

NEED ANALYSIS OF PERLIS TOURISM EMPLOYEES IN LEARNING ARABIC FOR TOURISM PURPOSES

NUR AMNAH DUNIYA¹, MOHD AZRUL AZLEN ABD. HAMID², MUHAMMAD SABRI SAHRIR³,
MOHAMED ABDELRAHMAN IBRAHIM YOUSSEF⁴

¹ Department of Arabic Language, Kulliyah of Sustainable Tourism and Contemporary Languages, International Islamic University Malaysia, Pagoh Campus, 84600, Muar, Johor, MALAYSIA. E-mail: nuramnahduniya@gmail.com

² Department of Arabic Language, Kulliyah of Sustainable Tourism and Contemporary Languages, International Islamic University Malaysia, Pagoh Campus, 84600, Muar, Johor, MALAYSIA. E-mail: azrul_qld@iium.edu.my

³ Department of Language and Literacy, Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak, 53100, Selangor, MALAYSIA. E-mail: muhdsabri@iium.edu.my

⁴ Department of Arabic Language, Kulliyah of Sustainable Tourism and Contemporary Languages, International Islamic University Malaysia, Pagoh Campus, 84600, Muar, Johor, MALAYSIA. E-mail: mansoura@iium.edu.my

Corresponding Author E-Mail: azrul_qld@iium.edu.my

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Abstract: Malaysia's tourism sector has succeeded in term of tourist's arrival and receipts significantly. Perlis, as the northern rising hub for tourism, holds a strategic potential in attracting Arabic-speaking travelers from the middle east and beyond for its strategic location by the border of Thailand and its proximity to Langkawi Island, a popular tourists' destination among Arab tourists. Apart from leveraging its unique attractions, nature, and cultural heritage, Arabic language competency among tourism employees is acknowledged as a strategy for the tourism sector development. This study conducts a need analysis to examine the Arabic language learning needs among tourism employees in Perlis, aiming to bridge the linguistic gaps and eliminating language barriers. This study adapted mixed-method approach using questionnaire that distributed to 120 tourism employees across Perlis and interview with the tourism stake holders. The analysis revealed a strong demand for Arabic language skills in Perlis tourism, particularly in vital areas such as hospitality, customer service and cultural interactions due to communication challenges and language barriers between tourism employees and Arabic-speaking tourists. This research offers practical recommendations for curriculum development in teaching Arabic for tourism purposes tailored to the real needs in fostering communication efficiency, enhancing service quality and improving tourism experiences, thus strengthening its position as a preferred destination among Arabic-speaking tourists in the region.

Keywords: *Need Analysis, Arabic for Tourism Purposes, Perlis Tourism, Arabic-speaking Tourists, Communication*



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INTRODUCTION

Arabic language is recognized as one of the main languages in the tourism sector in Malaysia in accordance to the increasing numbers of Arabic-speaking tourists year by year. Malaysia recorded 37.96 million of tourists' arrival and marked RM102.2 billion of tourism receipts in year 2024 (Tourism Malaysia, 2024). Furthermore, Arab tourists, mainly from Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) are among the notable tourism market in Malaysia for its Muslim-friendly offerings and environment (Islamic Tourism Centre, 2025), apart from their high purchasing power. This situation creates a significant demand of Arabic language in tourism sector to ease communication with Arab tourists.

Perlis, as the smallest state in Malaysia, indicates an exceptional potential in attracting tourists domestically and internationally with its nature, unique tourism destinations and cultural heritage. With its captivating slogan: "Perlis: Asia's Best Kept Secret", this state is consistently developing its attractions and services in achieving the target of 6.5 million of tourist arrival by 2030 (PLANMalaysia, 2020). In supporting the remarkable progress in Perlis tourism, teaching Arabic for tourism purposes can boost the Perlis tourism sector and facilitate effective communication between its employees and Arabic-speaking tourists.

