

IBN KHALDUN'S VIEWS ON LANGUAGE LEARNING: TOWARDS A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

Siti Suhailah Abdul Rahmanⁱ & Abdul Azim Mohamad Isaiⁱⁱ

- i. (Corresponding author). PhD Candidate, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Abdelmalek Essaadi University. ssuhailah978@gmail.com
- ii. Lecturer, Academy of Language Studies, MARA Technological University. abdul_azim7911@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract	<p><i>To date, Muqaddimah or Introduction, a masterpiece written in the 14th century, still stands strong as a reference for researchers from various disciplines around the world. In this work, the Islamic thinker and historian, Ibn Khaldun, expounds his extensive knowledge and experience in a wide range of scientific disciplines within a historical account and sociological analysis, including his views on language learning, which were discussed at length in the latter part of this book. This study, however, aims to broaden Ibn Khaldun's perspectives on language learning by exploring the relevance of his ideas for foreign language learners in a contemporary context, specifically among Malaysian youths. Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on language learning form the foundation of this research since the researchers seek to assess the applicability of his views to non-native Arabic speakers. This study is supported by a survey conducted on 68 Malaysian students who are studying or have studied abroad, to examine the vital role of hearing in the language learning process, as proposed by Ibn Khaldun in the Muqaddimah. The findings of this study reveal that Ibn Khaldun's thoughts are pertinent to Malaysian foreign language learners and could be further enhanced by integrating modern technologies into the learning process.</i></p> <p><i>Keywords: Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah, Language Learning, Hearing Skill, Technology</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

In Islam, learning is compulsory for every Muslim, as Prophet Muhammad said:

{ طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَوَاضِعُ الْعِلْمِ عِنْدَ غَيْرِ أَهْلِهِ كَمُقَلِّدِ الْخَنَازِيرِ الْجَوْهَرَ وَاللُّؤْلُؤَ وَالذَّهَبَ }

This means, "The seeking of knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim, and he who imparts knowledge to those who do not deserve it, is like one who puts a necklace of jewels, pearls, and gold around the neck of swine" (Hadith. Ibn Majah. Bab Fadl al- 'Ulama'i wa al-Hatthi 'ala Talabi al- 'Ilm. 224).

Learning can be expressed as a continuous process of gaining knowledge and skills through experience, study, or teaching, which takes place in the life of every human being. This process begins even before birth (Cutler, 2012) and occurs as a result of the strong human tendency to seek causes for the world's happenings (Gardenfors, 2010). Any learning process undertaken by an individual will ultimately lead to changes in the individual, either physical, mental, or combined, resulting in positive or negative effects on the individual's life and further learning capacity. For instance, cycling can only be introduced after one is able to walk, not before. And persuasion skills grow from one's ability to speak fluently. Nonetheless, the learning process cannot take place if an individual is not exposed to any kind of interaction with other living beings,

as this exchange plays a vital role in human growth and development. Within this context, one of the most essential means of the learning process can be said to be 'linguistic skill'. A learning process not involving language can be considered virtually impossible or difficult, as it involves communication, which takes place through verbal or symbolic expression.

Modern studies in language learning often enfold various perspectives and branches of knowledge, scrutinizing the phenomena from widely differing lenses. Several studies, for instance, differentiate the language learning process between children and adults, noting the differences between their distinct mental states and physical abilities. Studies on children's language acquisition are primarily concerned with their cognitive development and the developmental stages of language acquisition. Meanwhile, studies on language learning for adults often revolve around the acquisition of foreign languages and the strategies for language learning.

