

# MOTIVATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ARABIC AND ITS IMPACT IN UNDERSTANDING QUR'AN TO TRANSFORM ULUL ALBAB GENERATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

This article critically examines teachers' and learners' views on their motivation for teaching and learning the Arabic language in secondary school settings. It discusses the motive and rationale behind Arabic provision within secondary schools and the degree to which this provision meets the expected outcomes in transforming Ulul Albab generation with special focus on learning Arabic for Qur'anic purposes. As a Muslim educator specialized in teaching Arabic, I have seen that most of the Islamic schools have the provision of teaching and learning Arabic with a religious view; also, I have seen inappropriate syllabus use, shortage or complete lack of resources and many other issues which hinder proper teaching and learning of Arabic. The motivation behind this study came from a deep interest in examining views of learners and teachers to find out their motives for learning and teaching this language. As a practitioner in the field, I am hoping that this empirical enquiry will contribute to the wider efforts aiming to improve this important teaching provision in the British secondary schools particularly, and for the wider world generally. I conducted this enquiry within the interdisciplinary field of Islamic Education Studies. This study aims to contribute to the growing body of empirical studies in this field. My review of the literature suggests that the teaching of Arabic in the secondary schools has not been subjected to empirical research, especially to explore the motives behind it. I feel that there is an urgent need to investigate the challenges facing teachers of Arabic with a special focus on Qur'anic Arabic within the context of secondary schools, to generate Ulul Albab.

**Keywords:** Arabic, motivation, Muslim Secondary Schools, Ulul Albab, Islamic Education

## INTRODUCTION

This article critically examines teachers' and learners' views on their motivation for teaching and learning the Arabic language in secondary school settings. It discusses the motive and rationale behind Arabic provision within secondary schools and the degree to which this provision meets the expected outcomes in transforming Ulul Albab generation with special focus on learning Arabic for Qur'anic purposes.

As a Muslim educator specialized in teaching Arabic, I have seen that most of the Islamic schools have the provision of teaching and learning Arabic with a religious view; also, I have seen inappropriate syllabus use, shortage or complete lack of resources and many other issues which hinder proper teaching and learning of Arabic. The motivation behind this study came from a deep interest in examining views of learners and teachers to find out their motives for learning and teaching this language. As a practitioner in the field, I am hoping that this empirical enquiry will contribute to the wider efforts aiming to improve this important teaching provision in the British secondary schools particularly, and for the wider world generally.

I conducted this enquiry within the interdisciplinary field of Islamic Education Studies. This study aims to contribute to the growing body of empirical studies in this field. My review of the literature suggests that the teaching of Arabic in the secondary schools has not been subjected to empirical research, especially to explore the motives behind it. I feel that there is an urgent need to investigate the challenges facing teachers of Arabic with a special focus on Qur'anic Arabic within the context of secondary schools, to generate *Ulul Albab*.

## **Literature Review**

**'Ulul Albab'** is a term used many times in the noble Qur'an to signify special people with certain abilities of 'Aql'- intellect, and *Tadhakkur-to be mindful* of the message of the holy Qur'an. This construct phrase comprised of Mudhaf (possessed) which is 'Ulu' means owners and Mudhaf ilaih (possessor) which is 'al-Albāb', means: intellects or wisdoms. The word 'Albāb' is plural of 'Lubb', it means according to Al-Raghib, العقل الخالص من الشوائب -intellect free from impurities. Out of all these verses, I have selected just verse 3:7, which has a special connection to the holy Qur'an. In this verse, Allah described His verses as two types: precise and allegorical. The precise verses are considered as foundation of the scripture while the full interpretation of the elusive ones is only known to the God. As for those *Rasikhūn* (singular of *Rashik*)- well-grounded, well proficient in knowledge, who has no suspicion or doubt (alRagib), they say, 'we believe in this (Qur'an)-it is all from our Lord', but none will be mindful of the Qur'an except (*Ulul-Albāb*) people of understanding.

This is what the Qurān has emphasised with regard to 'understanding': having real faith in the whole Qurān without any doubt, by being well-grounded (*Rasikhūn*) in knowledge, and then to be mindful of the message of the holy Qur'an. As the holy Qur'an has been revealed in the dialect of '*Arabiun Mubīn*'- perspicuous Arabic tongue, and to understand and contemplate its message is the principal focus of each Muslim, therefore learning the holy Qur'an in its original Arabic scripture is meaningful and desirable even by students in independent Muslim secondary schools (IMSS), of the UK.

The Qur'anic text is also known as the standard of excellence in literary Arabic, and its authority continues to be decisive for many linguistic disputes and has never permitted any deviation in literary Arabic at any time. As a result of this unique consistency, literary Arabic has been closely associated with the Qur'anic standard.

Likewise, the Qur'an's influence and effects on the cultural, social, political and spiritual aspects have a great influence on Arabic language. Therefore, learning Qur'anic Arabic is considered a 'fountainhead of numerous branches of Arabic literature and its decisive influence over the origin and development of Arabic literature incalculable' (Surty, p.22).

