

Exploring Group Dynamics in The Arabic Classroom Using Tucker's Development

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Abstract

Group work is one of teaching methods that is widely used in education today, and some of the language instructors, including Arabic, had been incorporating this method in teaching, instead of the traditional method, considering the advantages of applying it in the classroom. This quantitative survey explores group dynamics in learning Arabic language. The instrument used is a questionnaire of 41 items, that are divided into 5 sections. Section A is the demographic profile and section B looks at learning strategies; direct and indirect. Next, section C focuses on social interaction while Section D looks at more knowledgeable others. Finally, Section E focuses on the zone of proximal development. 189 students that take Arabic language as a third language course in a public university were chosen to be the respondents for this study. Findings of this study reveal that learners do show group dynamics in learning Arabic language through five stages of Tucker's group development which are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. From this study, it is clear that group work can help students in learning Arabic language, enhance their understanding and improve their skills as well. Therefore, it is encouraged for the instructors to use collaborative learning in their class frequently to enhance the students' understanding.

Keywords: Group Work, Group Dynamics, Arabic Language Learning, Arabic as Third Language, Group Stages

Introduction

Background of Study

Group work is widely used as one of the teaching strategies among teachers nowadays, where they divide their students into groups to perform a specific task. Rezaie (2017) defined group work as "an instructional approach in which students work together in small or large groups to accomplish a common learning goal or a well-defined learning task".

Meanwhile there are researchers that emphasize a small number of group members to optimize their participation in the group (Cohen & Lotan, 2014; Zhang, 2010; Burke, 2011).

Group work is also used in foreign language learning and it tends to promote productivity and achievement to the students (Zhang, 2010). Arabic is one of the languages that are widely learned as foreign language today. Studies showed that this language has been taught by two methods; traditional and modern methods. Traditional method refers to the role of teacher as the sole source of information, where the knowledge is conveyed to the students by explaining the grammar and morphological context, and listing the vocabularies for students to memorise (Alhirtani, 2020; Gharawi & Bidin, 2016). This method results in less interaction between the students and the teachers, and between the students themselves. On the other hand, the modern method incorporates involvement of the students in the teaching and learning process and one of the methods used is group method (Alhirtani, 2020). Students are designed in a group and they will discuss ideas to complete tasks given. Zhang mentioned that this cooperative learning method is able to form interactive environments, where students need to make their friends understand them, so they must adjust their language to suit their group members. Eventually, they are able to learn more, form longer sentences and make less mistakes (Zhang, 2010).

Statement of Problem

Conventional method in learning Arabic have been a practice in Arabic classroom which is more depending on the instructors. Most of the Arabic instructors either in school or universities practicing conventional method are depending more on the instructors compared to the learners and by applying in this way it will give negative effect to the learners (Ramli et al., 2017). As a matter of fact, it seems like Arabic instructors are not ready to turn to 21st Century education (Jouejati, 2011). According to constructivist learning by Vygotsky's 1978, and when learner interact actively it will develop their knowledge compared to the passive learning, it will happen otherwise (Sari et al., 2021). Passive learning referred to the conventional method while learners have less participation in their learning process and they rely mostly on the instructors.

The time have been changed while online group work have been a practice in learning languages and any other subjects. This is becoming popular teaching strategy in online group work (Koh & Hill, 2009). According to the guidelines prepared by The National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NADSFL), one of The Characteristics reflect the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996) is most of the lesson, learner activity should be more than instructors activity, which is the interaction between learner equivalent to the instructor and learner interactions, they have to work freely, with partner, and in groups. Hence, learning now days are not restricted to the individual but turn into the grouping and it seems effective to use in language classroom. One of the teaching strategies applied by instructors to make their teaching more effective is group work (Godek, 2004). In online collaborative learning (OCL), effectively work in group among the learners are expected, in term of work in team and making decision in group (Lee & Osman, 2021). Learners are more interested in learning in group or using cooperative way compared relying on the instructors (Che In & Zakaria, 2017). Learning style through work in group is effective (Alfares, 2017; Mathew, 2014). The success for the group work will be achieved if all the team members work together and take their own responsibilities and contribute to their work (Sari

et al., 2021). The clear benefits to learn a foreign language is provided through working in group (Alfares, 2017). So, working in group is effective to practice in learning process because in this way it is not limited for instructors to learners interaction but it happens among learners itself while the excellent learners can play the instructors rules. This will happen when the learners are able to teach the other members in their group especially the excellent learners. So, the learners can take major participation in their learning sessions.

Even though group work is considered effective, there are some issues which should be considered by instructors to achieve the learning target. Godek (2004) mentioned the issues are choosing the best task for working in groups, classroom dimensions for group work, group sizes appropriate for each group and choosing the best working groups to make the learners comfortable in their own group. It is very hard for the instructors to monitor the correct information and wrong information distributed among the group of work, there maybe the discussions about learning topics course syllabus since the cooperation among the learners and the learner may not listen to the instructors anymore since there are other person who can be their source of information (Ismail & Kinchin, 2019).

On behalf of the learners, they have to face the other issues. Some problems facing among group members even in face-to-face classes or virtual, which are personal conflicts among members of the group, unwilling to participate, and inability to negotiate (Ismail & Kinchin, 2019). The learner's shyness, anxious and ignoring some members while learning may affect cooperative learning negatively when they need other members help (Alfares, 2017).

Hence, to achieve the goal is to apply group work in learning process, negative aspects highlighted should be considered by instructors and should be prepared by the instructors to overcome all the emerge issues. Learners also should take part in avoiding all the negative behavior to cooperate with the members of the team, then only group work will be successful. Hence, this study is done to explore group dynamics in online group work in the learning Arabic as a foreign language. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

- How do learners show group dynamics in the Forming Stage?
- How do learners show group dynamics in the Storming Stage?
- How do learners show group dynamics in the Norming Stage?
- How do learners show group dynamics in the Performing Stage?
- How do learners show group dynamics in the Adjourning Stage?

Literature Review

Introduction

Language learning strategies (LLS) are the most important element in mastering any foreign language class and Arabic language is not exceptional. The transition of language learning and learning has evolved over time from teaching to learning strategies. Apart from paying attention to teacher's methods of language education to learning strategies in foreign language learning, the focus on learners has become a major concern for learners and educators. Moreover, it is encompasses all delivery modes; including approaches, methods and techniques which become a part of the learning process for language learners. The focus is on defining the language learning strategies used by the learner to help them develop their language learning, as well as to learn language in a short period of time, easier and more

effectively. The learning strategies are behaviours or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self – direct and enjoyable (Oxford, 1990). It involves mental and communicative procedures for learning and using language in the framework of improving language achievement and master (Shukri et al., 2000).

There are various different learning strategies that have been classified by many scholars. The most comprehensive and detailed instrument used around the world is known as Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by (Oxford, 1990). The SILL consists of two classes, six groups, nineteen sets and a total of sixty-two strategies. Oxford's two main categories of classification scheme are direct and indirect strategies. The subcategories of Direct strategies are memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies, meanwhile the sub categories of indirect strategies are as follows; the metacognitive, social and affective strategies. On the other hand, another group of researchers categorize language learning focusing on four language skills in the learner's skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Conversely, according to Oxford and Nyikos (1989), strategies in SILL instruments cover four language learning skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. It has also been used to investigate strategy use in conjunction with other variables such as learners' learning styles, attitudes, motivation, cultural background, language proficiency, major of studies, and gender.

