

Teaching And Learning Arabic Through Homeschooling: A Thematic Study Of Primary Education In Malaysia

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Abstract

The implementation of Arabic language teaching and learning in Malaysia over the past three decades has demonstrated dynamic and progressive development. However, this subject is not immune to the challenges and problems that arise in both teaching and learning. Therefore, a collective and strategic effort is required to reform and transform prevailing mindsets, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of Arabic language education. This study aims to identify the main criteria for a homeschooling approach as an alternative to traditional education in Arabic language teaching and learning among primary school students. To identify the main criteria, thematic analysis is applied to four key aspects: the module, implementation, time, and type of homeschooling activities. Several interviews were conducted by three Arabic language committee teachers across the state of Terengganu, Malaysia. The data is analysed by the computer software ATLAS.ti version 9. The results provide positive insights and constructive suggestions from study participants regarding the criteria for a homeschooling approach to teaching and learning Arabic to primary school students. The main criteria identified in this study are as follows: the inclusion of appropriate, straightforward, and concise basic modules; alignment with the Arabic language education syllabus established by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE); a flexible implementation method; an emphasis on group learning; the prioritization of mental breaks; and the use of engaging, creative, and enjoyable student-centered activities. The primary implication of this study is to propose a foundational reference for developing a comprehensive framework of guidelines for implementing the homeschooling approach in teaching and learning Arabic to primary school students in Malaysia.

Keywords: Arabic Language; Primary School Students; Homeschooling; Approach; Thematic Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning of the Arabic language hold a distinctive and unique position within the Malaysian education system. The importance of teaching and learning Arabic is evident in its significant role as a language of worship and religion in Malaysia, which is predominantly populated by Malay Muslims. Arabic functions not only as a medium of communication but also as an intermediary for accessing, understanding, and internalizing Islamic teachings and practices (Mohamad et al., 2017; Taufiq et al., 2018). The development of Arabic language education in Malaysia is crucial for preserving the country's religious and cultural identity. Its systematic integration across all educational

stages, from early childhood to adult learning, clearly demonstrates that Arabic education plays a vital role in enhancing religious literacy and spiritual practice.

The teaching and learning of the Arabic language in Malaysia have a long-standing history and have garnered considerable attention from the government, particularly regarding its systematic implementation. Through religious studies, Arabic language teaching began to be taught indirectly, mainly through the use of Arabic-language texts. The establishment of *pondok* schools in the 18th century marked the formal introduction of Arabic language education, with a pedagogical focus predominantly on grammatical structures (*nahw*) and morphological analysis (*sarf*) (Febrian et al., 2017). This fundamental phase effectively established a well-structured Arabic language curriculum that has continued to evolve and improve significantly. Today, Arabic education is institutionalized across multiple educational levels, beginning with the J-QAF program (*Jawi*, Quran, Arabic, and *Fardu Ain*) at the primary school level and extending to higher education institutions, where specialized courses in Arabic language and linguistics are widely offered.

In general, the teaching of the Arabic language in Malaysia aims to equip students with proficiency in the four essential language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The ultimate goal is to allow learners to use Arabic effectively and appropriately in various communicative contexts (Febrian et al., 2017). At the primary school level, the focus of Arabic Communication learning is more fundamental, aiming to nurture students' interest and positive attitudes toward the language. This early engagement is designed to help young learners acquire basic communicative competencies, thereby encouraging them to use Arabic with greater ease and confidence in everyday interactions (Ibrahim & Rahman, 2018).

Despite its religious and cultural significance, Arabic remains underdeveloped as a foreign language in Malaysia. This is mainly due to challenges related to its acceptance within the Muslim community, as well as students' limited ability to acquire Arabic as a functional language for communication (Zaini et al., 2019). One of the main factors that impede learning Arabic is the lack of motivation and negative attitudes among learners. Studies have found that low intrinsic motivation and poor views of Arabic as a foreign language make it difficult for students to engage and improve their skills (Abdullah et al., 2015). These affective factors are crucial in shaping the learning experience and outcomes.