Surty (2017) states that the Qur'an is known as 'the oldest and most unique book of the Arabic language. It is also the most renowned masterpiece of the Arabic language and a classic'. Ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph of Islam, says 'learn Arabic as learning Arabic is part of religion' (Al-Anbari, *Idhah al-waqf wa al-Ibtida*, 1971, v.1, 9). Ibn Taimiyyah says that the Arabic language is part of religion, therefore learning this language is *Fardh* (compulsory), understanding the holy book Qur'an and Sunnah (tradition of the prophet) is compulsory and is only possible by understanding the Arabic language. If a necessary thing is not perfect without something that is also compulsory. (Iqtidha, p207).

Ibn al-Qaiyyem also states that in order to understand the explanation of Qur'an and Hadith it is necessary to understand the intended meaning of the words of Allah and His messenger. For that we need to understand Arabic language.

To understand the Qur'an, one should understand the language of the generation who received the Qur'an. Ibn Taymiyyah says the whoever did not know the language of the companions in which they used to address and the Prophet spoke to them and their habit of speaking, otherwise he distorted the words from their proper places. Then he finds those words in the words of God, His Messenger, or the companions, so he thinks that what God, His Messenger, or the Companions mean with those words is what the people of his habit and his terminology want by that, and the intention of God, His Messenger and the Companions is otherwise (Majmu' alFatawa, v.1. p 243).

Although Arabic is older than the final divine book of Islam, and it has been divinely chosen to be the medium of the holy Qura'n –and mean of Salah (prayer), the fundamental communication between God and man, and that cannot be performed in any language other than Arabic. It is also the medium of instruction for the *Sunnah* (tradition) of the Prophet *Muhammed*, which is known as the second source of Islamic law for mankind.

As the Qur'an was revealed and preserved as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the language of the Qur'an is considered to be classic Arabic. Thus, it is slightly distinctive from the Arabic of modern time. As a medieval dialect, the sentence structures are also mostly considered the same as used in the modern standard Arabic used today, with some minor differences in grammar and punctuation of words between the Qur'anic and modern standard versions of Arabic (<https://www.arabacademy.com/quranic-islamic-arabic-courses/>).

According to Azad (2021) 'out of all non-Arab Muslims across the world almost 90% of them do not understand the Qur'an. The problem remains, if they don't understand, how would they ponder and follow the guidance of Allah SWT in their day-to-day life?'

Dr Surty's Qur'anic Arabic course could be considered as a good example, where he has accomplished teaching of Qur'anic Arabic based on introducing its vocabulary and expanding its meaning to the students in a simple direct method, taking into consideration teaching of the Arabic language in general and Qur'anic terms, in particular.

Surty (2017) suggested that to understand Qur'anic Arabic, a learner must understand three areas: 1) the Qur'anic Vocabulary; 2) Qur'anic text and grammatical themes and 3) also exercises. In his book 'Towards Understanding Qur'anic Arabic' (2017), Surty designed Qur'anic Arabic as follows:

- a) For the right vocabulary, he used 1400+ words from the Qur'an itself, determining by (a) the frequency of their occurrence in the Qur'an; (b) their effectiveness for explaining the grammatical themes; and (c) their suitability for developing familiarity with the subject matter of the text. As to the rate of assimilation: experience has shown that students can retain an average of twelve words per hour of teaching.
- b) For the text and grammar, he divided his book into Sixty-Three small units, with NinetyThree designed grammatical rules which were designed with graded progression. He used around 1400 both in the designed text and Qur'anic text, comprising of over five hundred references to the Qur'an, which greatly assist the comprehension of the Qur'an, classical Arabic literature and grammatical themes. Qur'anic text is cited as evidence for the selected grammatical themes.
- c) The learner has scope to go through the glossary and exercises in his book which has been designed as a supplement to the taught lesson to be delivered at the end of each lesson.

As mentioned above, I would like to examine the available provision of Arabic in the Muslim secondary schools of UK, by looking at students' motivation, the content, and types of the resources they are using, to find out to what extent these schools really contribute in transforming Ulul Albab generation with a special focus on the verse 3:7 of the holy Qur'an.

### **Research Methodology a Qualitative Research Design**

According to the nature of the research focus, a qualitative research design has subsequently been selected for this study. In the following section, I will present a rationale for choosing this design by defining a 'qualitative design' and describing its characteristics, and the relationship between this description and the specific area of enquiry.

The qualitative design has a long, noteworthy history which encompasses different fields such as history, sociology, anthropology, and social psychology. It also involves different philosophical traditions and research approaches (Stake, 1996; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln,2008). According to Stake (1996) the qualitative research is not defined with a single wellspring. Therefore, a definition of qualitative research is more appropriately given with in the explicit historical context.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) define qualitative research as that which investigates interaction, process, and intricacies. Yin (2016) suggests that every real world happening can become the topic of qualitative research. Creswell (2007) defines it as 'emergent', and Robinson (2002) as 'evolving'. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest it is to acquire new perspectives and deeper understanding on issues already explored. Merriam (2006b) and Creswell (2007) suggest that qualitative research is conducted because there is little information or theory on a certain phenomenon.

Yin (2016) suggests five features which distinguish qualitative research from other forms of social research: a) studying the meaning of people's lives in their real-world roles; b) representing the views and perspectives of the people in a study; c) explicitly attending to and accounting for real-world contextual conditions; d) contributing insights from existing or new concepts that may help to explain social behaviour and thinking; and e) acknowledging the potential relevance of multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone.