Apart from the phenomenon that experts have on different opinions about the terminology, many empirical studies on second language learning refer language learning strategies to steps, actions and behaviours that may be employed intentionally or unintentionally by language learners in order to improve their performance in both developing their knowledge and applying a target language.

Learning Strategies in Arabic Classrooms

Admittedly, the Arabic Language is known for being a difficult language in the world. It is normal when in the beginning of learning the Arabic language having to start at the absolute basics can be extremely frustrating. After all, there are some experiences about how hard it is to learn Arabic and plenty of people have given up after just a few weeks. Nevertheless, it is far from impossible because Arabic is perfectly doable, and it just takes some appropriate learning strategies considering the needs of students where they have opportunities to immerse themselves in the target language.

Many scholars classified Arabic language learning strategies differently according to four foundational skills of language learning, specific language subjects, social models theories, psychological factors which affect language acquisition. On the whole, clearly all aspects of theories, classifications, techniques, methods and approaches are related together to develop and perform the best learning strategies.

In the context of learning Arabic, a study by Yusoff (2005) found that among the many factors that help students master the Arabic language well is through effective learning strategies. Rahim (2003) study also supports the opinion that the use of strategies has improved students' abilities, self-confidence, interest and attitude towards learning Arabic. Rasip (2002), in his study, listed three major aspects on strategies: (i) teachers' criteria and credibility in teaching Arabic Language, (ii) teaching and learning management, and (iii)

existence of conducive Arabic learning environment in schools; as to upgrade the quality of Arabic Language performance in all national level examinations.

A study on Arabic language learning strategies among Malaysian students at Yarmouk University for example was related to the variables of specialization and gender. The study was conducted using foreign language learning strategies scale by Oxford. As a result, the study revealed that the level of using Arabic language learning strategies as a whole was moderate, with different levels on the six strategies as follows: Compensation and social strategies with high level, metacognitive, cognitive, memory and affective strategies with moderate level. Besides, the results also revealed that there were statistical significant differences in their using strategies due to the variables of specialization in favor of the Arabic language, and gender in the favor of the females (Al-Khawaldeh, 2015).

Relevant study highlighted by Brosh (2019) is Arabic students' perceptions regarding their language-learning strategy preferences (LLSPs). The findings revealed that students tend to adopt a holistic view of the learning task and relate it to real-life, personal experience. The study found that Arabic students desire to be proactive in order to make the language more concrete for them, to enhance their performance, and to develop language skills that will last a lifetime. Whereas beginner level participants preferred learning grammar and group work compared to advanced level participants who preferred working individually.

Haron et al (2016) emphasizes in the research Challenges in Learning to Speak Arabic, that positive attitudes will motivate students to use various strategies to utilize whatever facilities and opportunities available around them to create the optimum environment and opportunity to speak Arabic.

In the Teaching and Learning Strategies Used In Classroom: A Case Study in National Religious Secondary Schools (SMKA) in Selangor, Malaysia, Hamidin (2015) sums up some of the strategies of teaching Arabic: Motivational programme are scheduled continuously for the students, review difficult Arabic components, methodology of teaching, enrich the vocabulary of Arabic Language, familiarise with the format of examination. Add on, preparing excellent teachers, class management, and the formation of a good climate in Arabic Language.

The findings from these studies will have a positive impact on the diversity of Arabic language learning strategies among students. The more strategies learners use, the more successful they will be. Therefore, for those who tend to be successful in second or foreign language learning generally and Arabic learning specifically, should be familiar with all six categories of LLS and utilize them more consciously (Mamat & Sideh, 2013).

Despite the considerable amount of studies done about good strategies for learning Arabic, it can be concluded that good strategies employed in teaching and smart learning make the process of Arabic teaching learning successful.

Learning in Groups

Learning in groups or collaborative learning is an educational approach of teaching and learning that involves groups of students that work together to complete a task given by the teacher or instructor, or solve a problem or to create a product (Laal & Laal, 2012).

According to Slavin (2010), there are two factors that determine the effectiveness of learning in a group, group goals and individual accountability. Firstly, the group should be formed to learn something and not just to do something. If the goal is to do something or perform a task, the quick learner student will tend to finish the task by himself as explaining to the slow learner will take extra time. In contrast, if the goal is to learn something, the quick learner student will try his best to spend his time explaining the concept to the slow learner student. Hence, both parties achieve better understanding rather than students that are not actively engaged in the discussion or task. Webb (1982) in his study, proved that the activities of giving and receiving help in a group contribute to the achievement of the group members. Next, students should believe that they will be accountable for their performance and learning. When this belief is instilled in the students' minds, they will do their best in performing the task given, making sure everyone has achieved the group's goal. Burke added that assignment of group members also plays an important role in resulting in a good group performance (Burke, 2011).

However, group work also can experience failure due to following factors; First, the existence of dysfunctional members. These persons act negatively by practicing social loafing where they tend to reduce individual efforts when working in a group as compared to their individual efforts when working alone (Zhu & Wang, 2018). They also express negative emotions, attitude and moods that can affect their teammates' emotions as well. (Felps et al., 2006) Second, psychological safety of the team members. If the members feel psychologically unsafe, which they think that they may be seen as incompetence by their teammates, they tend to not share their opinions, give answers and participate in the discussion (Edmondson, 1999).

Theory Group Dynamics

When people work in group, their behaviour can be seen as a cyclical pattern. According to Tucker (1965), there several stage sin group development. Figure 1 shows the linear model of group development by Tucker (1965). The first stage is the (a) forming stage. This marks the beginning of the group interaction. The next stage is (b) storming stage. This is the stage where all team members brainstorming ideas. Some ideas are easily accepted, while other ideas need clarification and arguments to be included. The next stage is (c) norming stage. This is the stage where the group agrees on the final version of the completed task. This is followed by the (d) performing stages. For many institutions of higher learning, this is where the group make presentation of the groups' tasks. The last stage is the (e) adjourning stage. This is the stage where the group dissolves as task is completed.

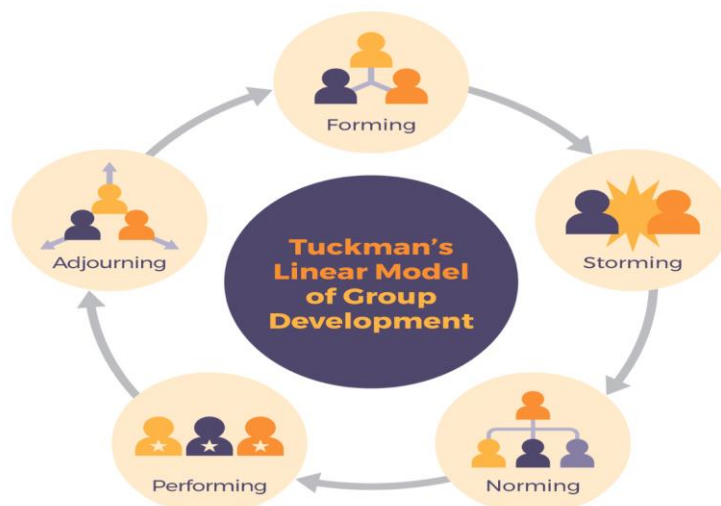


Figure 1- the Stages of the Tucker Model (Source :Tucker, 1965)