The current phenomenon demands a serious attention towards preparing non-native employees that are proficient to communicate in Arabic language, thus ensure a mutual understanding in the interaction. It is proved that Arabic-speaking tourists in Malaysia require good Arabic communication skills among tourism employees to assist them effectively and respectfully. Teaching Arabic for tourism purposes aims to serve the real needs in professional context in acquiring the functional language skills that aligned with cultural values.

Majority of Arab tourists often experienced a huge language barrier and misunderstanding throughout their visit in Malaysia caused by the lack of Arabic communication proficiency among tourism employees (Mohd Azhar et. al., 2025; Muhammad Imran & Mohammad Najib, 2018; Al-Janabi, 2015; Zalika Adam, 2013). Tourism employees in Perlis are exposed to difficulties in serving Arab tourists, understanding their speech, responding to their requests and engaging with them. As highlighted by Tanković, Vitezić and Kraljić (2023), communication skills is a crucial soft skill in tourism sector and main factor that determine the tourists' satisfaction towards a destination.

This situation is worse in Perlis due to the low number of international tourists making the majority of employees not well-trained to communicate in other than their native language. The communication skills influence the service quality and customer loyalty in the hotels in Perlis directly (Mohd Noor et. al., 2023). Lack of Arabic communication skill leads to dissatisfaction and a negative impact on word-of-mouth marketing within Arab tourist segment. Therefore, this situation needs to be solved through the implementation of teaching Arabic for tourism purposes.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study is to conduct a need analysis of Perlis tourism employees in learning Arabic for tourism purposes. The specific research objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the needs of learning Arabic for tourism purposes among tourism employees in dealing with Arabic-speaking tourists.
2. To analyze the communication challenges faced by tourism employees with Arabic-speaking tourists.
3. To explore the motivation of tourism employees towards learning Arabic for professional purposes.
4. To identify the current level of Arabic language proficiency level among tourism employees in Perlis.
5. To provide the characteristics of Arabic for Tourism Purposes Curriculum for the development of language training programs tailored the needs of tourism employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Teaching Arabic for Specific Purposes

Teaching language for specific purposes has been discussed in various areas concerning its role in enhancing the communication, efficiency and cultural understanding (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The focus of language has gradually shifted from describing rules and linguistics aspects to functional features related to its actual communication usage (Widdowson, 1978). Since the language usage differs from a situation to another, determining its elements of specific situation will further be the basis of learner's course.

A study conducted by Muthi'ulHaqq and Abdurashed (2024) revealed that Arabic for Muamalat purpose is highly needed to practice necessary language skills in Islamic business transaction and financial dealings, including related specific vocabulary. Nasirah Ismail, Fitri Nurul'ain and Mohd Akashah (2024) in their study stated that Arabic for Healthcare Services is a crucial need among public relation officers in Kuala Lumpur private hospitals to minimise language barriers while communicating with Arabic-speaking patients. Military purposes in Indonesia also exhibits the need of Arabic language mastery especially for the armies involved in international peace mission in various Arab countries (Mia Nurmala & Rinaldi Supriadi, 2022). Meanwhile, teaching Arabic for tourism purposes has drawn a dominant focus in Malaysia due to its obvious needs in catering the increasing number of Arab tourists.

All studies highlighted the role of teaching Arabic for specific purposes in serving the real linguistic functions in term of vocabularies, expressions and cultural interaction especially in tourism industry (Mohammad Najib et. al. 2022; Mohammad Taufiq, Wan Ab Aziz & Saipolbarin, 2019; Mohammad Imran & Mohammad Najib, 2018). However, there is no study conducted to investigate the need of Arabic language in the context of tourism sector in Perlis despite the importance of teaching Arabic for specific purposes in serving the professional demands.

2. Need Analysis in Learning Arabic for Tourism Purposes

Need analysis is the primary source in designing learning material, which explains the target situation based on necessities, lacks and wants (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Learners' needs

are reviewed in term of professional contexts, challenges and their existing proficiency level. It represents as an initiative to narrow the gaps between the needed language proficiency and its current level, towards achieving a high-quality tourism service.