As my research explores the real world of Arabic language teaching and learning, by collecting and representing the views and perspectives of the people, the characteristics of this research justify the choice of qualitative research design.

After setting the qualitative research paradigm, I chose the case study approach for my empirical research. Bryman (2016) mentions that a case study design involves detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. A 'case study' research, as Yin (2016) defines, 'deals directly with the individual case in its actual context... case studies get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors'. Stake (1995) defines a case study as 'the study the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances'. On the other hand, Merriam (1988) describes the qualitative case study as 'an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or single unit'. Creswell (2007) defines the case study more inclusively, as he sees a case study as an object of inquiry, a strategy, and a description.

According to Stake (1995; 2005) case studies are divided into three types: a) an intrinsic case study which emphasises a specific case, because of its special concern to the researcher; b) an instrumental case study which focuses on an issue of interest; and c) a multiple case study or a collective case study which is known as an instrumental case study that is extended to a number of cases.

As the case study has been widely used as a research approach to investigate teachers' and students' beliefs, thoughts and practices, therefore, I chose a multiple case study approach for this research. I also believe this approach allows in-depth understanding and descriptions of the issues in question and confirms contextual distinctiveness.

The case study has two basic sampling methods: probability and non-probability sampling. Merriam (1998) states that probability sampling is generally used in quantitative research in order to generalise the results, where the sample attempts to represent the population of a phenomenon. In contrast, qualitative research can be done mainly by using non-probability sampling, in order to explore the events, as well

as relationships between them; this selects a sample which does not attempt to represent the whole population, but rather is chosen purposefully for a reason. My study's main goal is not to generalise, but to discover how Arabic language is being taught and learnt, including the experiences of learners, teachers, and motivation of learning, at the same time investigating the relationship between the cases. Therefore, a purposive sampling has been selected for my research, with an aim of including multiple cases for the study focusing on three case schools.

As a purposive sampling of case study research 'to generate knowledge of the particular case' (Yin:2016), I have selected three independent Muslim schools in the UK, not the state schools. This is firstly due to the availability of samples, because the Muslim schools have the significantly more provision of Arabic than the state schools. Secondly, due to my personal experience in teaching the Arabic language in Islamic schools in the UK, I have easy access to some Muslim schools that I want to include in my study. Thirdly, I have also looked into <https://ams-uk.org/> the website of the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) in the UK to find appropriate case schools. Similarly, I have checked the Ofsted reports of some selected schools where I easily found reports regarding Arabic as MFL provision. Stake (1995) stated that it is always better to select cases which are easily accessible and hospitable to inquiry, as well as with participants who are willing to comment on certain materials.

Out of all the case schools, I have one female only school in my research. I also try to balance the ethnic representation, for example by including one school with a student majority belonging to the Bangladeshi community, one with a student majority belonging to the Pakistani community.

To follow that criterion, the first case is a school based in London, which is a popular area for Muslims. I was teaching Arabic there for three years. It is a mixed community school with a majority British Bangladeshi community. The second case school (Case 2) was suggested by my supervisor and is also known as a mixed ethnicity community school in Birmingham. The third case school (Case 3) is a female-only school in Walsall. I had informal meetings with the school leads for Arabic language and all have agreed access to the school and its resources. I believe these three schools, out of 178, to be best at broadly reflecting the diversity in the UK. Also, given that in qualitative research, purposive sampling is used, the main goal is not to achieve complete representation of the population via random sampling.

According to Holah (2009), the opportunity sampling technique can easily aid in selecting teachers, students, and other participants from a group of people who are available at the time of this research and who fit the criteria required by the researcher. Ideally, each case school would be unique and so they would be chosen not as representatives of the participants, rather as individual cases which would add to the sum of available data about the field.

The criteria to select the focus group interview and classroom observations is to combine both the Key Stages 3 and 4 containing the ages 13-15. A number of focus group interviews will take place with 4-6 pupils from each Key Stage of each school. Semi-structured interviews for adults will involve one head of Arabic from each school and Arabic language teachers of Key Stages 3 and 4 (of the ages 14-15).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Since enquiring the Arabic language provision in the three case schools (three independent Muslim secondary schools in the UK) a cautious selection of data collection methods for such study is needed. The data collection methods used in research involve semi-structured interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with pupils and document analysis.

### **Data Collection Process**

After I selected the field schools and received confirmation from the schools' authorities, I conducted my research according to this process: interviewing four Arabic language teachers, and conducting six focus group discussions.

Firstly, I interviewed all four teachers in my research. Before I interviewed them, I sent the information sheet along with a consent form to all of them, so that they knew the nature of my research. Before I started the interview, I explained to them the aim of my research and the relevant ethical issues. After that I asked them whether they agreed to participate in the interview or not. Once they gave their consent, the interview began. All of these teachers agreed to be recorded during the interview, so I recorded the whole session using the Zoom platform.

Secondly, I conducted focus group discussions with six groups of students from three case schools. All these discussions took place during the school term. For each of these schools, there were two discussions: one with year nine and one with year ten. Each group consisted of five students. Likewise, for the teachers' interview, before I conducted the focus group discussions, I gave the information sheet to all of them so that they could know the nature of my research. Before I started the interview, I explained to them the aim of my research and the relevant ethical issues. I also told them that they are allowed to keep silent or leave the meeting at any time during the meeting. After that I asked them whether they agreed to participate in the interview or not. Once, they gave their consent, the focus group discussion took place.