Past Studies

Past Studies on Learning Strategies used in Learning Arabic Language

Many Studies have been done to investigate the learning strategies used in learning Arabic language. Especially in terms of issues like tools used, teachers' role and most efficient methods to learn Arabic language among students. There have been many past studies on learning strategies for Arabic language. The study by Samah et al (2016) is done to investigate study method used by excellent students in learning Arabic to be used as guideline for other students This research revealed the weakness of traditional method of learning Arabic language, where the teachers are the source of information and students involve less in the learning process. Students themselves feel less confident to speak and participate in the activities in Arabic class, and they do not apply proper learning methods. However, there are excellent students that use specific methods in learning Arabic to overcome this problem and some of them are chosen to be the respondents for this study. The respondents for this study were 50 final year students from Arabic Language Department, Faculty of Major Languages, Islamic Science University of Malaysia that obtained high CGPA, which is between 3.0 to 4.0, and they are classified as outstanding students. The instrument used is a set of questionnaires that was developed based on the Imitation Strategy Instrument and students are required to report the frequency of the usage of learning strategies. The findings of this study are that the students used three methods in learning Arabic language; gathering, enhancing and applying. These methods are used to add new vocabularies and sentences and the tools used are Arabic materials and language activities. Gathering refers to the process of searching, recording, asking and referring to any reference material to obtain new vocabularies and sentences which is done by reading, listening, writing and interaction. Meanwhile, enhancing means these students enhance their new vocabularies and sentences by memorizing, imitating, recording, repeating and translating them, correcting errors, building sentences and interacting with others. Lastly, they applied the information obtained by translating, writing, listening and reading it, doing acting and roleplay, communicating, interacting and presenting it to others. Hence, this study helps teachers in providing the best and suitable materials to be used by the students to learn Arabic and the students themselves get to know the available materials and methods to learn Arabic independently.

Next, the study by Brosh (2019) also looked at methods used by students to learn Arabic. The author highlighted that learning Arabic is not easy since the students must learn lexical, grammatical and morphological structures of standard Arabic language or known as 'Fusha' and also spoken Arabic that is known as 'Ammiya'. Besides, the language-learning strategy (LLS) concept is also emphasized in this study, which consists of specific actions that are selected by the students consciously to ease the language learning. 120 undergraduate students that studied Modern Standard Arabic were chosen randomly to be respondents for this study and they are English speakers. They are divided into two groups, where the first group had finished two or fewer years of study and the second group had finished three to four years of study. This study used a set of questionnaires that listed 24 learning strategies and the students must choose three most frequently used LLS. Then, they are required to rank them as 1,2 and 3. The author also used semi-structured interview to shed light on how Arabic students expressed their preferences to LLS and 25 of the previous respondents were selected randomly to carry out the interview. The findings showed that these students preferred interaction with the teacher (one-on-one), speaking and usage of flashcards in learning Arabic. Interaction with the teacher is important for these students as teachers have vast knowledge about the language and students can get feedback from the teachers regarding the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, phrase and sentence structure that they used. This eventually can help improve their language skills. Next, speaking also helps students to learn Arabic better as they can practice what they have learned in the class theoretically. Finally, the usage of flash cards aids the students in learning Arabic as they can memorize new words, their meaning, spelling and pronunciation as well. Therefore, this study can help Arabic teachers in designing teaching materials for the students according to their needs and this will optimize learning time in the classroom. These previous studies shed light on the frequently used method by students to learn Arabic language efficiently and the same methods mentioned are the interaction with the teachers, speaking or communication with others and memorization of vocabularies. These studies can help instructors to improve their teaching style to optimize student's understanding. However, the first study focused on excellent students only and detailed the strategies and tools of learning Arabic used by them. In contrast, the second study selected the respondents randomly and divided them based on years of study.

Past Studies on Learning in Groups

Many studies have been done to investigate the learning in groups among learners. Especially in terms of the learners perception, benefits of group work, the difficulties in group work, even in language studies, management, sciences and any other studies virtual and face-to-face as well. Only the focus of the previous research was different from one to another. One of the researches related to group work conducted by Alfares (2017) to examine learning in group work on behalf of the learners perception in term of benefits and difficulties in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. This research revealed the effects of work in a group, to understand learners' behaviours while working in a group, and to give the information to language instructors about group work in terms of learner perception. The respondent for this study was EFL classes learners in five private language institutions in Saudi Arabia. 188 respondents involved in this study to answer the questionnaires. Hence, 20 learners chose to involve in interview through telephone interview. The findings of this study showed the advantages of the group work among learners firstly related to cognitive aspects, which helps members in learning process. Secondly related to emotional aspects in term of benefit for the

learners motivation. The difficulties highlighted through this study is mostly related to the behaviors of the learners or the members in the each group. However, group work among Saudi learners considered effective in learning process, on the other hand the learners who behave negatively will affected them to achieve the benefits of the group work.

Another study have been investigated by (Chang & Brickman, 2018). This research zoom in unfunctional group work in order of learners perception. This study looks at learning performance while practicing group work among learners at a large public university in the south eastern United States. The respondents for this research are non-science majors learners an introductory biology course. 246 respondents are involved in this study. Mixed method using in this research, while using qualitative through interview, analysis categories and themes, and comparison of evaluations. Quantitative applies in term of test score, frequency of categories and themes, and comparison of evaluations rating. Research's finding shows based on learners perception, unequal contribution among group members but at the same time group work came up with social support. The high scored learners realized the benefit of working in groups compared to the low score learners. It is considered group work take time with small cognitive benefit. Without looking at the learners group performance level, learners were expected to highlight positive experience with the team members.

The next research discussing about group work have been conducted by (Costley, 2021). This research have been examined from two points of view firstly, the total of learners working in groups, and the learners role among the group. Through these two perspectives this study investigated showed how it affected learner learning while working in group. Online classes collaborative study group which are university learners in South Korea became the respondents for this study. 1399 participants involved in this research. This research investigated using quantitative approach which is by using survey in a google sheet form with likert type scale range to measure the cognitive load. The finding of this research highlighted that when learners are part of learning groups they achieve their learning goal, and it will benefit them. This research shows the importance of working in groups will benefit the learners in term of cognitive side through learning in groups. In addition, this study reveals that the members of the group who contribute less in the group will also benefit from work in group. This is a valuable research when it can emerge understanding of the dynamics of learner-to-learner interaction as well as how it impact in learning.

The previous studies above showed group work can contribute to the positives point and also negative points, benefits and difficulties as well. To produce positive result while practicing group work as one of the initiatives of learning, all members in the group should contribute and take part to make it successful. On the other hand, those instructors need to understand the difficulties facing among learners and try to fix all the issues and come up with the best results.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is rooted from Tucker's (1965) model of group development and language learning strategies by Oxford (1990) and also group interaction by Rahmat, Mok, Lau & Ling (2021). The main headings are taken from Tucker's (1965) 5 stages of group development. These 5 stages help to build a foundation for the language skills and group interaction as shown in figure 2 below. The first stage is (a) forming stage and to learn the Arabic language,

learners use direct and compensatory strategies. The next stage is (b) storming stage and this is done through social interaction. The next stage is (c) norming stage and this is supported by the presence of the MKO-more knowledgeable other among the team members. The next stage is (d) performing stage and this is done through the use of indirect strategies. The last stage is the (e) adjourning stage and expediated with the ZPD-zone of proximal development that supported doing the task as a team than doing it alone.