Mohd Azhar Ali et. al. (2025) suggests need of Arabic communication skills among tourism employees in Kuching, as agreed by participants from Arab tourists. Other than enhancing tourism linguistic landscape in this area, Arab tourists may face challenges and difficulties especially in navigating the area and accessing relevant to their linguistic and cultural needs. The study by Bahtiar et. al. (2024) identified several Arabic linguistic functions needed among tourism members of Pokdarwis, West Java Province, Indonesia including greetings and introductions, asking direction, executing purchase and sale transactions to solve limited ability of Arabic communication skills with Arab tourists.

In the study conducted by Mohammad Najib et. al. (2022), the design of Islamic Tourism Mobile Application and its needs in teaching Arabic for Islamic and digital tourism is thoroughly analyzed. However, medical tourism field in Malaysia observed the need towards Arabic language highly among interpreters to improved personalized healthcare and services (Aisyah Jahidah et. al., 2022). Nevertheless, limited studies focused on the language skills in Perlis Tourism especially Arabic language and its need analysis.

3. Tourism and Language Demand in Perlis

According to the masterplan of Perlis tourism physical development, there are six main tourism products comprising of various tourism destinations such as follows (Plan Malaysia, 2020):

1. Eco-tourism
2. Shopping and gastronomic tourism
3. Agro-tourism
4. Historical, heritage, art and cultural tourism
5. Sports and recreational tourism

Providing that Perlis has a great diversity of tourism products, the number of international tourists is still average compared to other state in Malaysia (Goh Hong & Tan Wan, 2013). Due to the contradictory scenario between diverse products and low income from tourism, serious efforts such as language empowerment are needed to improve service quality and tourists' satisfaction. Dian Deliana (2024) supported that key to reaching and influencing diverse travel preferences in Perlis tourism is language and communication skills. Language barriers and cultural issues also arise between Perlis local homestay owners and international tourists due to lack of multilingual skills (Khan et. al., 2024). These challenges emphasized the role of language and communication in tourism industry, including Arabic language to communicate with Arabic-speaking tourists in Perlis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is constructed based on the need analysis model proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), a key framework in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This study applied this model in the context of teaching Arabic for specific purposes. According to the need analysis model, language learning should be tailored to the learners' real needs in professional settings such as tourism. The needs are categorized into three dimensions as follows:

1. Needs: What the learners need to know to function effectively?
2. Challenges or lacks: What do learners not yet know?
3. Motivation or wants: What the learners personally prefer to learn?

All these needs are identified to provide a holistic approach of analyzing the target situation and learning contents that developed based on the learners' competency level and practical demands.

The study is further supported by the theory and principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which emphasize on meaningful interaction and real-life communication. The foundation of CLT theory lies in Hymes' (1972) concept of communicative competence which highlights the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts. This idea is then developed by the teaching approach determined by Richards and Rodgers (2001) which describe CLT as prioritizing authentic communication, task-based learning and the functional use of language depends on its context. CLT supports learner-centered approach that helps employees in acquiring relevant Arabic language skills required for their daily interaction. By integrating these theories, this study intends to respond and analyze the specific needs of learning Arabic for tourism purposes among the tourism employees in Perlis to form the basis of a practical language training program.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method research design to examine the use and relevance of Arabic language in the tourism industry in Perlis. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled a comprehensive understanding of Arabic language needs and practices among tourism employees in Perlis. The mixed method design enabled the triangulation of data enhancing its validity and deepening the strength of findings (Creswell & Plano, 2007).

For quantitative method, questionnaires were distributed to 120 tourism employees in Perlis representing various backgrounds and level of customer interaction, to identify their needs in Arabic communication, Arabic proficiency level and perceived communication challenges. Purposive sampling was used to ensure a fair representation from different types of tourism roles including front staff and managerial personnel. The pilot study was conducted prior data collection and the Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire is 0.929 (n=20), indicating excellent reliability and consistency.

