

The Role of Psychological and Social Factors in the Acquisition of Arabic as a Second Language

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Abstract
The acquisition of Arabic as a second language is influenced by the dynamic interaction of psychological and social factors. This study examines how internal psychological dimensions—such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety—interact with social environments in shaping learners' ability and willingness to actively use Arabic. Using a qualitative library-based research approach, this study analyzes 25 scholarly sources published between 2020 and 2025 through thematic content analysis. The findings reveal that psychological factors, particularly anxiety and self-confidence, play a dominant role in determining learners' communicative engagement, while social environments function as critical reinforcement that either strengthens or weakens these psychological conditions. Supportive social contexts, including interaction with native speakers and access to technology-based learning resources, significantly reduce anxiety and enhance learners' confidence. This study highlights that Arabic language acquisition becomes more effective when psychological readiness and social support operate in synergy. The findings contribute to Arabic language education by emphasizing the importance of integrating psychological support and social learning environments to improve instructional practices for non-native Arabic learners.

Kata kunci:
Bahasa Arab;
Bahasa Kedua;
Faktor Psikologis;
Faktor Sosial.

Abstrak
Pemerolehan bahasa Arab sebagai bahasa kedua dipengaruhi oleh interaksi dinamis antara faktor psikologis dan sosial. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana dimensi psikologis internal—seperti motivasi, kepercayaan diri, dan kecemasan—berinteraksi dengan lingkungan sosial dalam membentuk kemampuan serta kesiapan pembelajaran untuk menggunakan bahasa Arab secara aktif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka dengan menganalisis 25 sumber ilmiah yang diterbitkan pada rentang tahun 2020–2025 melalui teknik analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor psikologis, khususnya kecemasan dan kepercayaan diri, memiliki peran dominan dalam menentukan keterlibatan komunikatif pembelajaran, sementara lingkungan sosial berfungsi sebagai penguat yang dapat memperkuat atau melemahkan kondisi psikologis tersebut. Lingkungan sosial yang suportif, termasuk

interaksi dengan penutur asli dan pemanfaatan sumber belajar berbasis teknologi, terbukti mampu menurunkan kecemasan dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri pembelajar. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pemerolehan bahasa Arab akan lebih efektif apabila kesiapan psikologis dan dukungan sosial berjalan secara sinergis.

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INTRODUCTION

Arabic holds a highly important position in the fields of education and religion, especially for individuals from non-Arab countries (Luthfi & Munir, 2021). The acquisition of Arabic as a second language is not only related to linguistic aspects but is also influenced by various psychological, social, and cultural factors. The language is used not only in daily contexts but also plays a significant role in worship, education, and communication among Muslims around the world (Nafi'ah & Setiyawan, 2024).

Understanding the Arabic language is one of the key aspects to consider in acquiring it as a second language. Arabic has a structure that differs greatly from many other languages, including its grammar, vocabulary, and writing system (Lina et al., 2025). For non-Arabic speakers, the main challenge in learning Arabic lies in understanding these differences, which affect the way they communicate and absorb information within the context of Arabic culture.

Understanding the Arabic language requires careful attention to various linguistic aspects such as phonology, syntax, and semantics. For instance, several Arabic letters possess highly distinctive sounds that are not found in many other languages. This often becomes a barrier for learners of Arabic, leading to errors in pronunciation and comprehension (Budiman, n.d.; Julianti et al., 2022; Kosim, 2023).

The comprehension of Arabic is not solely dependent on linguistic skills; it is also closely linked to cultural awareness (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Therefore, in addition to learning linguistic components, learners of Arabic must also understand the cultural and social backgrounds that underlie the language.

At the intermediate level, Arabic language proficiency begins to improve. Learners start to understand everyday conversations, although they may still face difficulties in speaking or writing fluently. However, at this stage, they are already able to read and interpret Arabic texts more effectively, even though their understanding of linguistic nuances and social contexts remains limited (Ghozali & Luthfia

Khoiriyatunnisa, 2021). This level of proficiency is often characterized by reliance on dictionaries and other learning tools.