Furthermore, several challenges hinder the development of Arabic language teaching and learning. These include limited use of technology, lack of game-based teaching methods, difficulties in creating a conducive learning environment, and students' and parents' perceptions of Arabic as a non-mandatory subject. Additionally, the lack of a defined long-term strategic direction for Arabic language education has collectively hindered its effective implementation and sustainability (Abdullah et al., 2015; Mohamad et al., 2017). At the same time, some critical factors further intensify the challenges in Arabic language teaching and learning. These include the absence of a well-structured and focused syllabus, limitations in teachers' professional competence, insufficient pedagogical training, and varying levels of teacher motivation. The lack of adequate and engaging teaching materials (*bahan bantu mengajar* or BBM) also contributes to deficient learning outcomes. Furthermore, the natural structure of the Arabic language itself, which is not a native language for Malaysians, leads to other challenges, particularly in vocabulary acquisition (*mufradāt*) (Isnaini & Huda, 2020), syntactic and

grammatical structures (*nahw*) (Jamaluddin & Baharuddin, 2021; Rahman, 2020), as well as morphology and sentence construction (*ṣarf*) (Akla, 2022; Che Mat et al., 2023).

To address the challenges of Arabic language learning among primary school students, it is essential to propose new solutions that reflect the current state of Arabic language education. Furthermore, educators must engage in a reformation of thought and coordinate collective efforts to improve the teaching and learning of Arabic, aiming to resolve the learning difficulties faced by these students (Abdullah et al., 2015). Therefore, this research intends to suggest an intervention through an alternative education approach, specifically homeschooling, in teaching and learning Arabic to primary school students. The objectives of this research are to identify the key criteria for effectively implementing Arabic language learning and teaching through the homeschooling approach.

Homeschooling refers to educational practices that parents fully supervise and take place concurrently with regular school hours and days (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013; Fauziah, 2019). It is typically carried out by parents themselves or, in some cases, by professional tutors hired to provide teaching within the home environment, and can operate independently of public or private school systems (Jorgenson, 2011; Che Hat et al., 2024). This concept of learning at home has recently garnered growing attention and support from various parties worldwide. A group of parents has begun to adopt the homeschooling approach as a form of early childhood education or as a supplementary learning method to complement their children's formal schooling.

Homeschooling is often prioritized by parents who view it as their responsibility to actively shape their children's education according to their interests and learning preferences (Alias et al., 2023; Purwaningsih & Fauziah, 2020). Through homeschooling, parents can closely and directly monitor and supervise their children's educational development and growth. Additionally, the homeschooling method is said to offer several advantages that are not typically found in mainstream schools. These include flexible scheduling, the active involvement of parents as primary educators who serve as catalysts for their children's learning, and the provision of a safe and supportive environment that encourages meaningful educational experiences. Additionally, homeschooling can nurture a positive social atmosphere and provide tailored support for students with special needs (Jamaludin et al., 2015; Kim-Soon et al., 2015; Suparman, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to explore the current need for a homeschooling approach as an alternative method for Arabic language education, to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of Arabic language teaching and learn at the primary school level. The advantages of homeschooling—such as its emphasis on home-based learning, effective communication, a supportive and healthy environment, moral encouragement, and a positive social setting—are perceived to contribute significantly to its benefits. This effort aimed to help primary school students reach their full potential, thereby supporting the overall objectives of Arabic language acquisition.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative survey design and does not involve hypothesis testing. The main objective is to identify the main criteria for teaching the Arabic language in primary schools within the context of a homeschooling approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three study participants, all of whom are Arabic language teachers at the primary school level in the state of Terengganu. Study participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals

with relevant expertise and experience in Arabic teaching and learning within the homeschooling context.

The implementation of this study is part of the data triangulation method employed in the primary research, which investigates the homeschooling approach in Arabic language teaching for primary school students using a mixed-methods design. It involves a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data, collected through interviews and questionnaires distributed in selected schools in Terengganu. However, this study only focuses on the qualitative component, specifically the analysis and interpretation of data obtained through semi-structured interviews.

The data collection process was conducted through individual interviews between the researcher and selected study participants, who are Arabic language teachers currently teaching in primary schools located in the Kuala Nerus and Kuala Terengganu districts. Study participants were chosen based on specific criteria determined by the researcher to ensure their relevance and suitability for the study. Before the interviews, all study participants received formal invitations to participate, which were distributed by the Terengganu State Education Department (JPNT) through their respective school administrators.