For qualitative method, semi-structured interview was conducted with tourism stakeholders by using a purposive sample to gain deeper insights into communication challenges, staff-preparedness and attitudes towards learning Arabic for tourism purposes in Perlis. The questionnaire and interview questions were validated by experts in Arabic for Specific Purposes, Arabic language and tourism, prior to the data collection to increase reliability.

The quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to produce the perceived importance of Arabic language in the workplace. To complement this data, the qualitative data was analyzed by using thematic content analysis to identify key points in teaching Arabic for tourism purposes. Ethical considerations were strictly observed with all participants informed consent and assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. Demographic Background of the Respondent

Among 120 participants of this study, the distribution of the samples by gender represents male 53% (n=63) and 47% of female (n=57). Regarding the age of the respondents, most of them are under 25 years old (33%), followed by 26-30 years old (27%), 26 of them are 31-40 years old (22%) and lastly 41 years old and above (18%). In term of academic background, majority of the respondents obtained SPM (40%), 25 of them have other academic qualifications (Malaysia Skills certificate, Malaysian Higher School Certificate etc.), 28 of them hold a diploma (23%), 19 of them earned bachelor's degree (16%) and one Ph. D holder (1%).

Furthermore, 38% of the respondents have a working experience of 2 years and less, whereas 28% of them has 3 to 5 years of experience, 21% with 9 years and above of working experience followed by 13% with 6 to 8 years of experience. In relation to second language skills, 81 of the respondents are skilled in English language (68%), 28 employees do not any second language skills than their native language (23%), 6 of them know other foreign language (Mandarin, Khmer, Hindi, Filipino, Hindi & French Language) (5%), 4 of them claimed proficiency in both Arabic language (3%) and Thai language (3%). This demographic information confirms the lack of multilinguals personnel in tourism sector in Perlis for the purpose of serving various backgrounds of tourists.

2. Needs of Arabic Language

This section unveiled the results of the first research question: What is the need of tourism employees in Perlis in learning Arabic for tourism purposes? The needs towards Arabic language skills in Perlis tourism sector is analyzed and the result is categorized into three main themes as determined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), which are needs, lacks or challenges and motivation.

2.1 Needs Of Arabic Language in Perlis Tourism

To understand the need towards learning Arabic language among tourism employees in Perlis, the data was analyzed, and the results are as shown in the table below:

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Arabic language skills among tourism employees in Perlis can attract middle east tourists	3.91	0.789	High
Arabic language skills among tourism employees in Perlis can boost international tourism	3.91	0.789	High
Tourism employees in Perlis need to learn Arabic language skills to communicate with Arab tourists	3.71	0.982	High

Tourism employees need to learn Arabic language skills to ease the interaction with Arab tourists	2.47	1.130	Moderate
Total	3.50	0.923	High

Table 1: The Needs of Arabic Language In Perlis Tourism

Table 1 shows that learning Arabic language is needed among tourism employees in Perlis with an overall mean score of 3.50 (SD = 0.923). The highest need is to attract middle east tourists in visiting the state of Perlis and boost international tourism, both with a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 0.789). Then, Arabic language skills are important to communicate with Arab tourists as shown in the table with a mean score of 3.71 (SD=0.982). Learning Arabic language to ease the interaction with Arab tourists obtained a mean score of 2.47 (SD = 2.47), indicates a significant contradict phenomenon as compared to other items.

The responses from interview with tourism stakeholders firmly show that the employees need to learn Arabic language for tourism purpose, as listed below:

“Being multilingual is super important in tourism. Even though we have tech like google translate, image translation and so on, we cannot deny that we still need real human skills” (R. 1, P. 187-189).

“When we have basic communication skills in multiple languages including Arabic, it kind of shows that we are ready to welcome our guest into our home (state)” (R. 2, P. 281-283).

“Good communication between staff and Arab tourists helps both sides understand each other better when talking. Then, they know how to respond the right way” (R. 1, P. 361–363).