Contrast this to a classical work of the 14th century, we may find a perspective in which children and non-native speakers of all ages (being healthy and sensible) are considered one and their language learning process is similar. This was the view proposed by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) a prominent medieval Islamic thinker and scholar, regarded by many to be the true father of sociology, and whose perspective on language acquisition can be found in his magnum opus, a historical encyclopaedia in seven volumes titled '*Kitab al-'Ibar*' or more famously known as *Muqaddimah* or Introduction, based on its opening chapter or prolegomenon. The *Muqaddimah* is filled with recounts of political affairs during his time, historical events, and comprehensive knowledge of human behaviour, not excluding extensive explanations of linguistic behaviour and language learning. Ibn Khaldun's remarkable insights on language learning are explained in depth, encompassing the definition of language per se and effective methods of language learning from his viewpoint. His analysis mainly revolved around the Arabic language, not surprising given that Ibn Khaldun primarily dwelt in Arabic-speaking regions across Andalusia, North Africa, and the Middle East throughout his life. Another influence on Ibn Khaldun's writing was his diverse career, as he held various positions in different regions, namely scholar, teacher, and magistrate, (Alatas, 2013) which enabled him to gain vast exposure to dialects, traditions, local cultures, and political issues. Ultimately, this extensive exposure gives depth to his insights, making his contributions to the present study especially relevant.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Among Ibn Khaldun's significant contributions to modern human sciences is the educational pedagogy presented in his book, the *Muqaddimah*. Despite having spent a large portion of his life in politics, he has also been actively involved in the academic realm, including teaching and writing (Fromherz, 2010). His immense knowledge in a wide range of fields in the human sciences is reflected in his phenomenal works, later acknowledged by researchers and scholars in many parts of the world to this day. Undoubtedly, such erudition could not have been achieved effortlessly, except through a good educational system and deliberate training from an early age by excellent educators and adequate access to learning resources. Based on Ibn Khaldun's detailed memoirs, he was born into an intellectual family, with his father being his very first teacher (Abd al-Wahid Wafi, 2009). His learning endeavours throughout his life were continuous, involving learning from different authoritative teachers in diverse fields of knowledge. The names of his teachers, along with their biographies and the titles of the books he has studied, were listed in his book *Al-Ta'rif bi Ibn Khaldun wa Rihlatuhu Gharban wa Sharqan* or Biography of Ibn Khaldun and His Travels to the East and West.

Ibn Khaldun on Language Learning

Ibn Khaldun placed a high value on the Arabic language, and his training for its command began from an early age and was consistently sustained throughout his life, since his obligations as a statesperson, diplomat, scholar, sociologist, and judge required him to have an excellent command of both spoken and written Arabic. Most importantly, understanding the legal materials extracted from the Quran and Hadith compels mastery and fluency in the Arabic language (Ibn Khaldun, 1967). Although there is no explicit evidence of him being bilingual (Abd al-Wahid Wafi, 2009), Ibn Khaldun wrote extensively on language acquisition and held linguistic issues in high regard,

considering them consequential and of high importance to the societal fabric. This is clearly expressed in his thoughts within the *Muqaddimah*, in which he detailed an exposition of nearly a hundred pages, covering different topics related to language and mostly focused on the Arabic language, such as grammar, lexicography, and syntax. In this regard, we may find Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on language learning and education pedagogy overlap, considering language as a vital means by which humans acquire knowledge. Besides, Ibn Khaldun (1967) considered the Arabic language as an auxiliary science that lays the groundwork for a deep understanding of traditional sciences, such as Islamic jurisprudence and theology. In the *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun chose to write about effective methods of instruction before moving on to a detailed explanation concerning the Arabic language. Both matters were touched upon in the same chapter (the sixth chapter of the *Muqaddimah*), and the chapter begins with introductions to various scientific fields. Ibn Khaldun (1967, p. 504) regarded instruction as a craft, and language as a habit of the tongue, both of which were later developed into sciences with their own habits, requiring instruction for their acquisition. And both as a result of a habit that is different from understanding and knowing by memory. This habit belongs solely and exclusively to the individual who has obtained a certain skill as well as mastery of it.

The essence of the language learning process according to Ibn Khaldun (1967) can best be summed up in the passage below:

"As long as the habit of the Arabic language existed among the Arabs, an Arab speaker always heard the people of his generation speak Arabic. He hears their ways of addressing and how they express what they want to express. He is like a child hearing individual word employed in their proper meanings. He learns them first. Afterward, he hears the word combinations and learns them likewise. He hears something new each moment from every speaker, and his practice is constantly repeated, until (the use of the proper speech) becomes a habit and a firmly established attribute. Thus, the child becomes like one (of the Arabs). In this way, Arab languages and dialects have passed from generation to generation, and both non-Arabs and children have learned them."