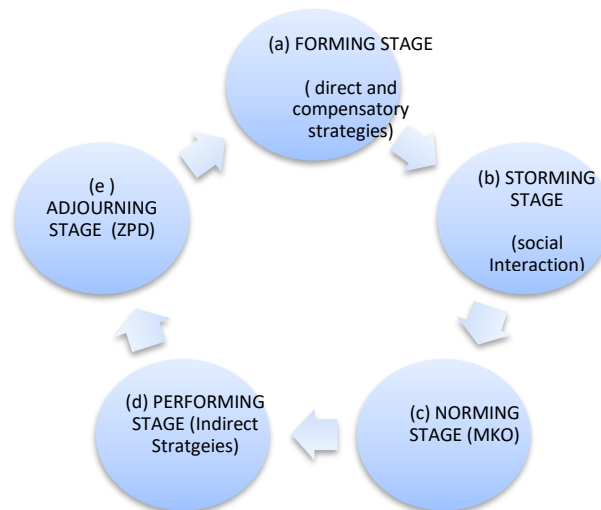


Figure 2- Conceptual Framework of the Study-Group Dynamics in Arabic Classroom

Methodology

This quantitative research is done to investigate group dynamics in learning Arabic language. The instrument is adapted from Oxford (1990) and Rahmat, Mok, Lau & Ling (2021). The survey has 5 main sections. With reference to Table 1, section A has items on the demographic profile. Section B has 12 items on learning Strategies (Direct and Indirect), section C has 8 items on Social Interaction, section D has 7 items on More knowledge Others (MKO), and section E has 7 items on Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Table 1

Distribution of Items in Survey

SECTION	CONSTRUCT	SUB-CATEGORIES	NO OF ITEMS
B	LEARNING STRATEGIES	DIRECT	6
		INDIRECT	6
C	SOCIAL INTERACTION		8
D	MKO		7
E	ZPD		7
			34

Table 2
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.976	34

Table 2 presents the reliability statistics for the instrument. SPSS analysis revealed a Cronbach alpha of .976 thus showing a high internal reliability of the instrument used. Data is collected online via goggle form. Data is then analysed using SPSS version 26. Analysed data is presented in the form of percentages and mean scores to answer the 5 research questions

Findings

Findings for Demographic Profile

The population and sample to which the results of the study were generalized comprised students who were taking Arabic Language as a third language course at the a public university in Malaysia. The questionnaires were distributed to 189 respondents.

This section explains the background of 189 respondents in this study. For 189 respondents, descriptive analysis gives information on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, highest academic level, faculty, and course code. The table below illustrates how the respondents are distributed based on the demographic characteristics that were chosen. It shows the frequency and percentage analysis for the demographic profile.

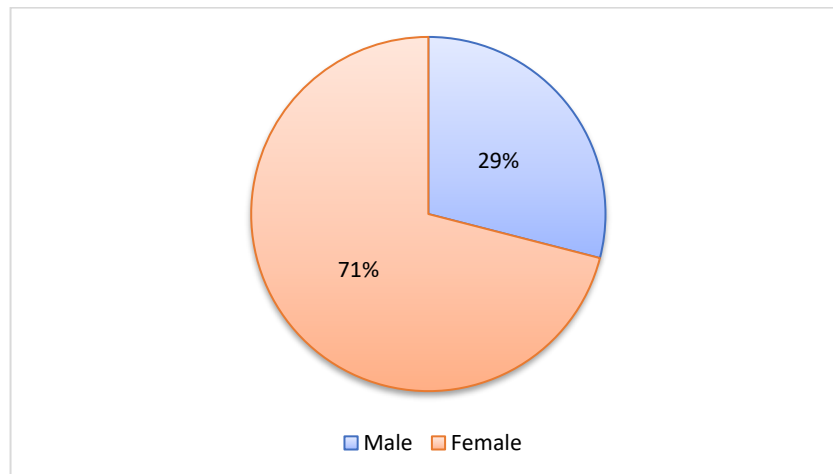


Figure 3- Percentage for Gender

Majority of respondents are female (n = 134, 71%) and the rest are male (n = 55, 29%). The difference between male and female respondents is 42%. Some research reported no significant effects of gender on Learning Language Strategies (McMullen, 2009; Radwan, 2011). Contrasting with some researchers indicate the existence of such influence (Shmais, 2003; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011; Khalil, 2005). Regarding this context, different gender had no significant effect on the overall strategy use nor on the use of each individual strategy.

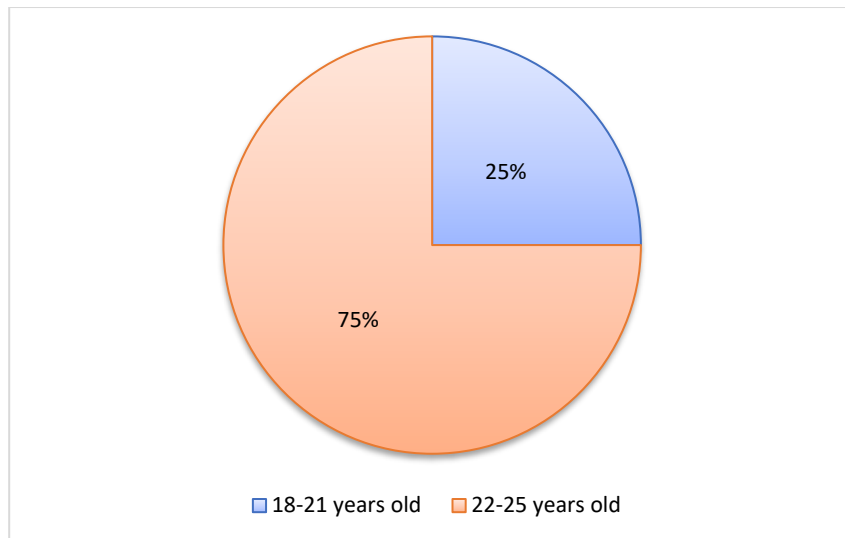


Figure 4 -Percentage for Age Group

For the age of the respondents in Figure 4, there are 141 respondents (75%) between 22 to 25 years, followed by 47 respondents (25%) aged between 18 to 21 years.

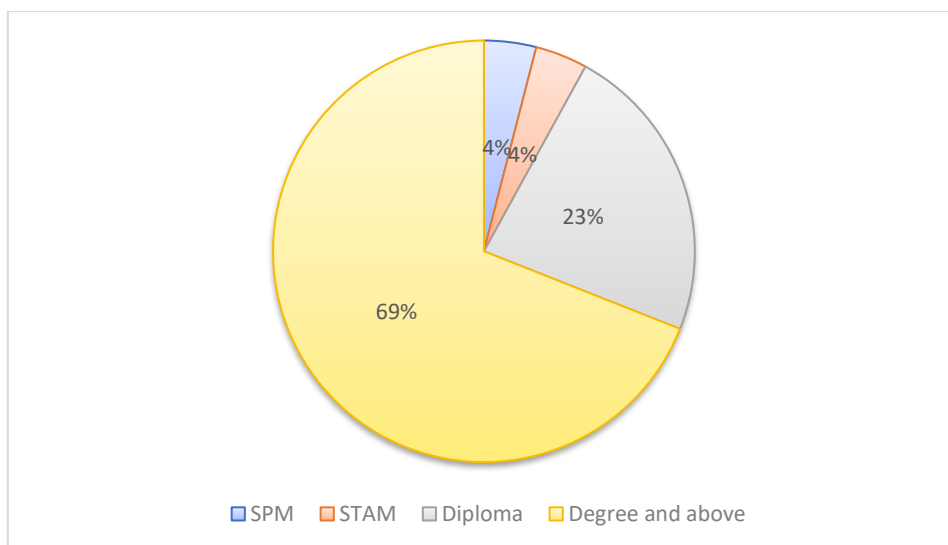


Figure 5-Percentage for Highest Academic Level

In terms of highest academic level as a student, there are 131 respondents (69%) that have a degree and above, followed by 43 respondents (23%) that have a diploma, 8 respondents (4%) have SPM and 7 respondents (4%) have STAM. The majority of students are still continuing undergraduate courses, regardless of their academic level. There might be a misunderstanding concerning previous academic achievements.