All responses above demonstrate the need towards Arabic language in tourism in Perlis, most importantly to develop a good communication and guarantee a service quality in dealing with Arab tourists. To conclude, this convincingly show that tourism employees need to learn Arabic for tourism purposes to better accommodate the tourists’ need effectively.

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Listening Skill	4.10	0.862	High
Speaking Skill	4.07	0.803	High
Reading Skill	3.78	0.936	High
Writing Skill	3.47	0.907	High

Table 2: Needs of Arabic Language Skills among Tourism Employees

Based on the table above, in term of Arabic language skills, the data presented that listening skill scores the highest mean value among all with 4.10 (SD = 0.862), followed by speaking skill with a mean score of 4.07 (SD = 4.07). Tourism employees agree that reading skills is the third skill needed, which demonstrates mean score of 3.78 (SD = 0.936). However, the least important language skill in tourism sector is writing skills (M = 3.47; SD 0.907). This

result is aligned with the responses from interview, which described that listening and speaking skills are the most needed skills, as outlined below:

“Because tourism really focuses on human interaction, especially in service and hospitality, I would definitely choose listening and speaking skills” (R. 1, P. 350-352).

“If you cannot listen and speak in Arabic, it’s hard to understand what Arab tourists want, and it’s tough to respond properly to their requests. They might ask for something, but we give them something else. That would really affect our ratings” (R. 1, P. 352-354)

“Tourists compare and judge with other places they have been. So, we have to listen carefully, understand them and respond politely with the right action” (R. 1, P. 356-358).

Therefore, the responses above positively show that the most important skills for tourism employees are listening and speaking skills. Both skills need to be focused more to provide good communication in performing their daily tasks.

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Asking questions and making enquiries	3.81	0.843	High
Ability to provide explanations about tourism information	3.78	0.972	High
Understanding the speech and language of Arab tourists	3.78	0.862	High
Using appropriate Arabic greetings and expressions	3.76	0.843	High
Giving directions to a tourist destination	3.73	0.950	High
Understanding travel documents written in Arabic	3.68	0.996	High
Handling telephone calls	3.61	0.964	High

Table 3: Sub-Skills of Arabic for Tourism Purposes

Table 3 records that most tourism employees in Perlis agree on asking questions and making enquiries in Arabic language is the most important skills with a mean score of 3.81 (0.843). Secondly, ability to provide explanations about tourism information and understanding the speech and language of Arab tourists, both show the mean value of 3.78 (SD = 0.972; SD = 0.862) indicating its role in the workplace. In contrast, they did not find the sub-skills of understanding travel documents written in Arabic (M = 3.68) and telephone calls (M = 3.61) as among the critical needs in learning Arabic for tourism purposes.

Besides, interview responses also validated asking questions and making enquiries as the most important sub-skills for tourism employees, as mentioned below:

“Like in a hotel, (employees) need to ask things like, have you made a booking? What kind of room do you prefer? Hotel terms like deluxe, connecting door, single or double bed etc. Then in tourist attractions, maybe the question is about how many tickets do you want? If restaurant, how to take orders – that kind of thing, I think” (R. 2, P. 361-363)

To add, stakeholders also believe that the ability to provide explanations about tourism information is essential sub-skill to be learnt in Arabic language, as said below:

“But for me, the most important thing is the ability to explain tourism information. Because Perlis is a state that foreign tourists visit rarely. So ideally, the staff should be skilled at explaining those places” (R. 2, P. 348-350).

Overall, asking questions and making enquiries and ability to provide explanations about tourism information are the most prioritized sub-skills in learning Arabic for tourism purposes.

2.2 Communication Challenges with Arab Tourists

This section details the challenges faced by tourism employees in Perlis while communicating with Arabic-speaking tourists.