### **Data Analysis**

In the empirical research there is no specific moment to start the data analysis, rather analysis is an issue of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final completion (Stake, 1995). I started the analysis in the field, immediately after the initial data were gathered from the interviews, classroom observation and document.

After collecting data from the teachers' interview, pupils' focus group discussion and observation and finalising the transcription, I used the thematic approach to analyse the data. The thematic analysis is considered as a "common approach to qualitative data analysis" (Bryman, 2021), and to Braun and Clarke (2006) it 'could be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis'. Kitzinger and Wilmott (2002) suggest that it is to 'organise sections of the data into recurrent themes'.

The reason for my selecting the thematic approach is 'due to its theoretical and methodological transparency, but also because it is sympathetic to the emergent properties of the data and those of interest that are actively chosen by the researcher' (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) suggest that the

greatest strength of this approach is 'its pragmatic focus on using whatever tools might be appropriate to get the analytic job done in a transparent, efficient and ethical manner'. The thematic approach is hence suitable because 'it minimally organizes your data in [rich] detail' (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

### **Teachers' Focus Group Interview Analysis**

The interviews of teachers were first transcribed. Then I listened to the interview records and carefully read the transcription. After that I made notes to confirm I had comprehended the key information for each recording. Later, I adapted the thematic analysis to do coding and construct the themes.

As this article is about part of the main research, I determined on just a few codes of the research to answer the issues related to types of Arabic and general motives of the learner behind learning Arabic in these schools, in order to find out to what extent this provision put emphasis on generating 'Ulul Albab' generation. Teachers' names mentioned in this study are anonymised.

### **Focus group discussions analysis**

There were two focus group discussions with the pupils of each school. One group were the pupils of year nine, and another one was from year ten. Each focus group consisted of 5 pupils. Pupils were interviewed via the mixed ability focus groups, thereby gaining further direct views from 30 pupils of these focus groups. All findings from these focus group discussions are presented following the coding system devised from the transcribed interviews. In this study students names are not mentioned, rather I used codes for their names: pupil one of the school one is S1P1 and for school two is S2P1. Therefore, there will be no concern about the identity of the learners.

### **Cross-Cases Discussion on Finding**

This study investigated three cases of teaching and learning Arabic in three independent Muslim secondary schools in the United Kingdom. As this type of study is rare in the UK, each of these cases is important. The cases are also considered distinct and different from each other in some noteworthy features.

This research explored why teachers and pupils intended to undertake Arabic, and what type of Arabic they are learning. The data derived from all participants, documents and classroom observations show that each case is distinct and unique, but that there are also some common patterns across the three cases.

The section discusses only significant themes which will include general motives for intended learning of Arabic: how teachers and students described learners' motivations and types of Arabic they are teaching. This discussion will relate the findings to the literature in the field. I believe the typical features from the findings will add some important values to the teachers and policy makers for reshaping the Arabic language for special purpose.



## General Motivations for Arabic as a subject

The data shows that all these three schools have the provision of Arabic in their school which is generally as part of the core Islamic curriculum. School C has more precisely included Arabic in the Qur'anic Studies department. Therefore, all of them have the same reason to teach Arabic in their schools. Teachers were asked about what motivated them to teach Arabic, rather than any other subjects. Then teachers expressed their motivational factors as follow:

Fahad expressed a religious motivation behind his choice of becoming an Arabic teacher, which goes back to his commitment as a Muslim. He has very strong feelings about establishing students' relationship with the main classic sources of Islam: Qur'an and sunnah. As he believes, *'this is the language of Koran and I learned Arabic language with loads of difficulties'*, and once he came to the UK, he has gone through educational courses and *'learned how to teach easily'*, therefore he tried to *'make a good connection between a student with his source'*. He also considers himself contributing, through teaching Arabic, as a lifelong act of charity for him, as he said: *'that will be a, a lifelong Sadaqah for me', and finally it will be a evaluated to him as 'completely real religious motivation'*.

### Jamil

Jamil also has religious motivation to teach Arabic because it is the language of Deen (religion), Qur'an, Sunnah and all the classic Islamic books. He states:

*"Arabic is the language of our Deen, Koran and Sunnah, and all the classical Islamic books are in Arabic. So definitely, when you learn Arabic, you have direct, direct access to those resources"*.

Fahad stated his personal reasons which motivate him to be an Arabic teacher. He mentioned that he learned Arabic in his student life with a lot of difficulties, he said: *' as I said, this is the language of Koran and I learned Arabic language with loads of difficulties'*. Once he had gone through the education course on how to teach Arabic, he understood how to teach Arabic easily, therefore he became motivated to choose this profession to Arabic teacher. He said: *'And once I came to this country, I learned how to teach easily'*. Also, long time experience in teaching Arabic made him an expert of Arabic, therefore, he became motivated to choose this occupation. He said *"...And another motivation is, you know, um, just making use the expertise that, uh, alhamdulillah I, I, I was able to gain"*.

