not understand the purpose of learning Arabic. So it is very possible that they will not be confident especially accompanied by the absence of support from their environment, support from their family and friends.

At some point, the lecturer's explanation was not understood, there were 20% of them answered this. That is, actually not from the perspective of the lecturers who are incompetent in their field. However, other factors hinder this. According to the author's search, environmental factors far more dominate the demotivation that occurs. The table 1. shows that 53% of the students stated that there was no language environment. While online or offline learning is not a crucial factor in the learning process. Maybe because they are students who are already adults and are used to explorative learning. However, 47.9% of them think that online learning is less effective. Maybe this is due to the limited media and scope of their learning. However, other things are urgent as well, that is, they have difficulties in translating. There are 44.2% of them find it difficult to translate.

From the data above, we get point h. lack of confidence occupies the highest position, with the acquisition of 146 answers. This is an important note, therefore, there must be more training on the importance of self-confidence in every line of life. Because with high self-confidence in students, they can increase their creativity and skills optimally. Another thing to note is point u. the lecturer is not passionate about teaching. This point gets the smallest answer among the other answers. Only 11 students (4.2%) answered this point. This is a great relief for lecturers in particular because online learning certainly does not reduce the enthusiasm and motivation of lecturers in teaching them.

Table 2. Activities to improve your understanding and skills in Arabic (student perspective)

No	Non-language factor	Respondent (Percentage %)
1	Learn from YouTube	171 (64.5)
2	Take an Arabic course	79 (29.8)
3	Download an application to support learning Arabic	149 (56.2)
4	Ask friends who understand Arabic better	192 (72)
5	Practice listening, reading, writing, and speaking Arabic on your	148 (55.8)
6	Ask the lecturer / senior class	124 (46.8)
7	Others	30 (11.3)

Because they think Arabic is a difficult subject, 29.8% of them take Arabic courses at Arabic language institutions. However, some learn Arabic through applications that they have downloaded before. It can be seen from the table, there are 56.2% of them answered this. Of course, this is a smart solution for smart students too. Because by learning through the Arabic application, it will certainly make it easier for them to understand the material. If there is material that is difficult to understand, they will ask friends who are considered more competent in Arabic. As illustrated, that there are 72% of students answered this. This is the highest score of their answer. This proves that the existence of a good learning environment and learning interaction will certainly greatly help the success of the learning process itself. However, they also really need very good communication between students and their lecturers (Albantani et al., 2022). Apart from that, continuous practice and exercises are needed because learning a foreign language is the same as practicing.

From the table above, the highest answer is obtained in point d. ask friends who understand Arabic better with a gain of 192 or 72% of students answer it. This is very possible for them to study together with their friends. Even though there was a second position, the answer was that they learned from the YouTube channel as many as 171 or 64.5% of students answered it. The lowest answer is at point g. others, where 30 or 11.3% of students answered that point. This shows that learning media is needed which is far more effective not only in the form of presentation of material, power points, or textbooks, but students also need videos from the YouTube channel as their study companions (Albantani & Madkur, 2019). Because at this time all of us depend on gadgets is very high, especially young people.

Conclusion

Motivation is the most important thing for us to be able to do anything, let alone study. Although motivation is divided into two major parts, intrinsic and extrinsic, the intrinsic factor determines it. Because extrinsic factors are only able to overshadow the individual, the decision is absolutely in the individual. Arabic is a second language that is learned with all its challenges and obstacles. Demotivation is one obstacle. From the data above, it is clear that the intrinsic factor in the form of self-confidence occupies the most important position as a motivating factor in learning a second language. Even so, the students did not just give up, because they still tried to maintain their motivation to learn Arabic. It takes a high enough effort to be able to turn demotivation into motivation. This is our joint task, both teachers/lecturers and students, and institutional support, of course, for the achievement of predetermined learning objectives.

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