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Recurring challenges in dealing with Arabic-speaking tourists	2.47	1.130	Low

Table 4: Communication challenges with Arab tourists

Table 4 shows the recurring challenges in dealing with Arab tourists based on employees’ experience. They claim to encounter a slight challenge in their communication with Arab tourists with a low mean value of 2.47 (SD = 1.130). From the stakeholders’ perspective, the low recurring challenges in dealing with Arab tourists is due to low influx of Arab tourists in Perlis, as highlighted in the responses below:

“If we look at Perlis, there still are not many Arab tourists at the moment. Maybe because we are just starting to grow. Most of the ones that we use to see are usually in Kuala Perlis or nearby and most of them are students” (R. 2, P. 59-61).

“It is also a challenge for us to promote Perlis to the world. That’s how we see it. The trend of foreign tourists including Arab tourists is still quite low in Perlis” (R. 2, P. 68-69).

These clearly interpret the low occurrence of challenges claimed by employees is because of minimal arrival of Arab tourists in Perlis currently. Conversely, the result regarding types of challenges in dealing with Arab tourists presented a conflicting result.

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Behaviour of Arab tourists is difficult to dealt with	1.90	0.301	High

Misunderstanding of the communication style among Arab tourists	1.84	0.367	High
Misunderstanding of Arab tourists' speech	1.79	0.408	High
Arab tourists' inability to communicate in English language	1.65	0.479	High
Tourism employees' inability to understand Arabic language	1.51	0.502	High

Table 5: Type Of Challenges in Dealing with Arab Tourists

As shown in table 5, behavior of Arab tourists is the most difficult challenge faced by tourism employees, which shows mean score of 1.90 (SD = 0,301). Whereas the second challenge is misunderstanding of the communication style among Arab tourists scoring a mean value of 1.84 (SD = 0.367) followed by misunderstanding of Arab tourists' speech (M = 1,79; SD = 0.408). At the same time, minor issues were detected in challenges related to Arab tourists' inability to communicate in English language and employees' inability to understand Arabic language with a mean score of 1.65 and 1.51 respectively.

Even the employees' claim a low occurrence of challenge in their communication with Arab tourists, they also agreed on the challenges occurred. The stake holders also emphasized on cultural challenge which related to Arab tourists' behavior as mentioned below:

"I think it's about culture. Because it's not easy to understand another culture without knowing – or at least having some idea of their language" (R. 1, P. 230-234)

"Sometimes people say Arabs are rude, but actually it's just that we don't understand, that's just the way the talk" (R. 2, P. 158-159)

Misunderstanding also among of the challenges agreed by stakeholders in interview as illustrated below:

"When there are a lot of misunderstanding, the communication just does not feel good. It will lead to a lot of confusion. Tourists might get a negative impression of how we treat them when actually the real issue is the language barriers, not our manners" (R. 1, P. 222-224)

In term of inability to communicate in the specific language among the employees and Arab tourists, the stakeholders detailed their perspective below:

"Perlis is a small state and lately tourism has been growing. So, our staff are not really used to having a second language besides Malay language" (R. 1, P. 166-167)

"I think one of the main issues is that most of Arab tourists cannot speak English when they travel, except for some businessmen from Saudi and UAE (United Arab Emirates)" (R. 2, P. 223-225)

Therefore, tourism employees face a lot of challenges as referring to the importance of learning Arab for tourism purposes.

2.3 Motivation in learning Arabic for tourism purposes

Another important element related to investigation of needs in learning Arabic for tourism purposes is the employees' motivation. To understand their motivation, the result in the table below is referred:

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Willingness to attend Arabic for tourism purposes course to enhance Arabic communication skills	3.61	0.863	High

Table 6: Motivation In Learning Arabic for Tourism Purposes

According to the table above, tourism employees in Perlis are willing to attend Arabic language for tourism purposes course with a mean score of 3.61, indicating a high level of agreement. Hence, this shows their preparedness in learning Arabic to interact with Arab tourists with efficiency.

