



## **Attitude of Islamic Studies Students towards Learning Arabic Language in Secondary Schools in Asa Local Government, Kwara State**

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### **Abstract**

The study examined attitude of Islamic studies students' towards learning of Arabic language in Asa Local Government, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study involved senior secondary school students of Islamic studies that offer Arabic Language in schools. In an attempt to do justice to this paper, the researcher used relevant materials such as text books, journals from Internet and other relevant materials in the course of this study. The finding of the study revealed that most Islamic studies students have positive attitude toward Arabic language and that Islamic studies



students' competence in learning Arabic language is relatively poor. It is concluded that teachers and students of Arabic Language should be giving adequate support to enhance to enhance effective teaching and learning of Arabic Language. Recommendations are provided, including improving teacher training, curriculum design, and creating a more supportive environment for Arabic language education. This paper underscores the need for collaborative efforts among stakeholders to enhance students' motivation and performance in Arabic learning, ultimately bridging the gap between Islamic Studies and Arabic language acquisition.

**Keywords:** Attitude; Arabic Language; Islamic Studies; Learning.

## **Introduction**

Language is at the heart of culture, and culture is the glue of society, without language, culture could not be transmitted from one generation to the next. Language is a means of communicating thoughts, ideas, and concepts. Since the language of the Qur'an and Sunnah is Arabic. Hence, learning Arabic is super rewarding on many levels; it allows you to understand the words of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah on closer inspection. it is the main source of communication about Islam. The Arabic language has essentially been used for religious purposes since its introduction to Nigeria. For centuries, scholars have realised that Arabic as a language and Islam as a religion have contributed substantially to world civilization, culture and education. It was Islam that revived the human pursuit of science and it was through the Arab, not the Roman that the modern world achieved light and power through science.( Kami, 2016).

The emergence of the language in the history of Nigeria, which dates back to the 7 th century C.E., shows that the early Nigerian Muslims gave much recognition to Arabic in order to understand their religion. As a result, Arabic and Islamic studies become a twin subject that cannot be easily separated from each other. The close relationship between Arabic and Islamic studies puts the language at the disposal of students learning it in this environment. It is against this background that Muslims in Nigeria are committed to learning Arabic and Islamic studies. Wherever there is a Muslim population, some kind of Quranic as well as advanced Arabic schools are established in which both Arabic language and Islamic studies are studied simultaneously (Fafunwa, 1984). However, colonization of Nigeria and other African societies by European countries, coupled with European Missionary activities, which reconated Christian beliefs and secular thoughts, posed a serious threat to the well-organized Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria. As a result of this, the teaching and learning of Arabic language were given little or no attention in the modern systems. The design and development of Arabic curriculum and the methodology of teaching Arabic language became the sole effort and responsibility of the traditional private Arabic teachers. Students of the language were relegated to the lowest level in the society. They were neither recognised by the government nor allowed to take any post in the government's administration. Thus, learning Arabic was restricted to the study of Islamic religion while the functions of the Arabic language graduates were restricted to dealing with religious matters.. The development of Arabic language has received little or



no support from the Nigerian Governments, most especially in the Southern part of the country. Arabic has been regarded as part Islam, thereby requiring to be handled with caution given the multi religious nature of the country.

The close relationship between Arabic and Islamic studies makes it easy for the students learning the language to access it from time to time. However, the emergence of the imperial forces of the European countries and the European Missionary activities with their fragile reconciliation between their beliefs and secular thoughts posed a serious threat to the well-organised Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria (Danjuma & Rasli, 2013). Thus, the learning of the language was confined to the study of Islamic religion while the functions of the Arabic language graduates were restricted to the mosque affairs only. The learning of the Quran and the Arabic language started in Northern Nigeria where the teachers in the early stage depended for their living on charity.