Each interview session lasted between 45 minutes and one hour and was audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data. The transcribed data then underwent a systematic coding process, followed by thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and key themes. This process was facilitated using the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti, version 9. Subsequently, the data were reviewed and compared to identify similarities and differences in the perspectives of study participants. Particular attention was given to information that appeared unclear, overly abstract, or repetitive, as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2015). The findings are then presented in a descriptive format, organized according to the identified themes.

Thematic analysis is a widely used method for analysing qualitative data, aimed at identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns or themes within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Heriyanto, 2018; Sitasari, 2022). In qualitative research, it is essential to examine data in depth to uncover underlying relationships and meanings within the phenomenon under investigation. As such, thematic analysis provides a systematic yet flexible approach that enables researchers to explore the complexity of qualitative data and to articulate how and to what extent a phenomenon manifests, as perceived through the researcher's interpretive lens (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Sitasari, 2022). There are a few techniques that can be used in analysing qualitative data through thematic analysis in research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Liamputtong, 2009), such as;

1. Data collection and organization: Gathering relevant qualitative data and organizing it systematically.
2. Data familiarization and transcription: Thoroughly reading the data to gain an overall understanding and transcribing audio or written content into a textual form.
3. Initial coding: Generating preliminary codes by closely examining the raw data and assigning labels, typically in the form of words or short phrases.
4. Theme identification: Identifying patterns and relationships among the codes to begin constructing meaningful themes.
5. Theme classification: Grouping related codes under broader thematic categories.

6. Theme refinement and detailing: Elaborating and refining each theme to ensure clarity, coherence, and distinctiveness.
7. Development of main themes: Distilling the refined categories into main themes.
8. Theoretical integration: Relating the identified themes to relevant theoretical frameworks and existing literature.

At the final stage of analysis, the research findings can be presented in various forms, including matrices, tables, conceptual networks, flowcharts, and diagrams, which facilitate more straightforward interpretation and understanding of the data (Mohamed Mokhtar et al., 2018). In the context of this study, the researcher will focus on identifying and presenting the main themes associated with the key criteria for implementing the homeschooling approach in Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of data collected through interviews, the study identified four key themes emphasized by study participants regarding the criteria necessary for implementing the homeschooling approach in Arabic teaching and learning. These themes include the homeschooling module or syllabus for Arabic learning and teaching, the implementation strategies, and the timing and types of activities involved. These themes are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Main Themes Regarding The Homeschooling Criteria In Arabic Teaching And Learning For Primary School Students

Themes	Sub-Themes/ Criteria	Results
Module	Appropriate, straightforward, and concise basic modules;	Supported by all three study participants
	Align with the Arabic language education syllabus established by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE)	Supported by 2 out of 3 study participants
	Engaging and entertaining module	Supported by 1 out of 3 study participants
	Emphasize the basics of Arabic writing.	Supported by 1 out of 3 study participants
Implementation	Flexible	Supported by 2 out of 3 study participants
	Small group-learning	Supported by all three study participants
	Conducive and comfortable learning environment	Supported by 1 out of 3 study participants
	Cooperation and support from all parties involved	Supported by all three study participants
Time	Flexible and appropriate schedule	Supported by all three study participants
	Prioritization of mental breaks	Supported by 2 out of 3 study participants
Type of Activities	Engaging, creative, and enjoyable	Supported by 2 out of 3 study participants
	Relaxing but entertaining	Supported by 2 out of 3 study participants
	Student-centered, interactive	Supported by 2 out of 3 study participants
	Including repetition and exercise every day	Supported by 1 out of 3 study participants

The study involved three Arabic language committee teachers with experience teaching in primary schools in and around Kuala Terengganu and Kuala Nerus. Two study participants were from rural primary schools in Kuala Nerus, and one was from a primary school in Kuala Terengganu. All study participants had pursued further studies abroad in the fields of Islamic and Arabic language studies.