### Umar

Umar also expressed a religious motivation behind his choice of becoming an Arabic teacher, which goes back to his duty as a Muslim. Umar believes his subject knowledge in Arabic is considered to him a *'master key'*, therefore he is *"able to open every, uh, every, um, lock"*, which enables the learners *'to.... understand the core of Islam....anything related to Arabic . So that, that is, that is that, that motivates me okay. To, uh, teach them Arabic."*

Umar has also personal and professional motivation through being fascinated and influenced by the highest academic degrees in Arabic from the Arabic environment, with the native teachers. He believed that this motivation engaged him in teaching Arabic, with a social purpose of aiding the children of the community to **understand the basics of Islam**. Umar said: *'So, my background and because I was in Arabian country and, I have, learned Arabic from the natives. So therefore, it was my, key interest to, uh, teach Arabic to the children, those who are in the secondary school and especially, we have, in our school opportunity that the students, they will take modern than foreign language, uh, and one of the main, preferable language that students they want to learn, and they want to take GCCS that is Arabic language. So therefore, having, the, the highest, degree in Arabic language my interest was to teach them'*.

## **Maryam**

Maryam was asked 'being graduated in Arabic and Islamic studies what motivated you to teach Arabic, not the Islamic studies' then she said: *'I actually started with because I love Islamic studies know it's just like, uh, and this is my degree as well in Arabic and Islamic studies. Uh, but the need here in England, it was for Arabic more than Islamic studies because any other, you know, the, if they know Arabic is not native Arabic people, Arabic people, then they can actually teach Islamic studies'*.

All these data are symbolising that they are really teaching Arabic for religious purposes, and most precisely for students to understand the classic sources of Islam.

## **Students Views**

When the pupils were asked about what motivated them to learn the Arabic language, most of the respondents suggested that they are learning Arabic for religious reasons, which includes: *'to understand Qur'an'*; to learn *"the language of the prophet"*. S1P3, S3P1, S2P2, S3P4, S3P8 suggested that their motivation to learn Arabic is *'because it's the language that our prophet spoke and the language that our Allah speaks. Because it's like a unique language. It's fun to learn'*. S1P1 believes *'that if you want to become like a scholar, you might need to know the meaning of the Qur'an. So it would be Arabic will be useful'*.

S3P4, S3P8 believe it's language of the Paradise, therefore they are learning it. She said: *'Um, and they speak in Jannah that it will you be speaking in Arabic'*. S3P8 said: *'Because we're young. We went to mosque and from Mosque we learn how to read Arabic. And obviously we learn that it's a, um, language we gono speak in Jannah. So because of that, we want to learn it in this word as well'*.

S3P7 has stated her proof that the Arabic she is learning helps her to understand Qur'anic verses. She said: *'For example, when I recall, I can notice some words that I, that I eye at and then, because I know some vocabulary I can, predict what the Ayah means. So, um, it really helps me and I feel like a deep connection with myself now a lot, because I know what he's saying to me'*.

S3P1 stated her experience of improving her knowledge in the Qur'an through learning Arabic with her teacher, as she mentioned *'Each topic Um, our teacher tells us, uh, what it relates to the Qur'an. So she gives us like Ayah and stuff, like related to our topic'*.

S2P4 has added another motivating factor as that *'we have many holy scripts with us, which I would say, in Arabic and, uh, by understanding Arabic, you'd be able to understand what the holy scripts convey'*; similarly, S2P9 believes that it helps to understand *'true interpretation of the holy Qur'an'*. S2P3 thinks that a learner can get the highest reward through learning Arabic, he said: *'More reward you learn Arabic than any Other language'*. S2P1 has a good argument for this reward, as he said: *'So if you learn Arabic, you get the reward, but that's only if you have good intention that you learn only for Allah'* by gaining *'pleasure of Allah'*. S2P3 had a more specific argument for the reward, which is to him *'it's the language of the Qur'an. So if we learn Arabic there's I don't think there's any reward in that, but can use that to gain reward by like you reading the meaning of the Qur'an'*.

S2P3 had experienced an immediate benefit of learning Arabic with his teacher as it was instrumental to him to understand the text of holy Qur'an. He said: *'When like for example, ustadh shows or spoke up and we memorize it. And then the next day, like when I'm reading the Qur'an, I'm doing like page revision. Then I understand some of the words cuz I memorized it yesterday'*.

S2P1 expressed he would like to go for further study in Arabic, because of learning Qur'an, whereas to him learning any other language such as Spanish, Italian, won't help him unless he goes to Spanish or Italian schools. He said: *'Definitely Arabic. Cuz first of all, yeah. If, if you understand the Koran, I mean, so if you understand Arabic and you can understand Korean and cuz I'm Arab it's I learn Arabic than any other like language, Spanish, Italian, cuz that won't help me unless I go like, you know, to Spanish school'*.

All these participants are being religiously motivated, and they believe that Arabic is being learnt and taught in these schools with an aim of understanding the Qur'an, Sunnah, which is classified as language for special purpose (LSP) and more specially, language for Qur'anic purpose (LQP). Therefore, the following sub-section discusses the resources the teachers use, to find out what type of Arabic is being taught in these schools.