moreover, exploring student's attitudes towards Arabic language sheds light on broader sociocultural and linguistic dynamics within the local community. Given the cultural significance of Arabic in Islamic contexts, Shah(2012) opined that student's attitudes towards language may reflect broader societal attitudes, values, and perceptions regarding religious education, language identity and cultural heritage. Furthermore, Yakubu(2020) stressed that examining the attitudes of Islamic studies students towards Arabic language learning can form educational policy makers and stakeholders about potential for intervention and improvement. Azeet'al (2024) strongly believed that addressing factors that contribute negative attitudes or barriers to language acquisition, policy makers, government officials, stakeholders, academicians and educators can enhance the quality and inclusivity of Arabic language education, there by promoting greater linguistic competence and cultural understanding amongst students. In light of these considerations, this study seeks to investigate the attitudes of Islamic studies students towards Arabic language learning in secondary schools within Asa Local Government Area Kwara State.

## **I. ISLAMIC STUDIES EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

The Encyclopedia of Education (2006) defined education as a process of acquiring knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude. The knowledge is acquired through teaching and learning especially at school or similar Institution. Zailan et-al (2008), viewed education as a solution to the relevant problems and challenges of contemporary life. Dauda (2005) commented that education in any society, anywhere and at any point in time, is basically the sum total of all the process by which a child or a young adult develops the abilities, the attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of immense positive value to the society in which he or she lives. However, the Islamic ideal of education differs According to Afzalur – Rahman (2009), the source of all knowledge is Allah (SWT), who gives knowledge to mankind through His Messengers.

They educate people in Islamic ideals and purify them and prepare them to establish justice, generosity and goodness in society. Thus, this is the basic principles of Islamic education, which gives importance to both knowledge and training as indispensable to its objective. It also



considers knowledge and purification of the self (through training) as essential elements in its system of education. Dauda (2005) is of the view that education is a fundamental instrument which differentiates a fully developed human being from other mammals. It is a criterion for measuring the mental, spiritual and political and to some extent, the material development of man. Education is therefore a necessary ingredient for a meaningful development of man and woman, as well as their society. In other words, education is the key to the success of mankind both in this world and the hereafter Haque et-al (2009) says from the Islamic perspective knowledge is a system of learning which is to be developed and disseminated in a manner that recognizes Allah (SWT) as Lord and creator of the universe and man as His servant as well as vicegerent on earth. This knowledge is to be utilized in accordance with His will and any endeavour in this regard is to be considered as an act of Ibadah. Haque et-al (2009) continued to discuss that knowledge is one of the important aspects of the Islamic worldview which is based on the following ideas:

- (i) The idea of one living, merciful and just Allah.
- (ii) The idea of man as the servant and vicegerent of Allah on Earth.
- (iii) The idea of Prophethood for the guidance of man.
- (iv) The idea of multi-faceted reality and diversity of life which is a manifestation (ayat) of Allah and which is intended to benefit man in his quest for a meaningful existence.
- (v) The idea of judgments in the hereafter followed by reward or punishment.

The concept of knowledge in Islam has several key features such as the following:

- (a) Knowledge is infinite since it originates from and ends in Allah, who is the Absolute Knower.
- (b) Since knowledge is an aspect of divinity, seeking it, expanding and teaching it are considered acts of divine worship.
- (c) The proper and sincere application of knowledge in one's personal and collective life forms the basis of taqwa – Allah consciousness.

Islamic Studies is one of the academic disciplines or courses that are offered today in both the Muslim and non-Muslim. It is the subject taught in Secondary School that prepares students for further studies in Islamic education, particularly with regard to the following facets of Islam: Qur'an, Hadith, *Sirah* and *Tarikh*, *Adab* and *Tadhib*, *Fiqh*, *Tafsir*, *Ulumul Qura'n*, *Usul Fiqh*, and *Tawhid*, Arabic Language and Literature *Shari'ah*, Islamic Economics and Banking, Islamic Political (Oseni, 2016). Based on the various reasons for its inclusion in the curricula of various countries, the subject has a lengthy history of development and significance in the modern day. In Islamic studies or any other field, there are as many different points of view as there are authorities. Some choose to examine it from a *shari'ah* standpoint, while others prefer to view it from a sociological or historical angle.