3. Language Proficiency level

The proficiency level in Arabic among tourism employees is also assessed to know their background in terms of language skills. The result is as presented in the table below:

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Arabic language proficiency level	1.31	1.308	Very low

Table 7: Arabic Language Proficiency among Tourism Employees

Based on table 7, Arabic language proficiency level in overall among these employees is low with a mean value of only 1.308, which shows a very minimal ability to use this language in their workplace. As reported by respondent 1, tourism employees have a very poor proficiency in Arabic language as stated in the response below:

“Their (Arabic Language) is very weak because they have not mastered it. Plus, they have so little to no opportunity to use Arabic in their work” (R. 1, P. 186-190)

This weak proficiency in Arabic language shows a need for learning this language for tourism purposes to cater to the challenge faced by the employees.

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Reading skill	1.54	1.608	Low
Listening skill	1.53	1.571	Low

Writing skill	1.37	1.443	Very low
Speaking skill	1.22	1.265	Very low

Table 8: Level of Arabic Language Skills among Tourism Employees

Table 8 depicts that these employees gain a poor ability in all language skills with mean score of only between 1.22 to 1.54. The highest mean score recorded is reading skill with a mean value of 1.54 (SD = 1.608) and low level of agreement followed by listening skill (M = 1.53: SD = 1.571). Besides, least mastered language skills are writing skills with a mean score of 1.37 and speaking skills with a mean score of 1.22. In short, employees are quite good in receptive language skills (reading and listening skills) and very poor in productive language skills (writing and speaking skills).

4. Characteristics of Arabic for Tourism Purposes Curriculum

To design a specific module in accommodating the needs of Arabic language for tourism purposes in Perlis, the study examines the characteristics that need to be considered to ensure learning efficiency in acquiring Arabic language.

Item	Means	Standard Deviation	Level of Agreement
Learning activities based on real situations	3.86	0.863	High
The module must include tourism destinations in Perlis	3.78	0.835	High
The module must cover terminology and vocabulary related to tourism	3.76	0.870	High
Teaching practical grammar which focuses on communication	3.73	0.886	High
Practicing interactive communication in the class	3.73	0.867	High
Learning using Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)	3.72	0.900	High
Learning using colloquial (Spoken) Arabic	3.62	0.980	High
Covering cultural aspects of Arab society	3.50	0.953	High

Table 9: Characteristics of Arabic for Tourism Purposes Module

It is denoted that all characteristics show a high level of importance in designing a specific module of Arabic for tourism purposes, with a mean score between 3.50 to 3.86. The highest mean score recorded is related to learning activities based on real situations (M = 3.86, SD = 0.863). Subsequently, the employees agreed on the module must include tourism destinations

in Perlis ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.835$) and cover terminology and vocabulary related to tourism ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.870$). The lowest characteristics needed is covering cultural aspects of Arab society by scoring a mean value of 3.50 ($SD = 0.953$).

The interview's responses agree on learning activities must be based on real situations, as highlighted below:

"It's really important to learn based on real situations, because that what they actually dealt with" (R. 1, P. 481).

Respondent 1 further explains that these real situations with the following statement: "Learn important and friendly greetings. Learn how to answer their questions about tourism in Perlis, how to give directions, explain about tourist spot and practice how to have a good conversation with them, like where they came from? How they got here? Where they want to visit and things like that" (R. 1, P. 536-539).

Regarding the second characteristics, respondent 1 recognizes that the module must include tourism destinations in Perlis, as elaborated below:

"Maybe we can target five top tourism destination that are most frequently visited. At the very least, if tourists ask them (employees), they can explain them in Arabic. Even if we do not cover everything, just the important ones would be really good" (R. 1, P. 517-519).

The item that stated module must cover terminology and vocabulary related to tourism is supported by respondent 1 in his response:

"We need to look closely at all staff's background and analyse which words and terminology are the most important. We can also ask them what they usually use when talking to tourists" (R. 1, P. 503-506)

In summary, the most important characteristics proposed to design a specific course for learning Arabic for tourism purposes are learning activities based on real situation, module must include tourism destinations in Perlis and cover terminology and vocabulary related to tourism.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that the employees need Arabic language skills to better communicate with Arab tourists and provide a good quality of service. This finding aligns with the previous studies which found that tourism sector must concern on developing good language skills as a tool to for strengthening communication efficiency and create better tourist experience (Al-Khaled, Alkhateeb, & Almarshad, 2022; Cuic Tankovic et al., 2022). Arabic language must be developed to cater the needs of Arab tourists and ensure their retention visit (Mohd Azhar et. al., 2025).