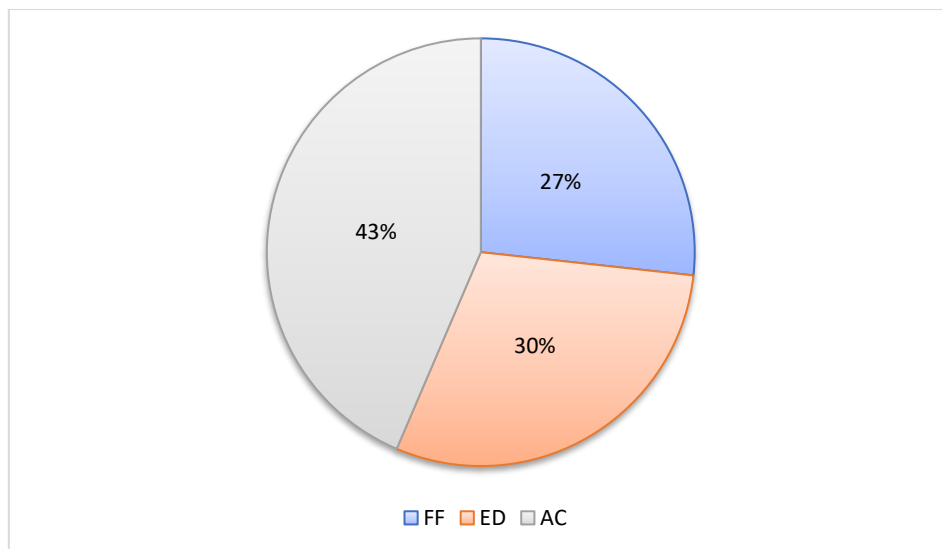


Figure 6-Percentage for Faculty

Meanwhile, the highest faculty of respondents was Faculty of Accountancy (AC) which is 83 respondents (44%). Meanwhile, 56 respondents (30%) from the Faculty of Education (ED) and 50 respondents (27%) are from the Faculty of Film Theatre and Animation (FF).

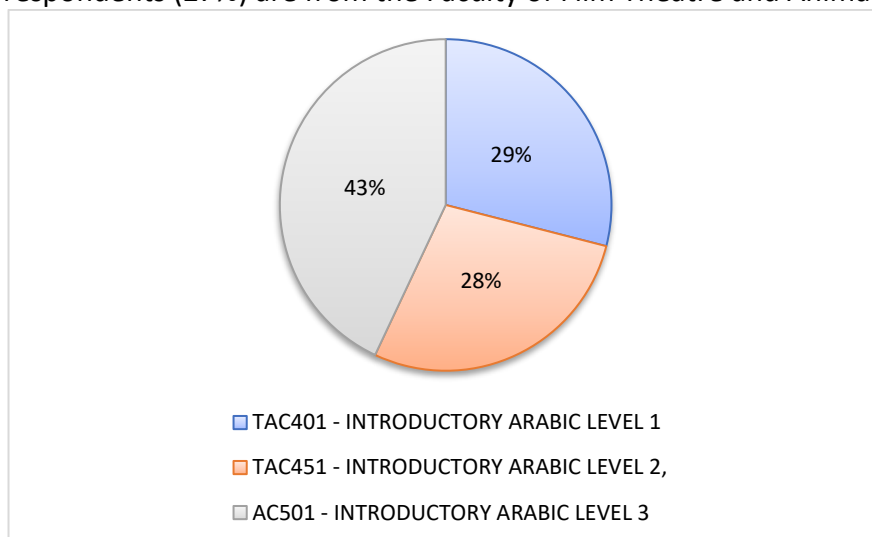


Figure 7-Percentage for Course Code

Figure 7 above shows the course code subject, 82 respondents (43%) are taking the TAC501 course, followed by 54 respondents (29%) taking the TAC401 course and 53 respondents (28%) taking the TAC451 course.

Findings for Forming Stage

This section presents data to answer Research Question 1: How do learners show group dynamics in the forming stage? In the context of this study, the forming stage is measured by 6 items from direct and compensatory strategies.

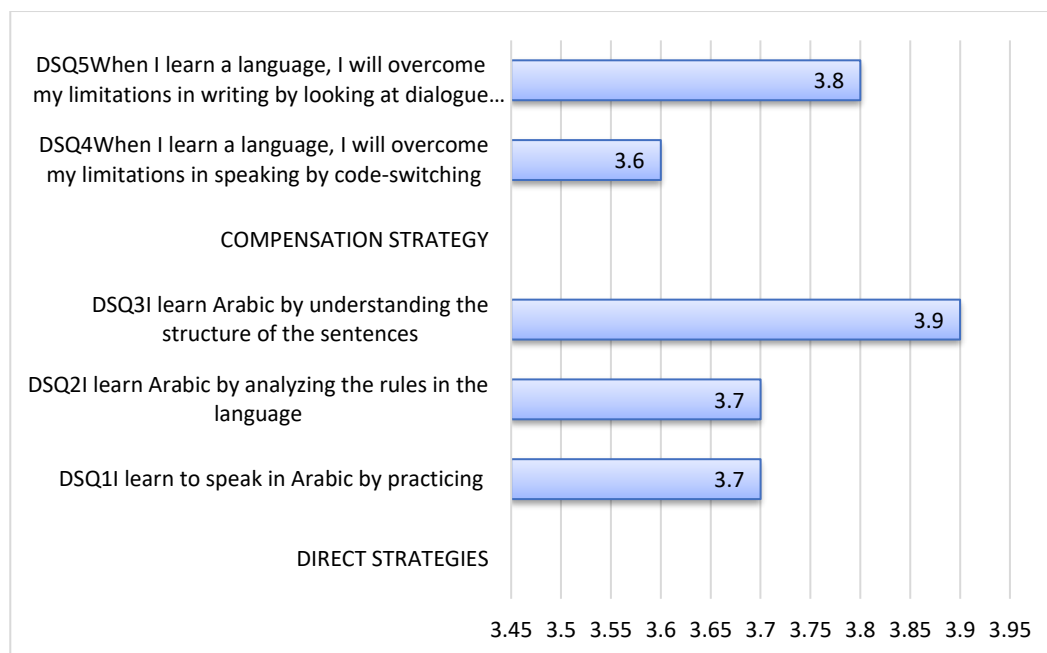


Figure 8-Mean for Direct and Compensatory Strategies

Figure 8 shows group dynamics by learners in the forming stage. The most favourable strategy by students to be used in learning Arabic is by understanding the structure of the sentences with the mean of 3.9. Gaining new vocabulary is essential in understanding the structure of the sentences, hence this explains the reason why most students prefer to learn Arabic by obtaining new vocabularies and sentences that is done by gathering them from various Arabic materials (Samah et al., 2016; Brosh, 2019). It is followed by item DSQ5 with the mean of 3.8, which the learners tend to overcome their limitations in writing by looking at dialogue or conversation samples. Dialogue samples consist of various structures of sentences and numerous vocabularies, therefore students are able to acquire new vocabularies that can improve their writing skills eventually (Maskor et al., 2016). Next, it is followed by item DSQ1 and DSQ2 with the mean of 3.7, which indicates that practicing Arabic and analyzing the rules of the language are less favourable to the students. Generally, in order for a student to practice a language or make a sentence, he must possess the rule first, which is known as grammar. Therefore, these two items are strongly linked, and affect each other. Memorization of vocabulary itself is not enough to practice a language, hence Arabic learners must learn the grammar too in order to speak in the language. Studies showed that Arabic learners face difficulties in constructing the composition of sentences due to the complexity of the grammar and the difference of the language structure from their first language (Brosh, 2019; Abduh et al., 2018). Meanwhile, items DSQ4 and DSQ6 have the lowest means with the value of 3.6, which show that speaking by code-switching to overcome students' limitation and guessing the incomprehensible words intelligently are the least favourable strategies to learn Arabic. In general, code-switching requires someone to be bilingual in order to alternate the two languages (Skiba, 1997). Therefore, if students cannot practice speaking in Arabic due to less vocabulary and knowledge in grammar, they cannot apply code-switching in their communication. Besides, guessing the meaning of Arabic words is not easy since Arabic alphabets are completely different from Malay alphabets and the Arabic scripts are written in cursive, with 'ligatures' joining one letter with another (Salehuddin, 2013).