The Concept of Islamic Studies constitutes a comprehensive framework that centres around three critical dimensions: the individual, society, and the entirety of existence, encompassing both material and spiritual realms (Ahmed, 2021; Hassan, 2020). This multifaceted perspective underscores Islamic Studies as an intricate exploration into human behaviour, encompassing various facets including communal, economic, and governmental aspects (Ismail, 2019). This exploration unfolds within the backdrop of contemporary or historical living conditions, encapsulating the essence of Islamic teachings and values (Rahman, 2022). The essence of Islamic Studies as an educational domain lies in its capacity to nurture the sensitivities of students, thereby shaping their outlook on life, choices, and strategies. The ethical and spiritual principles of Islam serve as the cornerstone, guiding the development of an individual's character and worldview (Karim, 2020; Mustafa, 2021).

The Goals and Aims of Islamic Education are deeply rooted in the dynamic and practical nature of Islam, setting it apart from other religions worldwide (Raza, 2021). At its core, Islam encourages active and meaningful participation of individuals within their communities (Jalil, 2020). This participation is driven by the aspiration to create engaged and responsible members of society (Zafar, 2019). The teachings of Islam are intricately designed to nurture ethical behaviour, positive attributes, and inner self-discipline in individuals (Siddiqui, 2022). Guided by the teachings of the Quran and the life of the revered Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Islamic education aims to foster a strong moral character that adheres to principles of justice, compassion, and ethical conduct (Haider, 2018). Furthermore, Islamic education propels students towards becoming responsible, law-abiding citizens who contribute actively to the betterment of their communities and the welfare of humanity as a whole (Qureshi, 2020). This integration of ethical values, spiritual principles, and societal engagement serves as a cornerstone of Islamic education, encompassing both personal development and communal well-being (Hussein & Ahmed, 2021).

The aims and objectives of Islamic education encapsulate a profound and dynamic sphere that distinguishes Islam from other global religions. These objectives resonate harmoniously with the teachings of the Quran and the profound insights of the revered Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Beyond mere adherence to legal regulations, Islam's guiding principles underscore the development of individuals who contribute to the well-being of society, aligning with the collective welfare of humanity.

Ayuba (2019) observed that Islamic education unfolds a multi-faceted set of objectives, encompassing both individual and societal dimensions. He added that instill in each individual a profound consciousness of Allah, what serves as the foundational bedrock for students intellectual, emotional, and spiritual progression. This heightened awareness establishes the cornerstone for a robust Islamic foundation, fostering insightful and contemplative perspectives on the surrounding world, equip individuals with a comprehensive comprehension of their responsibilities towards Allah, guiding them in harnessing their innate abilities and resources to effectively serve the divine purpose. It is to engage in worship and devotion in



accordance with the prescribed methods and guidelines articulated by Allah, fostering a sense of spiritual connection and alignment with the divine will.

### **Attitude towards Arabic Language in Secondary School and Academic Performance**

Attitude could be defined as a consistent tendency to react in a particular way often positively or negatively towards any matter. Attitude possesses both cognitive and emotional components (Adediwura & Tayo, 2007). According to Sejčová (2006), an important factor contributing to good results for students in individual subjects is their attitude towards them. The attitude has a particular importance in the achievement of the students' academic process, to the extent that it constitutes one of the success factors in the learning process of students. Attitude plays a vital role in influencing student academic performance as either positively or negatively in the academic community because attitude is an expression of like or dislikes against a particular thing, place, event or person (Garba *et al.*, 2017).

Kubiatko (2013) said that if attitudes towards a subject and school are positive, also the achievement of students gets better. According to Jegede (2001), there is a positive relationship between students' attitude and their performance in academics. It should be noted that there is no generally accepted procedure for measuring student performance, and individual researchers tend to conduct and explain it in their own way. So many factors have been known to influence the academic achievement of students in their various school endeavors. These factors can be either being personal (poor self-concept, motive, readiness, emotion, attitude, maturational level of the student) or environmental (Otekunrin, 2014).