We could see how Ibn Khaldun emphasized the role of hearing in maintaining and preserving language for generations to come, including its role in language learning for children and non-native speakers. Remarkably, Ibn Khaldun used the word "hearing" instead of "listening" in the language learning process. Though both activities are certainly crucial to the act of human communication, the most significant difference between them is the element of human will that is involved in the activities (Specht, 2019). Something is often said to be heard merely accidentally and listened to attentively. It is worth mentioning here that most verses in the Quran on the purity of heart and human understanding are related to hearing (Rahmat, et al., 2018). For instance, Allah linked the sign of weak faith with hearing in chapter 2, verse 7:

﴿خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَهُمْ وَعَدَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

This means, "God has sealed their hearts and their ears, and their eyes are covered. They will have great torment" (al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 7).

Accordingly, language learning begins with hearing and concludes with constant practice of hearing, listening, and speaking. It is notable that the hearing process is beyond human control, either to stop or continue hearing at will. In contrast to the speaking process, humans have control over their speech, allowing them to stop or continue speaking as they wish (Bashar, 2000). This process is impossible to carry out if language learners are isolated from society, since language is a social phenomenon, whereby society is a necessary condition for its origin (Karve, 1966). In this respect, Ibn Khaldun asserted the importance of having exposure to the language community and mingling with native speakers to ensure the authenticity of resources and the learning environment, in addition to the constant practice of the language. This perspective somewhat aligns with his view that travel is an essential way to acquire knowledge from authoritative teachers (1967). Therefore, it can be concluded that one of the major benefits of constant

exposure to native speakers is to learn and discover things unintentionally, as hearing activities take place continuously.

Additionally, Ibn Khaldun (1967) pointed out the primacy of vocabulary comprehension over grammar in the language learning process. This, however, does not deny the importance of grammar because Ibn Khaldun himself had stated that language proficiency should not be judged by lexical knowledge, but instead, should be observed in the ability to arrange words in line with the speech situation or context. An efficacious method suggested by Ibn Khaldun (1967) to achieve a higher level of language proficiency, which de facto could be implemented in any language, is the memorization of classical poetry. The type, quality, and amount of memorized material will determine the future of the learner's language proficiency. Concisely, the language learning process according to Ibn Khaldun starts with hearing and listening, which should be done continuously to build familiarity with words and phrases, and also to bring an understanding of the cultural insights that should not be neglected in language learning. This process resumes until the learner can express his or her thoughts or ideas without being misunderstood by a listener. The understanding of the right word selection becomes a starting point for word combinations according to the speech context. Meanwhile, a minimal mastery of grammar is commonly considered adequate for oral communication, particularly bilateral communication, since it may involve explanation and clarification. Nevertheless, the importance of grammar will be predominant when the learner embarks on his/her journey of written communication because the learner needs to create messages that are immediately comprehensible to the reader. This type of communication is unidirectional; hence, the learner relies heavily on the correct usage of syntax as well as vocabulary, and spelling (Rossiter, 2021).

The Convergence of Language Learning and Education Pedagogy

As previously mentioned, there are similar dimensions shared by language learning and educational pedagogy in the *Muqaddimah*, which shall be noted by language learners, teachers as well as native speakers while interacting with foreigners. Firstly, Ibn Khaldun (1967) emphasized the significance of the oral approach in teaching instead of a total reliance on reading material. According to Ibn Khaldun, "linguistic expressions are merely interpreters of ideas that are in the mind." For this reason, writing constitutes the second medium of human communication. Therefore, the learner's journey to acquire knowledge would be longer if it were revealed only in written forms because humans communicate their thoughts and feelings through the medium of speech in general. As such, educational materials explained and discussed orally may simplify the learning process and prevent misinterpretation of information. Many modern researchers have attempted to prove the benefits of the oral approach in teaching. For instance, the task-based approach is one of the most modern approaches in language teaching, which provides exposure to the learners on authentic language use scenarios. This approach provides opportunities for the learners to practice and develop their language skills, as it requires active involvement of the learners to complete the tasks (Matrasulovna, Dovranovich, & Ravshanbekovich, 2024). Although this approach is often perceived as learner-centred, instructors nonetheless play a pivotal role throughout the entire learning process. Apart from guiding and assisting the learners, they also must determine and decide on purposeful tasks to be assigned according to the learners' needs and interests (Branden, 2016).