Table 2. Demography of Study Participants

Study Participants	Duration	Education Background	District/ State
Study Participant 1 (PK1)	18 years	Bachelor's level, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.	Kuala Nerus, Terengganu
Study Participant 2 (PK2)	15 years	Bachelor of Islamic Studies (Philosophy in Islamic Beliefs), Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.	Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu
Study Participant 3 (PK3)	15 years	Bachelor's level, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt.	Kuala Nerus, Terengganu

Table 2 shows the demography of the study participants, who were three Arabic language committee teachers. The first study participant (PK1) is an Arabic teacher with 18 years of teaching experience at a primary school located in a rural area in Kuala Nerus. She originated from Terengganu and has a background in studying abroad. Her formative academic training was undertaken at Maahad Fatayat Al-Azhar in Egypt, after which she pursued undergraduate studies at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, where she obtained her bachelor's degree.

The second study participant (PK2) served as an Arabic language teacher for 15 years at a cluster school of excellence in Kuala Terengganu. A native of Terengganu, she held a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy with a specialization in *'Aqīdah*, obtained from an institution in Egypt. Before starting off her role as a practicing Arabic language teacher at the primary school level, she served as a J-QAF teacher at the Besut Teachers' College, Sultan Mizan.

The third study participant (PK3) is an Arabic language teacher with 15 years of teaching experience at a primary school located in a rural area of Kuala Nerus. She is a native of Terengganu, originally from Kuala Terengganu. She pursued her higher education in the Middle East, specifically at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. Upon completion of her studies, she began her professional career as an Arabic language teacher at the same rural school. All study participants were female Arabic language teachers with over ten years of teaching experience in their respective institutions. All study participants met the sampling criteria established by the researcher and had substantial knowledge and experience in teaching Arabic at the primary school level.

Criteria For Homeschooling Modules in The Teaching and Learning of Arabic for Primary School Students

The first theme highlighted by the study participants was the homeschooling module or syllabus used in teaching and learning Arabic for primary school students. Modules or syllabi served as a crucial foundation in designing a practical learning experience. They function as an instructional guide and reference for educators, ensuring the implementation of structured teaching and learning processes across subject areas. Based on the interview findings, the study participants proposed four key criteria for homeschooling modules as essential guidelines for implementing a practical Arabic language teaching approach for primary school students. These criteria include modules that are appropriate, straightforward, and concise; alignment with the Arabic language

education syllabus established by the Malaysian Ministry of Education; modules that are engaging and capable of sustaining student interest; and modules that emphasize the development of writing skills. The following are statements given by study participants regarding this matter;

“The first one is the module, right...Regarding the module, it should be something suitable and straightforward. Just something basic enough to be used towards these (primary) students. It does not have to be complicated and elaborate, just simple and easy...”

PK1

“And firstly, the module is crucial. It is preferable to provide a simple and easy-to-use module...”

PK3

Referring to the statements given by the study participants, the researcher found that the criteria suggested for the modules were appropriate and simple. Additionally, the study participants also emphasized that, within the context of the homeschooling approach to Arabic language learning for primary school students, modules should focus on basic and straightforward content. This was explained by Study Participants 1 and 2 in the following statement;

“We need to emphasize and focus the learning on the introduction of basic hijaiyah letters, it is the same as the alphabet ABC, and 123...just like that, we focus on learning basic and foundational Arabic for these (primary) students. Then, after that, maybe we can start applying simple words, meaning words that they can pronounce and spell, based on what they heard so that they can follow along...”

PK1

“I think, in learning the basics, it is important to use some easy Arabic words, such as when speaking and communicating. For example, it is as simple as giving the salaam, or saying ‘Good Morning’ in Arabic, ‘Sobahal Khair’, or reciting the prayer in Arabic before starting the class, ‘Qabla Nabda Darsana...”

PK2

One of the main characteristics highlighted in the Arabic homeschooling module is the emphasis on basic content and easy-to-follow learning. When learning Arabic at the primary school level, the basics and foundation, such as *hijaiyah* letter pronunciation, are priorities. This also includes daily used terms such as ‘*Sobahal Khair*’, which means ‘Good Morning’. This study builds upon Che Mat et al. (2023), which emphasizes the importance of easy word learning, including pronunciation, meanings, and words that are easy to remember, as one effective technique for acquiring vocabulary in language learning.

