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Teaching the Arabic Language to Tourist Guides and Its Relationship to Improving Tourism Services: The Malaysian Experience as a Model

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Abstract

This study aims to examine Malaysia's interest in investing in the teaching of the Arabic language to its tourist guides over recent decades through the mobilization of relevant means to promote this vital sector and enhance the services provided to Arab tourists, particularly those who are not proficient in English.

To accomplish this research paper, the descriptive method was adopted as the most appropriate approach for the nature of the topic, drawing on certain methodological tools such as analysis and deduction.

Among the most important findings of this study is the effective and significant role of foreign language learning in stimulating tourism activity in countries. This is manifested primarily in the contribution of teaching Arabic to Malaysian tourist guides, which has helped develop the country's tourism sector and foster its economic growth and prosperity.

Keywords: Teaching the Arabic Language; Multilingualism; Tourism; Malaysia; Economic Growth.

Introduction

Language is the primary means of communication used by human beings to interact with one another and to express their various purposes. It has become an arena of competition and intense rivalry aimed at promoting the teaching of the most influential and beneficial foreign languages, particularly in terms of improving individual and collective income levels.

Malaysia is one of the countries that has witnessed sustained efforts in recent years in the field of teaching the Arabic language to its citizens, owing to its significant economic growth and the increasing number of foreign tourists visiting the country for leisure and recreation.

Research Problem: To what extent can the Malaysian experience in teaching Arabic to tourist guides contribute to improving tourism services in Malaysia?

Main Objectives of the Research Paper: This study seeks to shed light on the following points:

1. To demonstrate the importance of human languages in achieving sustainable human development;
2. To highlight the economic impact of language in the information age;
3. To address the concept of language teaching for specific purposes for clarification and explanation;
4. To examine the Malaysian experience in teaching Arabic to its tourist guides, as well as the policy adopted in this regard.

Study Terminology

Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers (Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages): The term "Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages" refers to the teaching of Arabic to all learners who are acquiring a language other than their mother tongue. This designation is currently the most widely used among researchers and in academic studies, is commonly recognized among learners, and is generally preferred by specialists in the field. **Multilingualism:** Multilingualism refers to the coexistence of more than one language within a single society or within a single individual, who uses these languages for different forms of communication. One of the most well known examples of this phenomenon is Switzerland, where French, Italian, and German are official languages.

Tourism: Tourism is defined as spending time away from home for recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment, in addition to benefiting from commercial services. Tourism overlaps with other activities, interests, and practices, such as pilgrimage. In recent years, several subcategories of tourism have emerged, including business tourism, medical tourism, and sports tourism.

Malaysia: Malaysia is a country located in Southeast Asia, with Kuala Lumpur as its capital city. It lies near the Equator and has a tropical climate.

Economic Growth: Economic growth is one of the most important economic indicators. It is defined as the total value added by all production units operating in various sectors of an economy, such as agriculture, mining, and industry.

Previous Studies

Although the literature on the Arabic language as a language of tourism remains limited, there have been several attempts that have addressed issues directly related to this topic, whether in Malaysia or in other countries. The focus has been primarily on teaching Arabic within the tourism sector in Malaysia, as this constitutes the core subject of the present study. These studies are presented in chronological order as follows:

1. The Study of (Zalika Adam), 2008, entitled: "Arabic Language Teaching Program for Tourism Purposes in Malaysia: A Needs Analysis Study"

This study sought to achieve a number of methodological and scientific objectives, the most important of which were analyzing the needs associated with teaching Arabic for tourism purposes and attempting to conduct research for designing a specialized Arabic tourism program. Such a program would assist teachers in their instruction and encourage the relevant authorities, including the Ministries of Tourism and Education, to contribute to the preparation of an Arabic tourism program, thereby making the proposed design a fundamental

reference.The researcher employed the descriptive-analytical method. The descriptive aspect focused on the theoretical analysis of tourism-related needs, while the analytical aspect was based on questionnaires distributed to selected samples and interviews conducted with their members. The study addressed all the elements necessary for measuring tourism needs analysis through both quantitative and field-based approaches. Data collection relied on questionnaires and interviews, while the scope of the study was confined to Arabic for tourism purposes. The research consisted of two major sections: a theoretical section devoted to Arabic for Specific Purposes, and an applied section through which the researcher sought to measure learners' needs regarding Arabic language courses for tourism. The study concluded with a proposed course specification plan for this program in Malaysia.

2. On the other hand, the study by Hashim and Tengku (2011): examined the status of Arabic as a language of tourism and demonstrated that the Arabic language possesses considerable potential for increasing employment opportunities and promoting economic development, given that many travelers and tourists use Arabic as a means of communication. The study recommended greater emphasis on Arabic language instruction in higher education institutions and universities offering travel and tourism programs.