Next, Ibn Khaldun (1967) proposed that an effective method of teaching requires threefold repetition, which involves brief and detailed explanation, observation, and evaluation. Given that novice learners lack knowledge and comprehension, they should be taught according to their level of understanding progressively. This is one of the best strategies to draw their interest to keep learning until they reach mastery. In this regard, teachers need to choose the right educational materials and resources that are tailored to the learners' intellect. This is particularly true for ab initio language teaching, where textbooks, if chosen and adapted well, can provide a map for both teachers and learners in addition to preventing incoherence and inconsistency in the learning course (Mossmann, 2022). As the learning process takes place gradually, the learners' motivation and preparedness to engage in the process may also develop, considering that their understanding level has also increased by degrees. It is fairly clear that Ibn Khaldun's method

requires teachers to pay a great deal of attention to their students throughout the learning process. And this kind of attention requires a great amount of patience and perseverance because the teachers must deal with diverse types of characters and personalities. That being said, the strong commitment demonstrated by the teachers will eventually lead to better performance from their students. Thus, both learners and teachers should bear in mind that the learning process will be time-consuming.

Lastly, Ibn Khaldun discouraged severe punishment on learners by any means because it would result in bad habits and character, such as lying and laziness (1967). Corporal punishment or physical punishment in the learning environment is way more harmful as it may affect the learner's physical and mental health. Many studies have found an association between the experience of corporal punishment and impaired cognitive ability, namely lower IQ scores, smaller vocabularies, poorer cognitive abilities, and less ability to pay attention (Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, 2023). In this regard, Ibn Khaldun stated that one of the best education methods was the one recommended by al-Rashid to Khalaf bin Ahmar, the teacher of his son al-Amin. Al-Rashid said to Khalaf:

"... Take firm hold of him and make him obey you. Occupy in relation to him the place that the Commander of the Faithful has given you. Teach him to read the Quran. Instruct him in history. Let him transmit poems and teach him the Sunnah of the Prophet. Give him insight into the proper occasions for speech and how to begin a speech. Forbid him to laugh, save at times when it is proper. Accustom him to honour his relatives when they come to him, and to give the military leaders places of honour when they come to his salon. Let no hour pass in which you do not seize the opportunity to teach him something useful. But do so without vexing him, which would kill his mind. Do not always be too lenient with him, or he will get to like leisure and become used to it. As much as possible, correct him kindly and gently. If he does not want it that way, you must then use severity and harshness."

Notably, most of the modern research regarding Ibn Khaldun's views on language learning and educational pedagogy are published to advocate methods of teaching recommended by Ibn Khaldun, namely by Maniam (2016), Unsi (2018), Stockton (2020), Al Farabi (2022), Mujahidah & Hascan (2022), and Solikhah and Purnomo (2023). Nonetheless, these papers did not consider modern technology as a learning tool that could be integrated into the learning process. Thus, this current study aims to expand the understanding of language learning methods that were encouraged by Ibn Khaldun by examining the applicability of his thoughts to Malaysian foreign language learners from a modern vantage point, where advanced technologies are an integral part of their everyday lives, per Ibn Khaldun's stance towards the dynamic nature of social phenomena. Accordingly, this study is supported by a survey conducted by the researchers to observe the ongoing relevance of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts, which highlighted the significance of hearing and listening in a language learning process, which could, in fact, be utilized by Malaysian learners.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following questions were raised:

- a) What are the similarities between children in general and Malaysian foreign language learners?
- b) What is the most frequently used way of foreign language learning by Malaysian youths?
- c) How does exposure to a specific language community aid language learning?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, where the data analysed from the open-ended questions allowed the researchers to draw inferences about the applicability of Ibn Khaldun's perspectives on language learning to Malaysian foreign language learners in a contemporary context. As this study seeks to broaden Ibn Khaldun's perspectives on language learning, it involves primary and secondary data collection methods. The sources of secondary data were Ibn Khaldun's writings, as well as academic books and articles deemed relevant to Ibn Khaldun and language learning. After reviewing the literature on language learning according to

Ibn Khaldun, the researchers designed semi-structured questions comprising six open-ended questions. This survey required participants to share their opinions based on their own experiences. The responses received through convenience sampling served as the primary data for this study. This data was later reviewed, coded, and grouped into meaningful themes based on the repeated patterns that emerged in participants' answers. Consequently, this data was exported to SPSS to interpret the responses in the form of frequency and percentage, which were later illustrated in tables.

The survey research was initially conducted to gain insights into Malaysian youths' preferred method of foreign language learning outside the classroom setting. Thus, the survey was conducted purposively on 100 Malaysian students who had studied or are currently studying Islamic Studies at Middle East and Moroccan public universities, via mobile instant messaging WhatsApp from 27th December 2023 to 7th January 2024. This application is one of the most popular messaging applications among the younger generation in Malaysia (Yoke, 2023). Hence, it facilitates the process of communication between researchers and participants from different places and time zones. Besides, this online platform could be accessed by the participants using their preferred portable electronic devices, namely smartphones, laptops, and tablets.

Three main criteria were being considered for the selection of participants. Firstly, this study requires multilingual participants. As a matter of fact, Malay and English are taught in Malaysian primary and secondary schools (Abu Bakar, Esa, Ationg, & Jawing, 2021). Thus, these participants were selected because they were expected to have basic knowledge of a third language since most Malaysians are bilingual, speaking both Malay and English. The responses collected are presumably significant in emphasizing autonomous learning strategies, while concurrently highlighting better methods for educators or native speakers to approach foreign language learners. Secondly, this study aims to examine the significance of constant exposure to native foreign language speakers in the language learning process. Therefore, the targeted participants were students with a minimum of one year of experience living in a foreign country. Lastly, youths were chosen as the sample of this study because they are usually more motivated to engage in practices that resist common norms, including traditional educational activities (Wortham, 2011). Therefore, the interests and preferences of Malaysian youth play a part in adapting Ibn Khaldun's perspectives to modern foreign language learners, thereby broadening his thoughts on language learning. In addition, the selection of participants within the age range of 20 to 30 was determined by the researchers because they are categorized as Malaysian youth, even until the year 2026 (Awang, 2023).

RESULTS

Of the 100 Malaysian students, 68 students (68%) chose to participate voluntarily, consisting of 11 graduate students and 57 undergraduate students. Of the total participants, 42 participants (62%) had studied or are currently studying in Morocco, 25 participants (37%) are presently studying in Jordan, and only one participant (1%) is currently studying at one of Saudi Arabia's universities. These participants are within the age range of 20-28 years. The number of male and female participants was approximately equal (30 male and 38 female participants).

Similarities between Children and Non-native Speakers in the Context of Language Learning

Participants were asked two questions: 1) "What is your purpose of learning a foreign language?" 2) "What would you wish from the locals while living in a foreign country?" The answers to both questions gave ideas on the similarities between children and non-native speakers in the language learning process. In the first question, the researchers only focused on responses related to the purposes of learning foreign languages other than English. This is because English is a mandatory subject taught at Malaysian schools, as we previously stated. In this subject, the participants listed several languages, namely Arabic, French, Spanish, and Chinese. All respondents possess basic knowledge of the Arabic language, leading to responses that accentuate the purpose of learning it. Additionally, only a few respondents stated their reasons for learning a foreign language other than Arabic and English. Thus, two tables could be formed based on the multiple responses

received, containing several categories that indicate participants' purposes for learning foreign languages.