Higher proficiency levels indicate a stronger mastery of the Arabic language. At this stage, learners are not only capable of understanding Arabic passively (through reading and listening) but also actively, by speaking and writing using more complex linguistic structures (Kurniasih & Fridayanti, 2024).

Although proficiency levels can be categorized, individuals may experience different challenges at each stage. Psychological and social factors play an important role in the development of Arabic language skills. For instance, a learner's motivation to study Arabic can influence how quickly they progress through proficiency levels. Similarly, social support from family, friends, or learning communities can accelerate the process of Arabic language acquisition.

The ability to understand Arabic well reflects a mastery that extends beyond technical skills in speaking or writing. It also encompasses the capacity to grasp the meanings embedded in conversations or Arabic texts. A deep understanding of the Arabic language indicates that the learner can comprehend various forms of expression, including those rooted in cultural contexts. Strong proficiency in Arabic enables individuals to participate in daily conversations as well as in more formal settings such as academic or religious discussions(Alamsyah et al., 2025).

A good understanding of Arabic also refers to the ability to apply the language accurately and fluently in daily life. An individual who understands Arabic can use appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures that fit the context of a given situation. They are also better able to access information in Arabic, whether through print or digital media, and can comprehend the cultural nuances embedded in the texts or spoken expressions they encounter.

The acquisition of Arabic as a second language is inseparable from various factors that influence the learning process. These factors can be classified into internal and external factors. Internal factors include motivation, age, intelligence, and cognitive ability, while external factors involve social and cultural environments that support the learning process (Pallawagau & Rasna, 2022).

Internal factors influencing Arabic language acquisition include a learner's motivation and mental readiness to study the language. High motivation, for example,

The Role of Psychological and Social Factors in the Acquisition of Arabic as a Second Language encourages individuals to practice more diligently and seek opportunities to communicate in Arabic. In addition, age also influences language ability. Children tend to acquire a new language more easily, whereas adults may face greater challenges in learning a second language. Mental readiness likewise plays an important role in the learning process. Learners who maintain a positive attitude toward Arabic and are open to new experiences generally achieve better outcomes. Conversely, those who feel anxious or fearful about speaking Arabic may encounter greater difficulty in mastering the language.

Besides internal factors, external factors also play a significant role in the acquisition of Arabic. These factors include social support from family, friends, and learning communities, as well as access to quality learning resources. A supportive environment such as opportunities to interact with native Arabic speakers can accelerate the learning process. Likewise, well-structured learning programs and guidance from experienced mentors can help enhance Arabic proficiency. One particularly influential external factor is the presence of an Arabic language community. Direct interaction with native speakers or participation in communities that use Arabic in daily communication can significantly facilitate language acquisition. This provides learners with opportunities to practice the language in real-life situations, which is more effective than relying solely on theoretical instruction.

Psychological factors play a crucial role in determining an individual's success in mastering Arabic as a second language. These factors involve the learner's perception of the language, levels of anxiety, and personal motivation. For example, individuals who feel anxious or fear making mistakes when speaking Arabic may avoid situations that require the use of the language, which ultimately hinders the acquisition process. Conversely, those who possess high confidence and strong motivation tend to practice more frequently and consequently improve their Arabic proficiency. Psychological factors also include the influence of past learning experiences, such as prior exposure to other foreign languages. Learners who have successfully mastered another foreign language usually demonstrate greater confidence when learning Arabic. On the other hand, negative experiences in learning a foreign language may lower motivation and affect learners' attitudes toward studying Arabic.