### **Resources used by the case schools**

Books and other materials used as fundamental resources for Arabic education, signify the type of Arabic being taught to a learner. Therefore, as part of this study, I was asking the teachers to mention the resources they are using. Resources used for Arabic language were sought through teachers' interviews. Teachers have mentioned what they are using for teaching Arabic as follows:

## **Jamil**

Jamil uses multiple resources such as books, self-produced PowerPoints and handouts and internet materials. The book he uses is "al-'Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik book 1" which will be analysed in detail. He said:

*"what I use, is multiple resources. Uh, teacher made PowerPoint, handouts. We have some recommended books. Al-arabiyah bayna yadaik book one, al-arabiyyah lin-nashieen, etcetera. We have internet resources".* Jamil sometimes also uses audios like BBC news, BBC Arabic, al-jazeera Arabic, live news broadcast, YouTube etc. He uses websites dedicated to Arabic, and also audio materials such as BBC news, BBC Arabic Radio and sometimes YouTube.

## **Fahad**

Fahad mentioned that he makes his own PowerPoint Presentations (PPP) and uses that during lessons. He said: *"Mostly, Uh, I'm using, uh, my own PowerPoint".* For year 7, 8 and 9, he uses a book, as he said: *Two books I am I'm taking as a foundation that is, uh, Al-Arabiyyatu baina yadaika, uh, book one and book two'. And then for GCSE level he uses GCSE Companion Arabic book, he said: 'I'm starting, I, I start from year 10. There is, there is a book called, uh, GCSE companion Arabic'. He also uses YouTube, and audio video versions of the books. He said: "I, I use lots of, uh, lots of, videos from YouTube and YouTube is now full of resources, you know, uh, is available. Al-Arabiyyatu Baina Yadaika is now available, the, the audio, the video version is available online. So I use that as well. And also I, um, give them away for students, those that do not have, YouTube is, you know, access in their home".*

**Umar** mentioned a set of resources he uses while teaching Arabic, such as books, online materials, PowerPoints, projectors, he said:

*'in obviously, in, in the, in, when we teach, uh, it's not, based on, book language, when we go and, uh, teach the students, obviously we use, materials that are online. Okay. And also we use PowerPoint and we use the projectors, to teach the students'.*

Among those books Umar mentioned is "Al-Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik". Umar also uses "newspapers and magazines". And he focuses on the vocabs of EDEXEL and PEARSON. He said: *'Okay. And also there is vocabulary prepared from Pearson and Edexcel, we use that as, uh, language as, uh, GCSE profession purposes'.*

He also uses other online resources such as YouTube, Social Media, Facebook videos and many writings of many writers as he said: *'So, say, and, and what online resources... available... Yes, obviously we use YouTube. We use, um, all the, social medias. Okay. Maybe the, the sometime, okay. Facebook videos, we use, okay. We use, many writers and many, Arabic, teachers of Arabic, Arabic language from, uh, countries as well. I think, in, in our time, the, the resources are plenty and you just need to search for them. And you'll find many resources of online'.*

**Maryam** uses some special websites, books, Arabic worksheets and textbooks for year 10 and 11. She said: *“Uh, I use different resources, you know, just like, you know, from some websites. And I use as well some books and I use, my own, , you know, worksheets as well. You, it just like, so I use different, but for GCSE and for your 10, 11, I use actually, some, uh, textbooks”*.

The website Maryam uses, for instance, is *“it's arabalicious.com”*; ‘Arabiyyah Baina Yadaika’ is the only book she mentioned by name out of all books she uses. Also, she produces her own worksheets and booklets from many other books and resources including the website ‘arabalicious.com’. She said: *‘I said to you books, as they said, I use different books. I use Arabiyyah baina yadaik’ run just like a year seven. I use book one and use book two. And it's not only that we have like some of the work from these, arabalicious websites, some of our, uh, you know, worksheets as well. So it is not one book, you know, it's like, and from year eight and nine and 10, that is it's D is like, um, it's booklet where, as I said, it's different it's mixed, mixed between books from different books. And so I cannot tell you exactly which book, because it's mixed books and as well, um, uh, websites and my own sheets as well’*.

For the speaking she uses “the new GCSE Arabic companion books”.

To summarise this subsection, it is apparent that teachers of these three case schools are using: 1) book: al-‘Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik, 2) they produce their own PowerPoints; 3) they use online materials such as YouTube, FB. Only Maryam mentioned that she uses a website dedicated for Arabic language which is called ‘[www.arabalicious.com](http://www.arabalicious.com)’

**Table for resources**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Arabic Teachers</b>	<b>Book Used</b>	<b>Online Materials</b>	<b>Self-made resources</b>
Al-Amanah Islamic School	Jamil	Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik	Not mentioned	PPP
Al-Bara’ah Islamic School	Fahd	Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik, Al-Arabiyyah Linnashi’een	Not Mentioned	PPP
Al-Hidayah Girls Islamic School	Umar	Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik, Miftah al-‘Arabiyyah	<a href="http://www.arabalicious.com">www.arabalicious.com</a>	PPP

## **Type of Arabic taught in these schools**

From the above-mentioned data, it is clearly found that all these teachers are using very common resources to teach Arabic. As evidence, the following section focuses on the book used by Al-Amanah school. Interviewees mentioned during the focus group discussion, that they use *Al-Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayka*, Book-1 for years 7-9. As part of this study, the following sub-section critically analyses this book, in brief, focusing on what the writers of the book say, and also topics of the book will be mentioned, thus types of Arabic will be explored.