Table 1: Participants' Purposes of Learning the Arabic Language

Arabic Language Learning Purpose	Responses		Percentage (%)
	N	Percent (%)	
Education	24	32.4	46.2
Religion	19	25.7	36.5
Residency	14	18.9	26.9
Job Requirements	10	13.5	19.2
Passion	7	9.5	13.5
Total	74	100.0	142.3

Table 1 reveals that the Arabic language was mainly (46.2%) learned for educational purposes, followed by religious purposes (36.5%). 26.9% of the respondents stated that residency in Arabic-speaking countries necessitates Arabic language proficiency. 19.2% of the respondents regarded the Arabic language as important for meeting job requirements. The lowest frequency (13.5%) shown in the table is learning the Arabic language due to their passion for language learning.

Table 2: Participants' Purposes for Learning Other Foreign Languages

Foreign Language Learning Purpose	Responses		Percentage (%)
	N	Percent (%)	
Additional Skill	8	57.1	61.5
Hobby	3	21.4	23.1
Curiosity	3	21.4	23.1
Total	14	100.0	107.7

According to Table 2 above, only 23.1% of the respondents chose to learn a language other than Malay, English, and Arabic out of curiosity, mainly to explore a new culture, including its language. Similarly, 23.1% of the respondents learned another foreign language as a hobby. 61.5% of the respondents learned another language to expand their language knowledge, which could strengthen their resumes for future job opportunities.

In the second question, the participants were required to share their hopes about communication with locals, based on their experiences of living in a foreign country. Five main points could be identified from the responses collected since most of the participants stated multiple responses (see Table 3). Firstly, 56.7% of the participants wished that the locals would talk to them more slowly and clearly. Secondly, 50.7% of the participants wished that the locals were willing to help and guide them in the process of understanding the foreign language. For example, correcting their grammar and introducing new expressions. Thirdly, 44.8% of the participants wished that the locals were willing to listen to them without judging or mocking their language abilities. Fourthly, 19.4% of the participants wished that the locals would not converse with them in dialects since the participants had no previous knowledge of the dialects. Fifthly, 4.5% of the participants wished that the locals would not have any expectations of them because their language abilities are different from those of native speakers.

Table 3: Participants' Wishes Towards Native Foreign Language Speakers

Participants' Hopes	Responses		Percentage (%)
	N	Percent (%)	
Talk slower and clearly	38	32.2	56.7
Helpful	34	28.8	50.7
Non-judgemental responses	30	25.4	44.8
Use standard language	13	11.0	19.4
Having no expectations	3	2.5	4.5
Total	118	100.0	176.1

The Most Frequently Used Way of Language Learning by Malaysian Foreign Language Learners

To examine the most preferred methods of language learning among modern learners, the participants were asked to list three ways that they prefer to learn foreign languages apart from their formal education. Four main themes were formed from the responses, namely media and entertainment, engagement with native speakers, reading, and language classes. The types of reading materials mentioned by the participants were novels, children's books, newspapers, articles, journals, and textbooks. The media and entertainment stated by the participants were films, kid-animated movies, animations, audiobooks, podcasts, songs, radio, video games, football commentary, and social media content. The most popular way used by the participants was media and entertainment (85.1%). Meanwhile, the least popular way utilized by the participants was joining or attending language classes (17.9%). Table 4 indicates the method utilized by the participants to learn foreign languages.

Table 4: Foreign Language Learning Styles

Language Learning Strategies	Responses		Percent of Cases (%)
	N	Percent (%)	
Media and entertainment	57	39.6	85.1
Reading	44	30.6	65.7
Engaging with locals	31	21.5	46.3
Language classes	12	8.3	17.9
Total	144	100.0	214.9

Exposure to a Specific Language Community Aids Language Learning

The third research question aims to observe the significance of engagement with locals, and in this sense, three open-ended questions were created. Firstly, the participants were asked, "Would you stealthily listen to locals' conversations?" This question brought out three kinds of answers: Yes (83.8%), No (5.9%), and Depends (10.3%). In response to the question, the participants were required to state their reasons. Most of the participants who answered "Yes" stated that this way could assist them in discovering new vocabulary and expressions, as well as in learning the correct pronunciation and intonation used in a specific speech event. All participants who answered "No" considered that no benefit could be gained from listening secretly to strangers' conversations. And the participants who answered "Depends" decided to listen only when they found the conversations were interesting or might be related to their country, Malaysia.