Apart from that, the researcher found that the criteria suggested by the study participants for the Arabic homeschooling module aligned with the Arabic language education syllabus established by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. The study participants proposed the Arabic syllabus used by MOE and the implemented programs, such as the Fun Learning method and the 21st Century Learning method, to be referred to and added to the Arabic homeschooling module for primary school students. The statements as follows reflect their perspectives regarding this matter;

“Yes, this is a possible approach, without having to worry about the location access in learning. However, at the same time, the syllabus by the MOE must be referred to every time. You see, as parents and beginners in teaching Arabic, they need a basic module to relate to their children’s learning in Arabic, right?”

PK1

“Yes, of course, the syllabus is a must. You know, the Fun Learning approach is one of the preferred and effective ways of teaching kids. All effective methods, such as LIMTS-25 and the

21st Century Learning approach, as well as various other methods, are being added to and focused on in the Arabic language education syllabus by the MOE. It is now 2021, it used to be '2020 Vision' (Wawasan 2020), right? We have adapted our learning into singing, dancing, and having fun."

PK3

Additionally, the study participants also suggested that the module be engaging and entertaining enough to grasp the students' interest in learning Arabic through homeschooling. The researcher also found that the basics of Arabic writing as one of the key criteria to be focused on in the Arabic homeschooling module for primary school students. The following are statements given by Study Participant 1 regarding this matter; *"I think it is also important for the learning experiences to be entertaining enough and engaging for these students..."*

PK1

"As they moved on to Grade 3 (third year), the learning tends to be writing-based, or more writing. This is very important, as writing correctly is one of the vital skills in acquiring the Arabic language, right? Thus, I think this element is suitable for them, it is not too high of a level for these kids..."

PK1

Writing skills are one of the four essential language skills needed to acquire the Arabic language. This skill, accompanied by three others —speaking, listening, and reading — indicates the language learners' level of mastery in language acquisition. Writing skills also reflect how students perceive the Arabic letters and words, as they are pronounced differently and sound distinct from those in their native language.

Criteria For Homeschooling Implementation in The Teaching and Learning of Arabic for Primary School Students

The second theme identified in the Arabic language homeschooling approach for primary school students is the implementation criteria. Effective implementation of teaching and learning strategies requires a well-structured framework to ensure that the educational process proceeds efficiently and achieves its intended outcomes. Based on the interview findings, the study participants suggested four key criteria for implementing homeschooling as guidelines in Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. This includes a flexible approach, small group learning, a conducive and comfortable learning environment, and cooperation and support from all parties involved.

"I think..For the implementation...It should be flexible..."

PK1

"The first thing is, we need to think of different ways to make this work. For instance, if homeschooling occurs through Google Meet, that is a good and practical option. Alternatively, maybe we could do it right after school, before the kids go home—that could work too, since the kids are still at school..."

PK2

Based on the study participants' responses, the researcher identified flexibility as a key criterion in implementing the homeschooling approach to Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. Flexibility is one of the unique features that distinguishes the homeschooling approach from other conventional educational models, allowing for a more personalized and adaptable learning experience. Jamaluddin et al. (2015) explain that homeschooling provides a flexible learning environment, particularly beneficial for children who encounter challenges in traditional school settings. This is

because the curriculum is more independent, adaptable, and often carried out through cooperative learning strategies (Jamaludin et al., 2015; Ismail & Masroom, 2018).

Additionally, some study participants suggested that homeschooling could be implemented through online platforms, such as e-learning via Google Meet. This aligns with Safar (2018), who notes that e-learning has become a widely used method among parents and institutions that adopt homeschooling practices. Another implementation criterion identified by the study participants in the context of the homeschooling approach in the Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students is the use of small-group learning. This approach was emphasized by Study Participants 1, 2, and 3, as mentioned in the following statements;

"...and then I think it needs to be done in small groups, not big classes like usual... We have to disassemble them and regroup into groups of about 5 or 6 people."

PK1

"For the hafazan subject, we focus on just three students every morning. That is what this school does., It is up to us (teachers) on how much we want to test their hafazan ...I think, this approach could also work in a homeschooling setting..."

PK2

"...like I mentioned earlier, the University of Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) ran a kind of homeschooling program where they worked in small groups, focusing mainly on students who were falling behind. Just about 10 people per group. I think that size is manageable and works better for homeschooling..."