#### **The Concept of Attitude**

There are many definition of attitude that are slated by expert. For instance, Montano in Abidin (2012) posited that attitude is determined by individual's beliefs about outcome or attributes of performing the behavior. Thus, a person who holds strong beliefs that positively valued outcomes will result from performing the behavior will have a positive attitude. Conversely, a person who holds strong beliefs that negatively valued outcomes will result from the behavior will have a negative attitude. The students' attitude is one of the determinant parts in achieving learning Arabic language in secondary school. Certainly, the teacher needs the students to have a positive attitude so that the learning can run well.

Attitude has been known as one of the factors affecting language acquisition. Based on Noursi (2013), there are some importance of learning attitude; they are as follow; an investigation into students attitude is an effective method by which language teachers, educators and syllabus designers and researchers can obtain greater understanding into language teaching and learning. Students have different needs, preferences, beliefs, learning styles and educational background, and imposition to change upon these factors can lead to negative reactions. Students have views on the learning process and can articulate them.

The students attitude towards Arabic language is not only influenced by the students as an individual learner but also from the academic aspect for example the teacher, facilities and etc.



### **Theoretical Review on Attitude**

Albert Bandura's social learning theory (SLT) suggests that we learn social behavior by observing and imitating the behavior of others. Bandura realized that direct reinforcement alone could not account for all types of learning, so he added a social element to his theory, arguing that people learn by observing others (Nabavi, 2012). His theory is regarded as the bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories, encompassing attention, memory, and motivational processes (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008).

### **Historical Overview of Arabic language in Nigeria**

The influence of Arabic language among the Muslims in the world is very great because of its religious status. Arabic which its original abode was the Arabian peninsula expanded to North Africa in the seventh century AD. It is an undisputable fact that there was commercial link between North Africa and West African kingdoms like Ghana, Gao, and Timbuktu. Others were Kanem-Borno, Kano and Katsina, which altogether with some other areas in the region, later got demarcated away from Biladu-Sudan (now West Africa) under the name Nigeria (Niger area). After the Islamic conquest of North Africa, the Arabs were in the forefront of the merchants that traded with the people of West Africa. This commercial link between the Arabs and the people of West Africa is the foundation stone of Arabic language in West Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular<sup>3</sup>. In other words, the spread of Arabic during the period mentioned above was, however, confined to the trading circles.

Nigeria as a nation has a multiplicity of languages, cultures and religions. There are many Arabic schools in both Northern and Southern Nigeria. The numbers of students in these schools are so many to the extent that their activities, attitudes and behaviours have a significant impact on the larger society. The emphasis on the search for knowledge by Islam accounts for the need of Arabic schools in Nigeria, for every Muslim at any point in time must have being a student of Islam. The reason is that the primary pre-occupation of Muslim is not only to digest, but to grasp the contents as well as imports of Islam and where this could be achieved is the institution of learning known as Arabic schools. These institutions, started from the Mosque of the Prophet in Madinah while his disciples followed suit by using their homes and shops for classes, which were conducted on part-time basis. The history of Arabic schools throughout the Arab world and in the non-Arab world in particular, has been the history of the spread of Islam. Hence, Nigeria cannot be an exception for the history of these schools is as old as the advent of Islam.

Since commerce needs a language of communication between the seller and the buyer, Arabic was used for communication among the traders of that time. The local traders learnt it from their Arab counterparts because Arabic was more developed than the local languages in West Africa. Moreover, the introduction of Islam and simultaneously inception of Islamic education in the territory occasioned the efflorescence of the language. In addition to this religious factor, there were also political and social factors which motivated the people to learn Arabic.