Secondly, the participants were required to give their opinions on lectures conducted in the Arabic language, did it help in terms of learning the Arabic language faster? The result showed three kinds of responses: Yes (83.8%), No (5.9%), and Depends (10.3%). The participants who answered "No" stated that it would be difficult for beginners to comprehend the lectures because any academic discourse calls for advanced phrases and technical jargon. Therefore, lectures conducted in Arabic are apparently insufficient to accelerate the process of learning the Arabic language. The reason stated for the answer "Depends" was practically the same as the reason stated previously, which was: the usage of dialect in the classroom hinders the process of knowledge acquisition.

Thirdly, all of the respondents (100%) agreed that living in a foreign country plays a huge role in learning and mastering a foreign language. In reply to the question, "Why?" The majority of the participants believed that the surroundings forced them to master the language because they considered language ability as one of the keys to adapting and surviving well in a foreign country. Moreover, language fluency guarantees a better communication experience with the locals.

DISCUSSION

The results of this present study indicate that most of the participants viewed the Arabic language as necessary, as it is required to gain profound insights into Islamic knowledge, which at the same time plays a huge role in their field of study, Islamic Studies. They believed that the Arabic language should be learned by every Muslim because Islamic resources are mainly written in the Arabic language. On that note, the Holy Al-Quran was revealed in Arabic, and Islamic daily prayers are recited in the Arabic language regardless of race and nationality. In addition, Ibn Khaldun mentioned in *Muqaddimah* that Islamic scholars are those who have mastered the Arabic language and its rules. Thus, having basic knowledge of the Arabic language can contribute a small portion to Islamic knowledge comprehension. Besides, we could infer that the participants were raised in Islamic families that hold positive views of Arabic societies and place a high value on the Arabic language. The positive environment created at home has successfully shaped the participants' minds subconsciously to perceive the Arabic language as an important language in their lives as Muslims. Ultimately, participants' willingness and readiness to learn a new language, as well as to travel to a foreign country for educational purposes were successfully cultivated through their environments and upbringings. This kind of motivation resembles children's motivation (integrational motivation) in acquiring their first language by imitating acts and behaviours around them. Integrational motivation is different from the motivation that is generated out of a human's purpose (Lee, Mikesell, Joaquin, & Schumann, 2009), which matches the job requirements category that we identified above in Table 1. Therefore, it can be concluded that the learning environment has a substantial effect on learners' motivation, as suggested by Ibn Khaldun (1967). All in all, the language learning process may cease to advance when the learner's motivation and enthusiasm are gone to dust. As a result, any potential information heard by the learner from the learning environment will eventually be forgotten or, at worst, will be discarded by the brain, as it is deemed meaningless and irrelevant (Smith, 2006).

Furthermore, it can be inferred that participants' wishes towards the residents (native foreign language speakers) during their stay abroad regarding communication are equivalent to the language teaching approach for children to a certain extent. The majority of the participants wished that locals would talk to them at a slightly slower pace with clearer pronunciation. It is beyond doubt that language is not a static system, and word formations are unpredictable. For this reason, the possibility of new words or expressions being communicated to non-native speakers might complicate their journey to understand the speech or conversation as a whole. It is noteworthy that every learner will encounter difficulties while attaining knowledge, and mistakes and errors are bound to occur. Thus, gentle correction and kind explanations can encourage non-native speakers to improve and enhance their language skills through formal education or self-directed learning. Besides, a humane correction may overcome learners' anxiety and fear of trying and failing. In this context, the best model of language teaching techniques is adults' communication styles with infants and children. Adults, especially parents, make an effort to ensure language learning is unchallenging for children. For instance, they engage in infant-directed speech (Golinkoff et al., 2015) and repeat words frequently at a time (Society & Sacks, 2009). Certainly, they are aware of children's abilities to acquire language, a process that requires a considerable amount of time. Therefore, teachers and native speakers ought to have this kind of expectation while teaching or interacting with language learners to help them grow and develop language skills strongly. As indicated by Ibn Khaldun, harsh criticism and judgmental feedback could discourage them from learning or actively engaging in the learning process. In short, a language learner requires a positive environment during the learning process, which begins at home, to cultivate a highly motivated learner who is eager to explore new cultures with an open mind and learn new languages willingly.