PK3

Teaching and learning sessions conducted in small groups of approximately five to six students are preferred over individual learning in a homeschooling setting. This approach aligns with Ismail and Masroom (2018), who highlight that homeschooling often incorporates cooperative learning, combining interaction and collaboration among students to achieve shared educational goals (Ismail & Masroom, 2018). Moreover, small group settings allow teachers to provide more focused and individualized attention to each student, thereby improving the overall learning experience (Looi Yung Hsin, 2019).

Moreover, a safe and comfortable learning environment was identified as a key criterion for implementing the homeschooling approach in Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. This theme emerged from the response of Study Participant 1, as quoted in the following statement:

"...and then I think the environment matters...It is essential to provide a comfortable and conducive environment for children to learn, one that makes them feel safe. Perhaps at a mosque or community hall. So, the local community should get involved, or we could also ask for opinions from the Parent-Teacher Association (PIBG) at the school..."

PK1

Referring to the study participants' response, a safe and comfortable learning environment is a critical factor in the effective implementation of Arabic teaching and learning through homeschooling for primary school students. Such an environment is necessary, as students require a quiet, distraction-free space that enables them to concentrate fully and engage meaningfully in the learning process naturally. This perspective is supported by Ismail et al. (2024), who assert that environmental factors significantly influence the success of the Arabic teaching and learning process. A well-structured and conducive learning environment, complemented by suitable facilities, fosters the development of competent and high-quality students (Ibrahim, 2019).

Additionally, the researcher found that collaboration and support from all parties involved are highlighted as key criteria in the implementation of the homeschooling approach in the Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. The statements as follows reflect the study participants' perspectives regarding this matter;

"...And if we want to make this homeschooling approach work, then everyone needs to work together and put in the effort—starting with the parents, the local community, and of course, the teachers too..."

PK1

"If it is something like a module, the school can just provide it. We can pass it to the student and ask them to pick it up. For example, we could leave it with the security guard while we wait nearby, or have the group come and collect it. But the main thing is, there needs to be an agreement—because if we are doing everything on our own, it gets exhausting, right?"

PK2

"I would say that parents should be involved—talking to their kids and staying in touch with their teachers, too. What is more important is to show up every time, and fully cooperate in their children's learning."

PK3

Based on the study participants' statements, the researchers found that cooperation and support from all relevant parties are necessary for the effective implementation of the homeschooling approach. While parents benefit from the flexibility and autonomy that homeschooling provides, their knowledge and available resources may be limited. Therefore, support from external parties is crucial to ensure the successful and sustainable implementation of homeschooling (Korkmaz & Duman, 2014). This finding is consistent with Ibrahim (2019), who stated that comprehensive support from educational institutions, along with access to relevant learning materials, plays a critical role in enhancing Arabic language proficiency. Consequently, collaboration among all parties is vital for implementing Arabic language teaching and learning through the homeschooling approach, ensuring the quality and effectiveness of students' educational experiences.

Criteria For Homeschooling Time Management in The Teaching and Learning of Arabic for Primary School Students

The third theme identified is the criterion of time management in the implementation of homeschooling in the Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. Effective time planning is important for the success of any teaching and learning process. Time must be systematically organized according to the students' learning pace, while also considering their levels of concentration and individual circumstances.

Based on the interview findings, two key time-related criteria were suggested by the study participants as guidelines for implementing the homeschooling approach in Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. These include the importance of allocating appropriate and flexible learning time, as well as ensuring sufficient time for mental rest. The following statements from the study participants illustrate these perspectives;

"The sessions should not be too long—an hour already feels like a lot. It is better to keep it under an hour or around that."

PK1

"If we are going to implement it, it might be best to do it at school while they are waiting to go home. You know, around the time after school ends but before their parents come to pick them up. We could do a quick half-hour session in class during that time."

PK2

"...I think weekends might work better for the kids. On school days, they are already packed with activities. So, if UniSZA wants to implement this homeschooling, weekends could be a good option."

PK3

Based on the statements provided by the study participants, the researcher found that time planning for homeschooling among primary school students can be effectively carried out after regular school hours, typically for a duration of approximately 30 minutes to one hour. Additionally, some study participants suggested that homeschooling sessions could be conducted on weekends, when students typically have more free time after completing their weekly school schedule. These responses indicate a common theme among study participants regarding the importance of flexible scheduling and adaptable timeframes rather than rigid, fixed timetables.