The book is written by three authors named Dr Fawzan, Dr Hussain and Dr Fadhl, under the supervision of Dr Muhammad Al-Sheikh as part of the project called 'Arabic for all', in Riyadh (2014). The purpose of this book, as Dr Muhammad Al-Sheikh suggests in the introduction of the book (2014) is *'to support the teaching of Arabic to non-native speakers through its excellent comprehensiveness and integration'*. It uses all educational media such as books, audio, video and computer a program, and also through the internet, so that the teaching of Arabic is achieved by the best and latest method, and for each student to find something that fulfills his desire and meets his needs.

He also mentioned that the main goal of this book is *'to serve this language and to spread its Islamic culture in the horizons'*. The book also aims to enable the student to have three competencies: 1) linguistic; 2) communicative; and 3) cultural competence.

The linguistic competence includes all four skills of the language: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. To gain all these skills, the book includes all three components of the language: 1) phonics, 2) vocabulary and 3) grammar- morphology. The communicative competency aims to provide the learner with ability to communicate with the people of the language through the accepted social context, so that he can interact with the native language speakers in writing and expressing himself appropriately in different social situations.

The cultural competence provides the learner with the various aspects of the culture of the language, which here is the language of the Arab-Islamic culture, in addition to patterns of global culture that does not contradict the principals of Islam.

The book 1 is divided into two volumes. The first volume has a table of contents of its 8 topics: At-Tahiyyah wa Al-Ta'aruf (greeting and introduction); Al-Ussrah (family); Al-Sakan (accommodation); al-Hayat al-Yawmiyyah (daily life); Al-Ta'aam wa al-Sharab (food and drink); Al-Salah (prayer); Al-Dirasah (study), and Al-'Amal (occupation/job).

Volume 2 has again eight topics: 9) al-Tasawwuq (shopping); 10) al-Ja'wu (weather); 11) alNaas wa al-Amakin (people and places); 12) al-Hiwayat (hobbies); 13) al-Safar (travel), 14) alHajju wa al-'Umrah (Hajj and Umrah); 15) al-Sihhatu (health), and 16) al-'Utlah (holiday).

A challenge for this book is to achieve its learning outcomes through those topics, as the authors of the book clearly mentioned that it provides the learner linguistic, communicative and cultural competences regarding the Arab-Islamic culture. As students and teachers at these schools said in their interviews, their key reason for learning Arabic is to gain the Qur'anic Arabic literacy, whereas this book is not really focusing on Arabic for Qur'anic literacy. Therefore, the book used in these schools for the Qur'anic Arabic literacy is not meeting the goal of the students and teachers at these schools.

### **Teachers' beliefs in the type of Arabic**

This sub-section aims to explore what teachers said about the type of Arabic they are teaching in their schools.

Jamil mentioned that the Arabic he is teaching is basically focusing on the GCSE Arabic, which doesn't necessarily aid learners to understand the Qur'an or Sunnah in Arabic text, despite the talented learners achieving grades eight or nine in GCSE Arabic. This is because the Qur'anic Arabic has its own specific vocabularies with a specific meaning. He said:

*'What I have experienced that, um, the curriculum and components we're using at this moment to teach Arabic targeting GCSE Arabic, it doesn't really help to understand Koran Arabic. Do you know, how did I know, for example, um, some of my students who are, uh, of grade eight and nine, which is As an A star in Arabic, if you give them the short surah in Qur'an, they won't be able to translate. They say because, uh, Qur'anic Arabic has a specific vocabularies with a specific meaning'.*

The contents for all modern foreign languages, including Arabic, as guided by the department of Education (DfE) also show that the GCSE Arabic is focusing on 'identity and culture, local, national, international and global areas of interest and current and future study and employment. Literary texts can include extracts and excerpts, adapted and abridged as appropriate, from poems, letters, short stories, essays, novels or plays from contemporary and historical sources, subject to copyright, the content, contexts and purposes of a GCSE specification in a modern foreign language will provide an appropriate foundation for A level study and a suitable preparation for higher education or employment'. (DfE, 2022, p.4-5).

Jamil suggests that if anyone is very good in the modern standard Arabic, as he found in his research, that person is not necessarily good in the classic Arabic such as Arabic of Qur'an, Sunnah, or any other sources of the classic Arabic. He says: *'Not at all, not at all. Okay. Cause, cause when I did my research on teaching Arabic for a specific purposes, I did piloting and I found that the people who are really fluent in communicate Arabic, they don't understand some basic terminologies in religious field and, and, and vice versa. There are people who are very expert in reading fiqh books, but when you give a news people text, they don't understand even half of it'.*

Umar suggested, on the one hand, despite the distinctive nature of the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and classic Arabic, that the learning of the MSA or Arabic as a modern foreign language (AMFL) is a good help for the learners to understand the

Qur'an and Sunnah. On the other hand, the understanding of the classic Arabic helps learners to understand the modern standard Arabic. Beside this, Umar teaches many other classic sources as well. These are the ways that, according to him, are considered as a spontaneous bridge between classic Arabic and the MSA. He said: *'So between the, both is automatically happening, because when a student is learning modern language, it is helping him to understand Qur'an and sunnah without doubt. And when a person is understanding or learning, classical Arabic, it is helping him for his modern foreign language. So the bridge is actually, uh, is, is automatic. So it's, it's automatically happened'*.