Findings for Storming Stage

This section presents the answer to Research question 2: How do learners show group dynamics in the Storming Stage? In the context of this study, the storming stage is measured by 8 items from their social interaction.

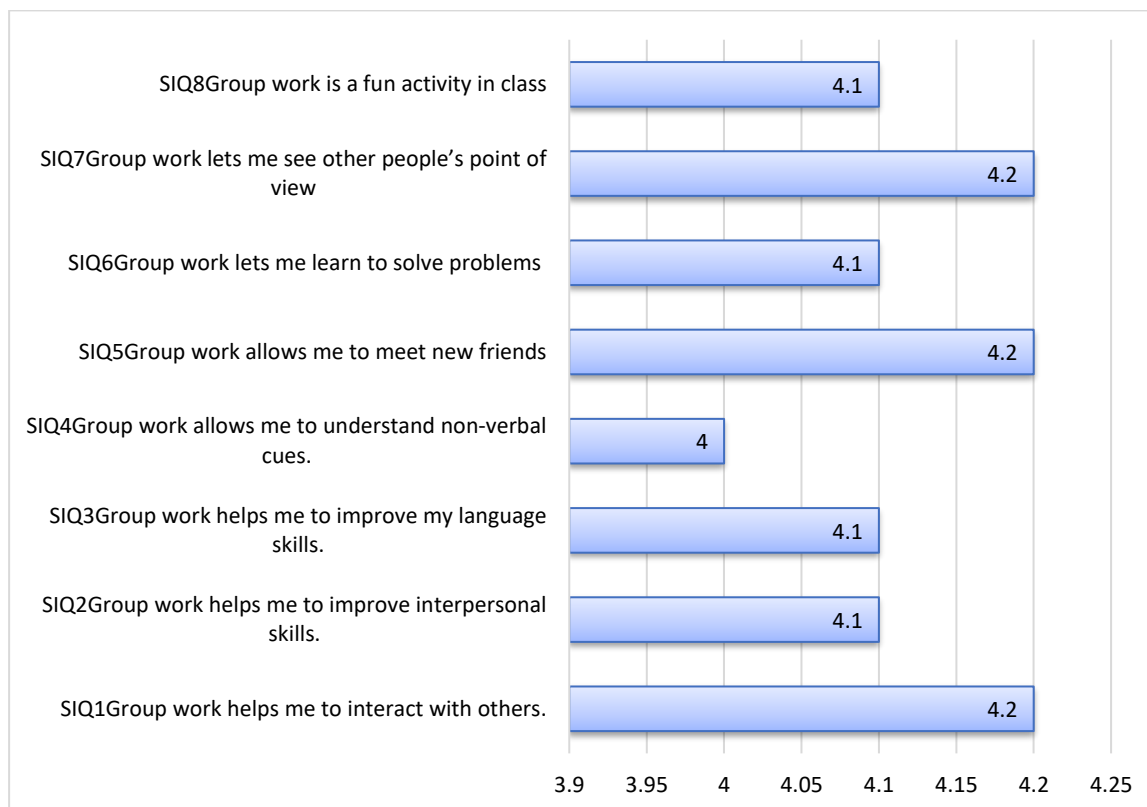


Figure 9 -Mean for Social Interaction

According to the Figure 9, group dynamics in storming stage showed by the learners in Arabic classroom in term of social interaction is highly favourable. Items SIQ1, SIQ5 and SIQ7 (M= 4.2) showed learners prefer to have social interaction with other learners in their learning session compared to learning individually. The important thing for online group work is social interaction while it will interact learners in term of social presence, learner's perception of collaboration, improve learner learning and satisfaction while learning online and it is also related to the group work when learners work in team toward skills of completing their project, hence communication is achieved when they interact openly (Koh & Hill, 2009). Learners will be aware of their comprehension abilities through the interaction (Alfares, 2017). Individual learners characteristics, instructor's pedagogical strategies skills and online learning environment are the features affected to the social interaction (Koh & Hill, 2009). This is followed by items SIQ2, SIQ3, SIQ6 and SIQ8 (M= 4.1) shows that working in a group is helpful especially to build up their skill and make them less stressful in their class session. Working in groups indirectly can help learners in term of expanding their critical thinking skills and reflection skills as well (Koh & Hill, 2009). According to Godek (2004), by working in group learners can take an opportunity to apply their knowledge, experiences and skills. The item that received the lowest score is SIQ4 (4) (*group work allows me to understand non-verbal cues*), this may sometimes help learners to understand individual expression and gesture, in the end learners eventually can conclude every single non-verbal

cues in the storming stage. Hence, learners gain the new individual expression and gesture by working in groups.

Findings for Norming Stage

This section answers Research question 3: How do learners show group dynamics in the Norming Stage? The norming stage is measured by 7 items in the more knowledgeable other.