The local scholars who were knowledgeable in Arabic enjoyed some socio-political privileges in the society which ordinary people could not enjoy. This greatly motivated the people to learn Arabic. Arabic, therefore, successfully competed with local languages such as Kanuri, Fulfude, Hausa and Yoruba. In other words, Arabic language enriched these indigenous languages with hundreds of religious, political and commercial words and expressions. Arabic had reached its peak of glory in the Northern Nigeria and was adopted as the official language after the Jihad activities of Uthman bin Fudi which began in 1804. This Jihad served as a catalyst for the spread and reformation of Islam. It also served as a booster for the spread of Islamic education and contributed to efflorescence of Arabic scholarship in Nigeria. The advent of the British in Nigeria, however, opened a new chapter in the history of Arabic language<sup>4</sup>. In a nutshell, Arabic became the language used in schools, religious gatherings, courts and communication, among others. But unlike the royal patronage accorded the western education by the British, Arabic education was a matter of private affairs.

### **Importance of Arabic Language in Islamic Studies**

Arabic language holds a central and indispensable position in Islamic studies, serving as the primary medium for accessing and understanding foundational religious texts, theological discourse, and scholarly literature within the Islamic tradition. The importance of Arabic language in Islamic studies is underscored by its multifaceted roles in religious practice, intellectual inquiry, and cultural expression: Access to Sacred Texts: Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century CE. Mastery of Arabic language is essential for Muslims worldwide to engage directly with the Qur'an, recite its verses in prayers, and comprehend its meanings and teachings. Additionally, Arabic serves as the language of Hadith, the recorded sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad, which constitute another primary source of Islamic law and guidance. Scholarly Tradition: Arabic language has historically been the lingua franca of Islamic scholarship, facilitating communication and collaboration among scholars across diverse geographical regions and cultural backgrounds.

Classical Islamic literature, including works on theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, mysticism, and literature, is predominantly written in Arabic. Mastery of Arabic language is crucial for students and scholars of Islamic studies to access and engage with this rich intellectual heritage, interpret primary sources accurately, and contribute to scholarly discourse within the field. Preservation of Tradition: Arabic language plays a vital role in preserving the authenticity and integrity of Islamic teachings and traditions. Through the oral transmission of Qur'anic recitation (Tajweed) and memorization (Hifz), as well as the written preservation of classical texts and manuscripts, Arabic language serves as a conduit for transmitting religious knowledge and cultural heritage across generations.

By preserving the original language of revelation and scholarly discourse, Arabic language ensures continuity and fidelity to the Islamic tradition. Cultural Identity and Religious Identity: Arabic language is intrinsically linked to the cultural and religious identity of Muslims





worldwide. For many Muslims, Arabic holds symbolic significance as the language of their faith, uniting believers across diverse ethnic, linguistic, and national backgrounds in a shared religious identity. Proficiency in Arabic language fosters a deeper sense of connection to Islamic heritage, facilitates participation in religious rituals and ceremonies, and strengthens bonds of solidarity within the global Muslim community. Intellectual Engagement and Critical Inquiry:

### **Factors influencing the Attitude of students towards Arabic Language Learning**

Attitude could be defined as a consistent tendency to react in a particular way often positively or negatively towards any matter. Attitude possesses both cognitive and emotional components (Adediwura & Tayo, 2007). According to Sejčová (2006), an important factor contributing to good results for students in individual subjects is their attitude towards them. The attitude has a particular importance in the achievement of the students' academic process, to the extent that it constitutes one of the success factors in the learning process of students. Attitude plays a vital role in influencing student academic performance as either positively or negatively in the academic community because attitude is an expression of like or dislikes against a particular thing, place, event or person (Garba Kolo *et al.*, 2017).

Kubiatio (2013) said that if attitudes towards a subject and school are positive, also the achievement of students gets better. Fazio and Roskes (1994) have proved that attitudes are important to educational psychology because they strongly influence social thought; the way an individual thinks about and process social information. According to Jegede (2001), there is a positive relationship between students' attitude and their performance in academics. It should be noted that there is no generally accepted procedure for measuring student performance, and individual researchers tend to conduct and explain it in their own way. So many factors have been known to influence the academic achievement of students in their various school endeavors. These factors can be either being personal (poor self-concept, motive, readiness, emotion, attitude, maturational level of the student) or environmental (Otekunrin, 2014).