Previous studies on Arabic as a second language acquisition have predominantly examined psychological factors or social environments as separate variables. Research focusing on motivation, anxiety, or self-confidence has provided valuable insights into learners' internal conditions, while other studies have emphasized the role of language environment, interaction with native speakers, and access to learning resources. However, limited attention has been given to the interrelationship between psychological and social factors and how these dimensions jointly influence learners' willingness and ability to actively use Arabic in communicative contexts. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by systematically analyzing recent literature to explore how psychological readiness and social environments interact in shaping the acquisition of Arabic as a second language, particularly among non-native Arabic learners.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a library-based research approach. The data sources consist of scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles related to psychological and social factors in Arabic as a second language acquisition. The literature selected for analysis was published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure the relevance and currency of the data. A total of approximately 25 academic sources were analyzed based on their relevance to the research focus.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis. The selected literature was carefully reviewed, categorized, and analyzed to identify recurring themes related to psychological factors (such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety) and social factors (including language environment, interaction with native speakers, and access to learning resources). The findings were then interpreted descriptively and analytically to explain the relationships among these factors in the process of acquiring Arabic as a second language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Internal Factors in the Acquisition of the Arabic Language

Internal factors are related to personal characteristics within an individual that influence their ability to learn a new language. In the context of Arabic language acquisition, several key internal factors need to be considered:

1. Motivation

The findings indicate that motivation plays a central role in encouraging learners to actively engage in Arabic language learning (Fitriyah, 2024). However, this study further highlights that motivation alone is insufficient without adequate social support. Learners with high motivation but limited opportunities to practice Arabic in social contexts tend to experience slower progress, indicating the importance of the interaction between internal and external factors.

2. Self-Confidence

High self-confidence facilitates language learning because individuals with confidence tend to be more active in speaking and interacting with native speakers or fellow learners. Confidence plays a crucial role in overcoming fear or anxiety that may hinder someone from practicing speaking (Oktaviani et al., 2024).

3. Cognitive Ability

An individual's cognitive abilities—such as memory, attention, and the capacity to understand new concepts—greatly influence how they learn Arabic. Learners with strong cognitive abilities are generally faster in understanding grammar and vocabulary (Nugrahawan et al., 2024). Additionally, the retention of information plays a significant role in optimizing the storage of learning material in memory, which subsequently supports the production or practical application of Arabic in real-life contexts.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the acquisition of Arabic as a second language is most effective when psychological and social factors operate in synergy. High motivation and cognitive readiness enable learners to engage actively in learning, while supportive social environments provide meaningful opportunities for practice and emotional reinforcement. When these factors interact positively, learners are better equipped to overcome anxiety and achieve higher levels of Arabic language proficiency.

External Factors in the Acquisition of the Arabic Language

External factors encompass elements outside the individual that play a major role in supporting or hindering language learning. Several external factors influencing the acquisition of the Arabic language are as follows:

1. Social and Cultural Environment

The social and cultural environment significantly contributes to the effectiveness of Arabic language acquisition (Ungun & Asyatibi, 2023). Furthermore, this study reveals that social environments not only provide opportunities for practice but also function as psychological reinforcement that reduces learners' anxiety and increases their confidence in using Arabic.

2. Interaction with Native Speakers

Direct interaction with native speakers of Arabic plays an important role in strengthening learners' speaking and listening skills (Sirad & Choiruddin, 2025). The program helps students overcome communication barriers, expand their vocabulary, and increase their confidence in using Arabic in daily life. This demonstrates that interaction with native speakers is a key external factor supporting successful acquisition of Arabic as a second language.

3. Technology and Access to Learning Resources

Technological advancements and improved access to Arabic learning materials such as language learning applications, videos, books, and online courses facilitate learners' ability to obtain resources that support language acquisition. The use of technology broadens learning opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings (Abdurahman et al., 2025). The research indicates that the development of information and communication technologies provides learners with significant opportunities to access various Arabic learning resources, including applications, websites, tutorial videos, and online learning platforms. This ease of access allows learners to practice Arabic anytime and anywhere, while also receiving immediate feedback from diverse sources. Through technology, learners gain exposure not only to textual materials but also to a variety of real-life contexts through audiovisual media and online interactions with native speakers, which significantly accelerate and deepen their mastery of the Arabic language.