Apart from a positive environment, Ibn Khaldun underlined the importance of both hearing and listening in the language learning process, along with the weight of repetitive action. The result of the second research question proves that most modern learners tend to rely more on their listening skills compared to other language skills outside a classroom setting. In the contemporary world, technological developments have brought out digitized audio and video as educational resources for modern learners. Through the Internet, learners have access to a vast

quantity of video and audio material of all kinds (Levy, 2009). These advantages, at any rate, do not reject the importance of formal education. In reality, technological devices still require human assistance to operate as programmed by the inventors and developers. Nevertheless, the utilization of modern technologies comprehensively could lead to better results (Wang, Hwang, Yin, & Ma, 2020; Islam & Ali Khan, 2023), especially if technologies were integrated into formal education. This is because it could ensure a surrounding that could provide support and assistance from teachers and peers, as learners might face different kinds of obstacles in their learning process. The variety of learning resources that emerge from the integration of technology in the education system is sure to captivate learners' interests, as well as to help them acquire knowledge according to their preferences and learning pace. Automatically, this factor can promote self-directed learning among learners (Kukulska-Hulme, 2016) and may increase their motivation to acquire knowledge enthusiastically.

Lastly, Ibn Khaldun (1967) suggested that traveling and having personal contact with authoritative teachers can promote better knowledge acquisition, while in terms of language learning, Ibn Khaldun highlighted the significance of hearing directly from native speakers. The findings from the third research question indicate that participants' active participation could be achieved by traveling to the country of the targeted (foreign) language. All of the participants agreed that living in a foreign country can contribute significantly to learning and mastering a foreign language. This is due to the learners' constant exposure to the language, provided that they were actively interacting with the residents. The environment forces them to speak in that language since it is the only medium to communicate well with locals. On top of that, the presence of native speakers could help learners in many ways, as learners are exposed to the actual use of language in real-life situations. For example, correction of pronunciation, word choice, and word arrangement could be done concurrently. While it is clear that traveling has a positive impact on language learners, it could be asserted that traveling is a privilege for financially stable learners, including sponsored learners. It is worth noting here that not every learner has the privilege to travel because learners come from divergent backgrounds and lifestyles. Alternatively, incorporating human inventions in the language learning process, which can be done either in formal or informal education, may facilitate foreign language learners and encourage self-directed learning in today's society in response to their interests and passions. Nowadays, various kinds of online platforms can provide exposure and opportunities to learners to enhance their language abilities, such as social network platforms and online learning platforms.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Ibn Khaldun's views on language learning brought us to effective strategies of language learning that should be considered by non-native speakers, which were practiced by children in the same manner, to acquire their first language from infancy. Moreover, these findings led us to the conclusion that Ibn Khaldun's views are important and relevant even to the present generation, as he emphasized the central role of hearing in the language learning process. Although he underlined the significance of travel in the quest for knowledge, this study, however, found an affordable alternative for modern language learners based on the data collected and analysed from the survey. It can be deduced that most modern learners benefit from the Internet in terms of education and language learning. The integration of digital technologies in the formal education setting, in particular, may facilitate both teachers and learners in various aspects since they can gain access to the facilities in a similar way. Hence, the provision of financial support by the government to educational institutions at all levels in the country can help establish an educational infrastructure that is well-equipped with modern facilities and advanced technologies, which, in turn, serves as a game-changer for foreign language learners.

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