This study reveals that tourism employees need productive language skills which are listening and speaking skills more than the other. This is supported by Muh Azhar and Nurin Auni (2022) and Nasirah Ismail, Fitri Nurul'ain and Mohd Akashah (2024) which emphasize on the importance of both skills among tourism employees in dealing with tourists in language that they can well comprehend. Tankovic et. al. (2023) affirms that both of these skills are considered as important communication skills or soft skills in tourism.

The tourism employees perceived that the most needed sub-skills are asking questions and making enquiries, ability to provide explanations about tourism information and understanding the speech of Arab tourists. Asking questions and making enquiries in Arabic

language is a skill that foster personalized tourism service to understand tourists' expectations and obtain quick feedback (Tankovic et. al., 2022). Meanwhile, Nuryadina August Rini and Luthfi Azizah Firdaus (2022) highlights that ability to provide tourism information in the tourists' language is vital as it is majorly related with tourism interaction. To understand Arab tourists' speech, Mohammad Najib et. al. (2022) described that the language barrier can be solved with teaching Arabic for specific purposes.

On the other hand, tourism employees face several challenges in dealing with Arab tourists mainly in term of understanding their behaviour, misunderstanding of their communication style and speech. Sarkhan Jafarov and Elnara Isazada (2024) mentioned that tourists' satisfaction varies due to difference of expectations from one culture to another. Thus, understanding tourists' behaviour based on their cultural values helps to better interact with them. Al-Yateem et. al. (2023) states that weak proficiency of language often leads to misinterpretation that cause more problem with the clients. Therefore, teaching Arabic for tourism purposes can minimise the probability of misunderstanding between tourism employees and Arab tourists.

The respondents show a great motivation in learning Arabic for tourism purposes to fulfil their professional needs. This motivation is very significant for non-native learners to avoid language anxiety which can leads to low self confidence in practicing the language (Yunus et. al., 2023) and develop a self-directed learning style in understanding the course content (Jamian et. al., 2022).

Tourism employees in Perlis indicate a weak proficiency in Arabic language including in all language skills. This issue is equivalent to the findings of Kholidi et. al., (2022) which proved that tourism staffs in Selangor Malaysia possess poor English language skills in dealing with international tourists. Mirboboyeva & Ibrahimova stressed that poor language proficiency need to be solved strategically in ensuring a smooth tourism interaction.

To propose a practical curriculum, it must emphasize on learning activities based on real situation, tourism destinations in Perlis and terminology and vocabulary related to tourism. The learning activities should be based on tourism daily interactions such as greetings, giving directions, explaining tourism destinations, offering assistance, handling complaints etc. (Al-Malki, 2023). Therefore, it is highly recommended that the course designed customised to real situations to assist learners communicate in the real context efficiently.

CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to determine the needs of Arabic language for tourism purposes among tourism employees in Perlis. The findings showed that Arabic language is highly required in Perlis to attract Arab tourists, provide a great quality of service and develop the tourism sector. The most important language skills are listening and speaking skills as tourism related majorly on efficient communication. The challenges encountered are too high in contrast with their Arabic language proficiency level, yet they are motivated in learning Arabic to improve service quality. Hence, course designed is proposed to be tailored on real situations, including tourism destinations in Perlis and specific vocabulary and terminology used in their professional context.

Therefore, this study is hoped to provide a clear insight on the opportunity to implement learning Arabic for tourism purposes in Perlis and provide better inputs for instructors and tourism management in training Arabic communication skills among employees. Furthermore, the findings of this study can be adapted among course designers and instructors to develop the best module for learning Arabic for tourism purposes. Finally, this research hopes to inspire future research that provide deeper insights on demands of Arabic for tourism purposes, enabling more effective course design process.

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