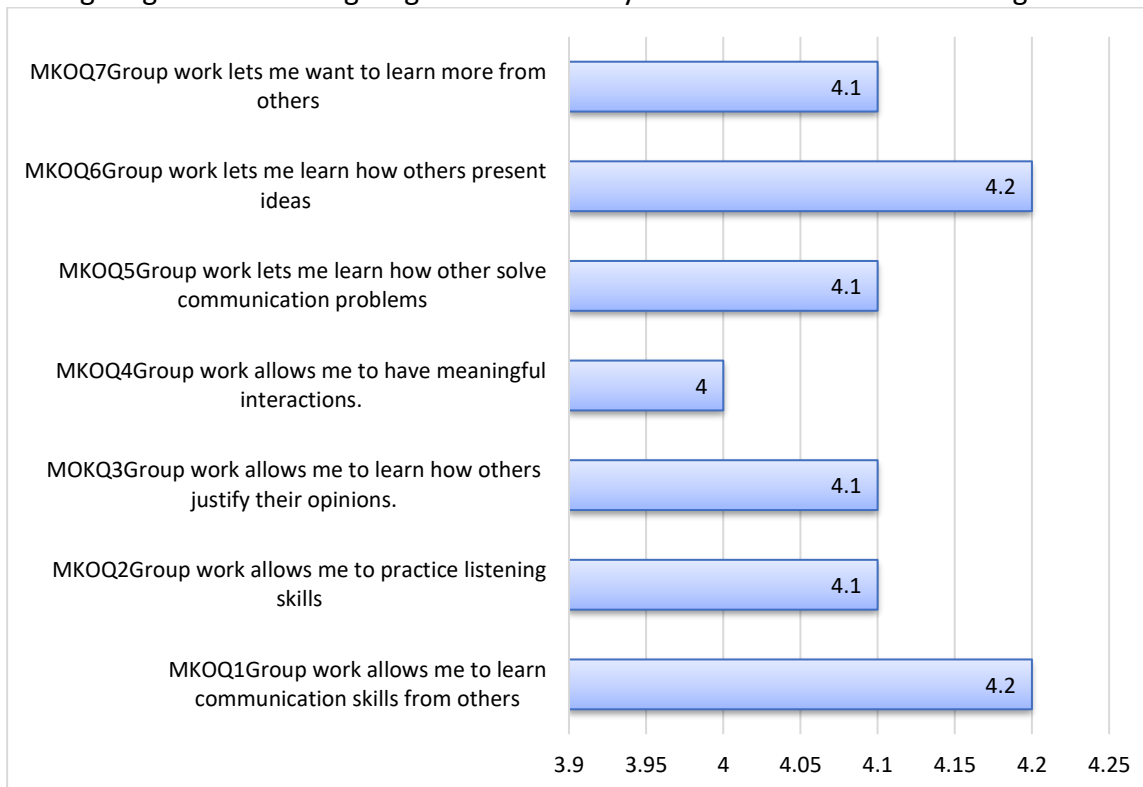


Figure 10-Mean for More Knowledgeable Other

It was found in Figure 10 above that only one item of more knowledgeable other was at medium high and the rest of the single items are at high level. The item with medium high value was “MKOQ4 Group work allows me to have meaningful interactions” (mean = 4). In fact, encouraging students in group work activities can help them in building good interaction as they are giving their opinions and thoughts to other members (Celik et al., 2013). The items with high mean values which is mean = 4.2 are item “MKOQ1 Group work allows me to learn communication skills from others” and item “MKOQ6 Group work lets me learn how others present ideas”. When studying in groups, ideas and thoughts can be shared together. Everyone in the group will definitely practice the language and increase motivation towards each other. As seen from the results, the participants had a positive feedback and good interaction among group members, and they generally agreed with researchers such as (Celik et al., 2013) in their belief that interaction that exists between students in group work can easily help them in learning communication skills as it is providing oral practice while doing group work. Undoubtedly, group work gives opportunities to students in presenting their ideas, defending their opinions and exchanging diverse beliefs that indirectly gives them a chance to learn from each other (Laal, 2013). The second highest mean value with mean = 4.1 are item “MKOQ2 Group work allows me to practice listening skills”, item “MOKQ3 Group work allows me to learn how others justify their opinions.”, item “MKOQ5 Group work lets me learn how others solve communication problems” and item “MKOQ7 Group work lets me

want to learn more from others". These findings are consistent with those of the studies by Kirbas (2017) and Laal & Laal (2012). The aforesaid studies conclude that group work is effective in developing listening skills and listening comprehension as it allows students to express their thoughts, share their ideas, and cooperate among them in an environment that they feel relaxed and comfortable (Kirbas, 2017). When students perform activities in group work, it does help them to learn to justify their opinions through problem solving skills, receiving feedback and responding to questions and comments (Laal & Laal, 2012).

Findings for Performing Stage

This section presents data to answer Research question 4: How do learners show group dynamics in the Performing Stage? 6 items in the indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective and social strategies) are used to explain the performing stage.

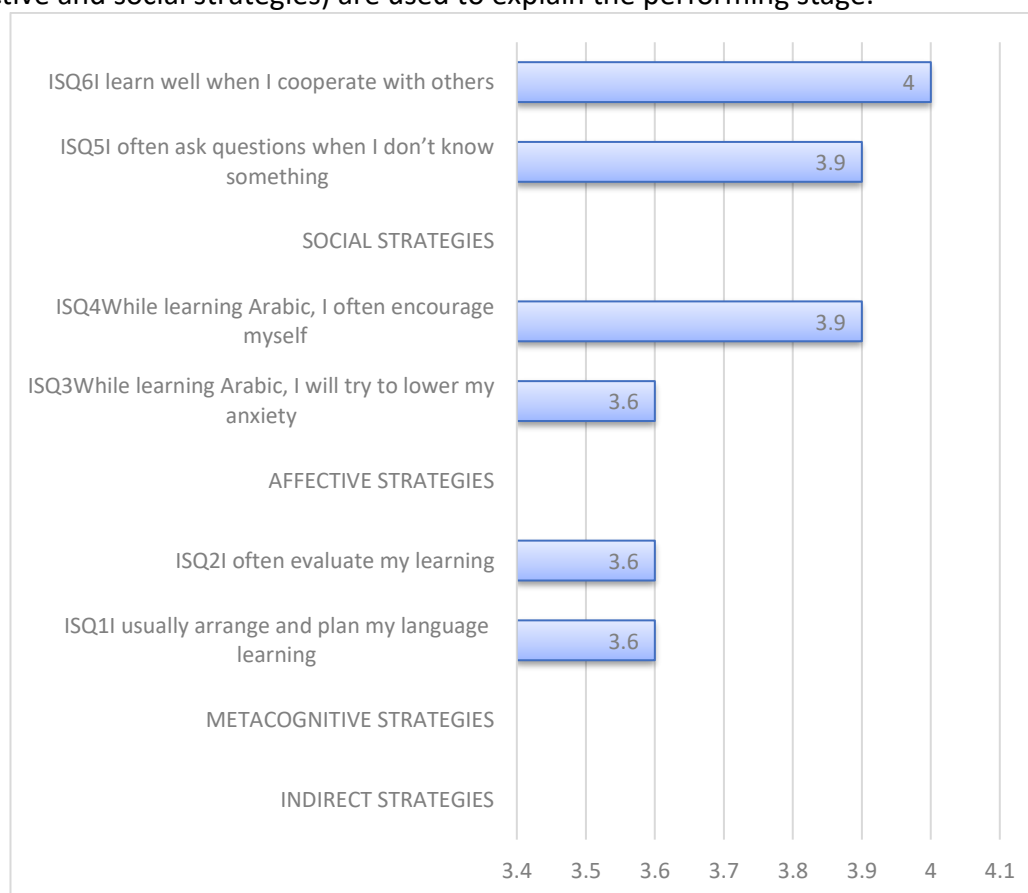


Figure 11-Mean for Performing Stage (Indirect Strategies)

Figure 11 reveals that the performing stage in term of indirect strategies are less favourable. Students showed the highest agreement with the item ISQ6 (4) (*I learn well when I cooperate with others*) while it is closely related to the social strategies, they can perform well while they cooperate with other members in group when they have the one goal to achieve. Obviously, information and knowledge switching among learners may improve the cooperative learning opportunities by working in groups, and on the other hand when the learners help and teach other members in group, indirectly it may help learners in term of increasing their understanding for that language (Alfares, 2017). So it will benefit the learner as well as the other members in the group. Most of the learners are happy with the group work because they can ask help from their peers (Alfares, 2017). Then followed by the items

ISQ4 and ISQ5 (M= 3.9) is one affective strategies when learners are able to encourage others, freely and have more confidence to ask questions among their peers in term of social strategies. It seems language learners prefer to ask their peers in the group to explain specific issues it is because they understand better when the questions asked are answered by their group members, furthermore the instructors need to teach the whole class compared to the individual explanation specifically, language learners give more attention to their members explanation (Alfares, 2017). The item that received the lowest are ISQ1, ISQ2 and ISQ3 (M= 3.6) refers to metacognitive strategies and affective strategies as well, these items related more on their self motivation and interpersonal feeling in learning language. Working in groups indirectly improve the learners motivation as well as their self-esteem, sharing their common problems with their peers, encourages them further inquiry in their discussion and at the end of their discussion they evaluate their work, in term of instructors feedback student progress is provided (Godek, 2004).