In addition to accommodating flexible learning times, study participants also emphasized the importance of incorporating mental rest periods into the implementation of the homeschooling approach for Arabic teaching and learning among primary school students. This aspect was particularly highlighted by Study Participants 1 and 3, as illustrated in the following statements;

"After that, they need a break time before continuing. They cannot just keep going—they will get tired. Even if these kids are interested, it will still get worn out. The first 30 minutes, they can focus, but after that, they start to lose concentration."

PK1

"You have got to let them play too. We want to teach these kids, keep them engaged, give them input—but they also need some time to rest. If they want to play, just let them play. So, I think the break time is needed..."

PK3

Based on the study participants' statements, including mental breaks into learning time is an essential criterion for the effective implementation of the homeschooling approach in the Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. Mental breaks play a crucial role in maintaining cognitive engagement, allowing students' minds to rest, process newly acquired information, and avoid fatigue or boredom. This, in turn, helps sustain attention and enhances learning outcomes.

One of the significant challenges in the current teaching and learning process is the limited attention span of students. Many are easily distracted, often due to the overuse of digital devices, which has contributed to a decline in their ability to concentrate for extended periods of time. Therefore, to ensure the effectiveness of Arabic language learning through homeschooling, teaching and learning time must be carefully planned and efficiently utilized. Balancing active learning with appropriate mental rest periods can help maximize student focus and increase the overall impact of the learning experience.

Criteria For Homeschooling Activities in The Teaching and Learning of Arabic for Primary School Students

The fourth theme proposed by study participants is the criterion of types of activities in the implementation of homeschooling in the Arabic teaching and learning for primary school students. Effective teaching and learning planning in any subject must include the intentional design of learning activities that can seamlessly fit into students' daily educational routines. In the context of Arabic language education, it is crucial to

adopt a systematic planning approach to ensure that learning sessions are balanced and developmentally appropriate. This is especially important for primary school students, who require tailored strategies to support their effective language acquisition.

Based on the interview results obtained, the study participants have significantly contributed to establishing four criteria for the suggested types of activities. These criteria serve as guidelines for implementing the homeschooling approach in Arabic language teaching for primary school students. The activities include being interesting and creative, relaxed and entertaining, student-focused, and involving daily repetition and practice. The following statements were provided by the study participants regarding this matter.

"...and then, types of activities...I think the activities must be enjoyable and engaging enough for these kids..."

PK1

" Yes, I think regarding the type of activities, these kids love it if we teach something new, so that they can get involved and learn about it. Sometimes, we have to be creative-minded..."

PK2

Based on the given statements, engaging and creative elements are considered important in designing effective teaching and learning through the homeschooling approach. Such elements are believed to enhance students' interest and motivation, thereby encouraging active participation and meaningful interaction with teachers as they explore and acquire new knowledge independently. This is consistent with the findings of Zakari et al. (2022), who argue that creative teaching methods and ongoing monitoring of mass media should be implemented to enable teachers to effectively engage primary school students in their learning. Conversely, traditional teaching methods often struggle to maintain students' interest, leading them to lose focus quickly (Zakari et al., 2022). Additionally, study participants suggested various types of relaxing and entertaining activities within the Arabic language homeschooling approach for primary school students. The following are statements given by Study Participants 2 and 3;

"...but when we use some kind of song, such as in Kalam Jama'ie, or all of that kind, they like it..."

PK2

"I think if we use some kind of fun learning, you know nowadays they are incorporating the Fun Learning technique in learning, these kids would love it..."

PK3

Based on the study participants' responses, the researchers found that the characteristics of activities used in the homeschooling approach are often relaxing and entertaining. These activities, which blend education with entertainment, highlight a relaxed yet engaging aspect of the learning experience. They encourage students to participate actively in learning tasks while maintaining their focus throughout the entire process. Among the characteristics of primary level Arabic language teaching that can be adapted are a communicative and interactive approach, *nasyid* techniques, competitions, and language games, adopting the valuable and relevant *Lughatul al-Fasl*, which is Arabic language expressions in the classroom, such as greetings, simple everyday expressions, praise, instructions, and prohibitions, as well as applying creativity and taking advantage of the use of current digital technology (Mukhtar & Damit, 2017; Febrian et al., 2017; Mohamad et al., 2017).