Maryam identified the Arabic she teaches is not Qur'anic Arabic and she believes it does not help to understand the Qur'an. She said: *'No, it's not... it's not the main thing is not Qur'anic Arabic. You know, the is actually no, it's the modern foreign Arabic language'*.

### **How to bridge between Qur'anic and MSA?**

As above data have indicated that the Arabic language provision at these schools is not directly aiding understanding of Qur'anic Arabic, an approach to understanding the Qur'an must be in place. The following sub-section aims to discuss thoughts of teachers in the case schools in making a bridge between the MSA and the Qur'anic Arabic:

Jamil believes that the available provision of modern standard Arabic (MSA) at his school has very little impact on understanding Qur'anic Arabic. Therefore, he suggested: *'so unless the study specifically what the classical Arabic used and meant definitely modern Arabic will not help understand, uh, Qur'anic text and hadith as each should be. Yeah. They will understand probably the basic things of something, but not in full'*.

To combine both the modern standard Arabic and the classic Arabic to understand the Qur'an and Sunnah or any other classic sources, Jamil allocates at least 10-15 minutes in each and every lesson. He said: *"What I'm experimenting now in every lesson we are trying to allocate at least, uh, 10- 15 minutes for the Qur'anic Arabic. So our lessons are 50 minutes. So after 15 minutes, we give at least 10 minutes for Qur'anic Arabic, either the beginning or sometimes at the end"*.

Maryam thinks that if a student learns the common words between the MSA and Qur'anic Arabic, then he/she can understand the Qur'an, therefore she normally combines and integrates both MSA and Qur'anic Arabic while teaching her classes. She said: *'but it's still the words it's there. Like, you know, it's like normally when I start in a lesson in a way I integrate for me in my lesson'*. She gave two examples from her lessons:

- 1) She tells them to find out numbers from the Qur'an. She said: *'So for an example, if I am actually teaching, uh, numbers for year of eight and I'm teaching them, so first of the, I think I would say, can you remember any numbers it's being mentioned in the Qur'an and the girls, they start to tell me if they still remember, or if they don't, then we share together. Or sometimes I ask them to go and search before they listen. So that is helping them'*.



- 2) She tells them to find out food, drinks, numbers. She said: *'like family members in the Qur'an. So they have to work with groups and they do display work for that as well. And, uh, about the family in the Qur'an about food and drinks in the, about numbers in The Qur'an prophets, in The Qur'an, you know, just like, so all of that helps them helps, but I'm not saying it would be able to understand The Qur'an'*.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The article presented the data which emerged from the views and beliefs of students and teachers at Al-Amanah Islamic School, Al-Bara'ah school and Al-Hidayah School, in the UK, with a special focus on types of Arabic taught in these schools and to find out whether they are aiding learners to reach the goal of education providers, teachers and learners to understand the Qur'anic Arabic or not.

A number of interested issues have arisen from the data. Views of students and teachers are clearly indicating that their main goal from learning and teaching Arabic is to understand the Qur'anic Arabic. Despite the main holistic goal, the curriculum and resources are focusing on GCSE Arabic which has a very minimal impact on understanding of the holy Qur'an in its original classic Arabic language. There is some trend of combining both MSA and Qur'anic Arabic by Maryam, which is mainly setting the learners the task of finding similar words in the holy Qur'an. But there is not any special focus on learning the Qur'an directly. Jamil said he is giving 10 to 15 minutes in every lesson to understand Qur'anic Arabic, but he did not mention any structure for that. Umar believes, whoever knows MSA should understand the Qur'an too. Therefore, further study is needed to find out to what extent the available resources, teaching methods and structure aid understanding of Qur'anic Arabic.

As a lecturer of Qur'anic Arabic Foundation (QAF), Birmingham, I experienced teaching Surty's 'Towards Understanding Qur'anic Arabic', and I found that Surty has a dedicated model towards understanding the Qur'anic Arabic, where he has a grading structure from Zero knowledge in Qur'an to a level which he called foundation level for a duration of 90 hours. That course is mainly designed for mixed adult groups, and he has been examining this module and reviewing the resources for last 40 years. I found that book and his methods of teaching what I have been teaching since 2019, are good examples to understand Qur'anic Arabic. It has more than 500 verses used to understand the Qur'anic Arabic and 92 grammatical structures, along with 1400 vocabulary from the holy Qur'an.

Also, the teachers should design a child-friendly syllabus, curriculum, scheme of work and learning materials for Qur'anic Arabic which could be fit in with in the Arabic as a generic subject, within the school. If they teach Arabic for 4 lessons a week, then at least one full lesson should be dedicated to specialized Qur'anic Arabic. Vocabularies and examples for any grammatical structure should be of the Qur'anic texts, as Surty did in his book.

The teachers also need to understand and practise Islamic educational theories and to be familiar with Qur'anic literacy and to reconnect with the Qur'anic transformative vision of education Sahin (2013) has proposed in his study.

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