Interrelationship Among Factors

The interaction among internal, external, and psychological factors plays a crucial role in the process of second-language acquisition. Internal factors such as motivation and cognitive abilities significantly influence how individuals perceive and respond to the challenges of language learning. Learners with high motivation tend to be more

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On the other hand, external factors also play a critical role in facilitating language acquisition. A supportive social environment such as the presence of native-speaking communities or access to diverse learning resources provides learners with opportunities to practice and deepen their understanding of the target language. Without sufficient exposure to native speakers or an environment that fosters meaningful practice, the acquisition process may become slower and more limited.

Psychological factors including self-confidence, anxiety, and mental disposition further influence how individuals interact with the language they are learning. For instance, learners with high self-confidence are more likely to initiate conversations and engage in communication in Arabic, even if their proficiency is not yet fully developed. In contrast, learners who experience anxiety or fear of making mistakes may hesitate to practice speaking the language, even when they possess strong motivation and a supportive learning environment.

Arabic language acquisition becomes more effective when these three factors work in harmony. High motivation, supported by positive psychological readiness, encourages learners to take advantage of available learning opportunities, whether through direct interaction with native speakers or through the utilization of technological tools. When internal, external, and psychological factors reinforce one another, learners are better equipped to overcome challenges and achieve optimal progress in mastering Arabic.

Further examination of existing research highlights the importance of exploring factors that have not yet been extensively addressed in previous studies. One area requiring deeper investigation is the influence of social aspects in Arabic language learning, particularly in the context of intercultural interaction (Fabilla, 2023). In many cases, discrepancies in social norms and communication styles may either slow down or accelerate language comprehension, especially when learners come from cultural backgrounds that differ significantly from Arabic cultural norms. Therefore, it is essential to examine how learners navigate cultural differences in the context of Arabic language learning and how these differences affect their ability to access and interpret the language in everyday life.

Psychological factors, particularly anxiety and self-confidence, strongly influence learners' willingness to use Arabic in real communicative situations (Sholeha & Al Baqi, 2022). Conversely, learners who receive positive feedback and social encouragement tend to develop stronger self-confidence, which accelerates their language acquisition.

Moreover, research on the use of technology as an external factor in acquiring Arabic also presents significant opportunities for further development (Abdurahman et al., 2025). Further studies in the field of Arabic language acquisition should therefore examine cultural influences and anxiety-management strategies more comprehensively, as well as explore the integration of more advanced technologies to support learning. By incorporating these factors, the process of Arabic language acquisition can be understood more holistically, which in turn may contribute to the development of more effective and comprehensive learning methods.

CONCLUSION

The process of acquiring Arabic as a second language is strongly influenced by the interaction of internal, external, and psychological factors. Internal factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and cognitive abilities play a central role in how individuals confront challenges in language learning. High levels of motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, enhance engagement and effort in studying Arabic. Self-confidence facilitates the willingness to interact with native speakers, while strong cognitive abilities support the understanding and application of linguistic concepts.

External factors also make a significant contribution to successful language acquisition, particularly within the social and cultural environment. Learners who are immersed in settings where Arabic is used daily tend to acquire the language more quickly. Interaction with native speakers and access to technology-based learning resources further accelerate the acquisition process. Technology enables learners to study anytime and anywhere, while providing quicker and more effective feedback from various sources.

Psychological factors, such as anxiety and mental readiness, likewise influence how individuals learn Arabic. High levels of anxiety may hinder confidence and slow the learning process, whereas strong mental readiness enhances one's ability to overcome psychological obstacles. Emotions also play a role in sustaining learners' motivation and

The Role of Psychological and Social Factors in the Acquisition of Arabic as a Second Language focus. Therefore, a harmonious integration of these three factors—internal, external, and psychological—will result in a more effective and optimal process of acquiring Arabic.

This study contributes to the field of Arabic language education by emphasizing the integrated role of psychological and social factors rather than treating them as separate dimensions. The findings suggest that effective Arabic language instruction should incorporate psychological support strategies alongside the creation of supportive social learning environments.

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