Other criteria suggested by study participants for the type of activity in the Arabic language homeschooling approach for primary school students include student-centered

and interactive activities. The statements as follows reflect the study participants' perspectives regarding this matter;

"...I think it must be student-centered, which means we have to include these kids in their learning every time. So, these kids would not feel bored while learning. When we do activities with them, we ask them questions and let them decide what is right or wrong. Yes, overall student-focused..."

PK1

"...we have to pay attention to this. We need to focus particularly on them. Right now, at this school, we are focusing on weekly programs, just two students per session."

PK3

Based on the above statement, the criteria for activities within the Arabic language homeschooling approach for primary school students should prioritize a student-centered framework. Emphasizing student-centered learning fosters a supportive and inclusive environment, which can enhance learners' confidence and promote more effective language acquisition by allowing students to engage actively and autonomously in the learning process. Furthermore, interactive learning methods that involve students in every stage of the learning process, such as role-playing, speaking, and writing, can strengthen their understanding and mastery of the Arabic language, thereby providing a positive impact on the students themselves (Ismail et al., 2024).

Moreover, the study participants in the Arabic language homeschooling approach for primary school students also propose a type of activity involving daily repetition and exercises. The study participant gave the following statements;

"For the activities, we have something we call Kalimatuna Al-Yaum—it means 'Our Word of the Day'. Every morning, we introduce one new word. We write the word on a whiteboard. The kids pass by it every time they go to the canteen. I set up the board there and asked them to write down Kalimatuna Al-Yaum. We would also put the date, read the word together—like Madrasatun, and then write its meaning, 'School', right next to it."

PK2

According to the statements provided by the study participants, the activity criteria for the Arabic language homeschooling approach at the primary school level should emphasize daily practice and repetition. This aligns with established pedagogical methods such as the Drill Technique or *Ajuk-Hafaz* method (*Ṭarīqat al-Isti'māl wa al-Ḥifẓ*) and the Exercise or *Latih Tubi* method (*Ṭarīqat al-Tarbīzāt al-Mukaththafah*), both of which are endorsed by the Islamic and Moral Education Department of the Ministry of Education Malaysia. These methods are specifically designed to support Arabic language acquisition among students aged 7 to 12 years (Mahmood, 2012).

These kinds of activities provide continuous exposure to Arabic vocabulary and sentence structures, which can significantly enhance students' fluency in pronunciation (Che Mat et al., 2023). Regular engagement in activities that incorporate daily practice and repetition is essential for reinforcing language skills and contributes to more effective and sustained learning outcomes in Arabic language acquisition.

Overall, the study's findings provided positive and constructive insights into the essential criteria for implementing effective Arabic language teaching and learning within the homeschooling approach for primary school students. The criteria identified for homeschooling-based Arabic language learning—such as the use of basic and simplified modules, flexible implementation strategies, scheduling that accommodates students' daily routines, and the selection of activity types suited to the needs of Arabic language acquisition—are well aligned with the intended goals and learning objectives of Arabic

teaching and learning for primary school students. These criteria reflect a practical and student-centered approach, supporting more effective and meaningful language learning experiences in a homeschooling context. Therefore, future research and continuous refinement are encouraged to ensure that educational alternatives, such as the homeschooling approach, can be effectively explored, optimized, and fully utilized in the future.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are expected to offer new insights for educators regarding the potential of the homeschooling approach in Arabic language learning. Through thematic analysis, the study highlights the main criteria that should be considered when implementing homeschooling as a pedagogical strategy for teaching Arabic to primary school students. Homeschooling offers a valuable alternative and intervention for overcoming learning challenges faced by primary school students in Arabic language subjects. It should be recognized as a collaborative effort aimed at enhancing students' proficiency and achievement in Arabic language learning across Malaysia. When executed with appropriate methodologies and structured guidance, homeschooling has the potential to produce significant educational outcomes and contribute to a more individualized, effective, and comprehensive learning experience for primary school students.

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