Exploring the attitudes of Islamic Studies students toward Arabic language learning in the Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State involves analyzing a variety of dimensions, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. This analysis will consider how students perceive Arabic, their emotional responses to learning it, and how these attitudes translate into learning behaviors. Below is a detailed exploration of these attitudes: Cognitive Attitudes Perceived Importance and Relevance: Students might view Arabic as crucial for understanding the Qur'an and participating fully in religious practices. The cognitive evaluation could also include the perception of Arabic's relevance to modern education and future career prospects, which might vary significantly among students. Perceived Difficulty: Arabic is often perceived as a challenging language due to its script, phonetic system, and grammar. Students' attitudes toward the complexity of learning Arabic can significantly impact their engagement and motivation. Utility Value: This refers to the practical benefits students believe Arabic offers,



such as better opportunities for higher education in religious studies, roles in religious leadership, or careers in regions where Arabic is a lingua franca.

**Affective Attitudes Interest and Enjoyment:** The degree to which students find learning Arabic enjoyable or stimulating is crucial. Positive emotions are likely to enhance motivation, whereas negative feelings could deter engagement with the language. **Anxiety and Fear:** These are significant barriers to language learning. Students may experience anxiety about making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, or script, especially if their performance is subject to peer comparison or high-stakes testing. **Cultural and Religious Pride:** For many students, learning Arabic might be intertwined with cultural identity and religious pride.

These feelings can foster a deeper connection to the language and motivate learning. **Behavioral Attitudes Willingness to Communicate:** This involves the likelihood of students using Arabic in class and in everyday situations. A willingness to practice the language actively outside of formal learning contexts indicates a positive behavioral attitude. **Persistence and Effort:** Attitudes toward Arabic are also reflected in the amount of effort students are willing to put into learning the language and their persistence in the face of challenges. **Choice of Learning Opportunities:** Positive attitudes are often exhibited by students choosing to participate in additional Arabic learning opportunities, such as clubs, extra classes, or cultural events. **Factors Influencing Attitudes Educational Environment:** The method of teaching Arabic (e.g., engaging vs. rote learning), the teacher's proficiency and attitude toward the language, and the overall school environment can significantly affect student attitudes. **Peer and Community Influence:** The attitudes of peers, family, and the wider community toward Arabic can play a crucial role. Supportive social environments may foster more positive attitudes. **Religious Significance:** Given the religious significance of Arabic, students' personal religious beliefs and practices may strongly influence their attitudes toward learning the language.

## **Conclusion**

The paper highlighted the meaning and significance of attitude of Islamic studies students towards learning Arabic language. It discussed the negative attitude displayed by the students in the process of learning as well as factors responsible, whereby through the discussion of the topic it was found out that western culture and environmental influences had serious effect in the students negative attitude towards the subject, in the sense that environment of students (schools and homes) is not favourable to Arabic language and acquisition of its knowledge. For instance males and females did not see who studied the language as civilised one in the society. It is concluded that teachers and students of Arabic Language should be giving adequate support to enhance to enhance effective teaching and learning of Arabic Language.

## **Recommendations**

In order to address the challenges mentioned above and improve the positive attitude of students towards the learning of Arabic language in the secondary schools, the following recommendations are offered;



1. Students of Islamic studies should be exposed to the beauty of Arabic language. They should be aware of its importance as language of the Qur'an, Ahadith and prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).
2. Student should be encouraged or be helped to have an intrinsic motivation for the language. This is so because interest in particular area makes the individual to develop a positive attitude towards learning it properly.
3. Specific and frequent lessons should be organized in order to keep students informed on the dangers and implication of marrying western language only to study Islam, especially those are directly and explicitly against Arabic language, its principles and teachings.
4. Lastly, students should make to understand that Arabic language is a vehicle through which one can fully understand Islam. Arabic language in my view should be made prerequisite qualification for Islamic education into our secondary schools.

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