Findings for Adjourning Stage

This section presents data to answer Research question 5: How do learners show group dynamics in the Adjourning Stage? 7 items are used to measure the adjourning stage via zone of proximal development.

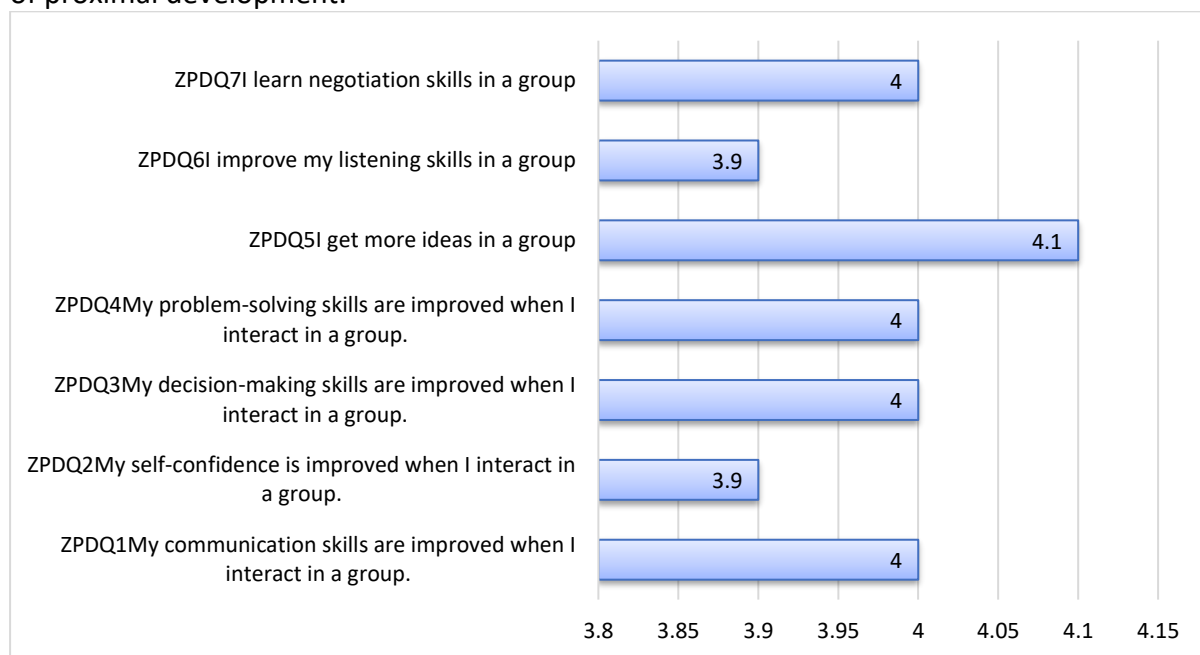


Figure 12-mean for Adjourning Stage (ZPD)

Based on Figure 12, six items of the zone of proximal development are at medium high level and only one item was at high level. The item with high mean value with mean 4.1 which is item “ZPDQ5 I get more ideas in a group”. As cautioned by (Darby & Tallontire, 2016), groups come up with more creative ideas than they would individually. Generally, group work is actually more effective than individual learning. Likewise the opportunity to discuss what learners are learning with others as they go, helps them make fresh discoveries and form new ideas.

The items with medium high-level values with mean 4 are item “ZPDQ1 My communication skills are improved when I interact in a group.”, item “ZPDQ3 My decision-making skills are improved when I interact in a group.”, item “ZPDQ4 My problem-solving skills are improved when I interact in a group.” and item “ZPDQ7 I learn negotiation skills in a group”. Sato (2003) in his research discovered that group work can also help achieve the two goals of anxiety reduction and meaningful communication for the purpose of fostering speaking ability. Each individual will take every opportunity to perfect their language learning. While learning a new language, the key is to find as many ways to practice as possible. In addition, some advantages of group decision making include the following: greater sum total of knowledge, greater number of approaches to the problem, greater number of alternatives, increased acceptance of a decision, and better comprehension of a problem and decision (Gunnarsson, 2010; Proctor, 2011). Group work also develops more complex skills, such as interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, critical analysis and problem-solving by putting students in a situation which requires them to notice and understand particular dynamics or circumstances (Ellis & Weekes, 2008). Based on the above statement, it is understandable that the good communication skills in group will be more efficient, more organized and in line with other’s ideas and perspectives. The findings of Tsui (2001) supports this item with medium high-level values with mean 4 which is learning negotiation skills in a group; the researcher discovered that the group work provides more opportunities for learners to initiate and control the interaction, to produce a much larger variety of speech acts and to engage in the negotiation of meaning.

With regard to the item with medium high-level with mean 3.9 “ZPDQ2 My self-confidence is improved when I interact in a group.” notes that The implementation of group work improves students’ confidence. They are more confident to present the results of the discussion, and perform the game or role play (Wahyuningsih, 2018). Followed by the same mean 3.9 “ZPDQ6 I improve my listening skills in a group”, notes that group collaboration could enhance student listening comprehension. Data analysis revealed that group work could facilitate students in working effectively and actively toward completing listening exercise questions through a strong engagement in group discussion focused not only on the achievement of text comprehension, but also on strategy use (Wicaksono, 2016). When all (of these) items are taken into account, in general, the more participation in a group work, the more improved and advanced the self-confidence and listening skill obtained.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Based on the findings above, learners show group dynamics in learning Arabic through five stages, which are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. In forming stage, students prefer various strategies in learning Arabic, but the two most favourable strategies are by understanding the structure of the sentences and looking at dialogue samples. From these two strategies, it can be concluded that students favour to study Arabic by gaining new vocabs and sentences and this finding is consistent with the previous studies (Samah et al., 2016; Brosh, 2019)

Then, in the storming stage, learners show group dynamics in the Arabic classroom by interacting actively with their group mates and building up their interpersonal and language skills. This supports the statement by Alfares (2017), where he stated that through

interaction, learners will be aware of their comprehension abilities. Learners also learn to see other people's opinions through group work. They might face difficulties throughout learning Arabic in a group due to differences in their learning styles based on the previous findings. However, by interacting openly, they can achieve good communication and work in a team to solve the problem or complete the task (Koh & Hill, 2009).

Next, during the norming stage, students learn from others, which refer to their group mates. They learn various skills from their group mates that aid in studying Arabic, especially communication skills. This is supported by Celik et al (2013), that interaction that exists between students in group work can help them in learning communication skills easily as there are oral practice while doing group work.

In the performing stage, learners use several indirect strategies, which are approaches that indirectly have an effect on learning and the most useful strategies are by cooperating with others and encourage themselves in studying Arabic. Alfares (2017) also agreed that cooperation in group work does help in increasing the understanding of a language as the students in the group help and teach the other members.

Finally, in the adjourning stage, the learners agree that they benefited much from group interaction among the members in term of skills, ideas and self-confidence. These acquired skills during learning in a group are proven in the research by (Tsui, 2001; Sato, 2003; Ellis & Weekes, 2008).

Pedagogical Implications

The benefits of learning in a group have been revealed by many researchers in improving teaching and learning process, hence it is encouraged for language instructors at all academic levels to increase the usage of collaborative learning in their teaching instead of traditional method to provide opportunities for the students to practice what they had learnt in order to deepen their understanding of the language and improve their language skills.

Suggestion for Future Research

It is suggested that future research investigate the method of enhancing the effectiveness of group work in learning Arabic language to optimize the learning time in the classroom, which will benefit both parties, instructors and students.

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