3. "The Need for Arabic Language Courses for Tourism Purposes in Malaysia," prepared by Zalika Adam and Chek Abdul Rahman (2012): This study presented a statistical analysis of the need for Arabic language courses designed for tourism purposes in Malaysia. The researchers conducted a field survey involving seven study samples to determine the extent of the need for Arabic language instruction within this sector. The researchers emphasized the importance of identifying those who interact directly with Arab tourists in order to formulate appropriate recommendations for classroom instruction.

The study adopted the descriptive method in its theoretical framework and was supported by fieldwork through the distribution of questionnaires to the study sample. The researchers reached several findings, including the necessity of organizing Arabic language courses to improve the proficiency of personnel working with the Arabic language. The study concluded with a number of recommendations, including the need to give greater attention to organizing Arabic language courses for tourism purposes in Malaysia, diversifying teaching methods, and emphasizing intensive courses to enhance students' performance.

Commentary on Previous Studies

- **In Terms of Objectives:** In general, the previous studies sought to achieve a number of scientific and methodological objectives, the most important of which were identifying the development of Arabic for tourism purposes in Malaysia, analyzing the needs associated with teaching Arabic for tourism, and attempting to design specialized programs for Arabic tourism that would assist teachers in their instructional practices. They also aimed to shed light on the reality of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in general and teaching Arabic for specific purposes tourism language as a model in particular.
- **In Terms of the Sample:** In the study by Zalika Adam (2008), the sample consisted of selected groups to whom questionnaires were distributed and with whom interviews were conducted for the purpose of measuring tourism-related language needs in Arabic language instruction. In the study by Zalika Adam and Chek Abdul Rahman (2012), the research was

Conducted on seven samples to determine the extent of tourism needs related to communication in Arabic among individuals active in Malaysia's tourism sector. In the study by Al-Jabarat, Nuaim Abdul Mawla Musa (2018), the sample consisted of students studying Arabic for tourism purposes.

• **In Terms of Research Instruments:** In the study by Zalika Adam (2008), a questionnaire designed by the researcher was administered to selected samples, and interviews were conducted with the participants. In the second study (2012), the researchers relied on a field survey involving seven samples to identify the needs for Arabic language instruction within this economic sector. In the third study (2016), the research instrument consisted of open-ended questions distributed to students studying Arabic at the International Islamic University Malaysia. In the study by Al-Jabarat, Nuaim Abdul Mawla Musa (2018), the researcher designed a questionnaire covering the main language-learning skills as well as the subsidiary skills required by students learning Arabic. Finally, the study developed an applied instructional unit for students studying Arabic for tourism purposes.

• **In Terms of Findings:** The study by Zalika Adam (2008) indicated that the Arabic language has a promising future for tourism purposes and emphasized the need for tourism-related authorities and the Ministry of Education to contribute to the development of a program for Arabic tourism. As for the study by Hashim and Tengku (2011), one of its most significant findings was that Arabic possesses substantial potential for increasing employment opportunities and promoting economic development, given that many travelers and tourists use Arabic as a language of communication.

In the study by Zalika Adam and Chek Abdul Rahman (2012), the researchers reached several conclusions, including the necessity of organizing Arabic language courses to improve the proficiency of personnel working with the language. Likewise, the study by Hashim and Tengku (2011) reaffirmed the status of Arabic as a language of tourism and demonstrated its strong potential for enhancing employment opportunities and economic development because many travelers and tourists use it as a communicative language.

As for the study by Al-Jabarat, Nuaim Abdul Mawla Musa (2018), its principal finding was that Arabic language use in the tourism sector suffers from linguistic weakness due to the relatively recent emergence of Arabic research in the field of teaching Arabic for specific purposes, as well as the shortage of specialized instructors and curricula designed for this purpose. The study also revealed that the most important language skill for students studying Arabic for tourism purposes is speaking, particularly in dialogues, seminars, and tourism-related conferences.

Methodology

In conducting this research paper, the descriptive method was adopted as the most appropriate approach for the nature of the topic, which requires a detailed discussion of the status of language in general as a means of communication among individuals and peoples, as well as its significant importance in the development of the economies of states and societies. In this regard, the study also draws upon certain methodological tools, such as analysis and inference. **First: The Impact of Foreign Languages on Tourism Development**

It is well known that language "is the primary means of communication and mutual understanding among human beings. The fundamental characteristic distinguishes

humans from all other animals. The difference between human language and the means of communication used by animals is not merely quantitative, in the sense that the number of sounds or vocabulary items is greater than that possessed by animals. Rather, the difference is qualitative and fundamental, relating to the very nature and essence of language, as well as to the systems of which it is composed, the manner in which each system interacts with the others, and the final outcome resulting from that interaction."
[1]

Given the great importance of language in human life, particularly because of the central role it plays in facilitating the management of various aspects of human existence whether individual, social, economic, educational, or otherwise it is appropriate, at the outset of this study, to highlight the nature of the relationship between language and economics and to clarify the value and position of language in the economic development of states and societies in general.

1. The Strength of Language and the Strength of the Economy

There exists a reciprocal relationship between language and power, a relationship that has developed within the context of the knowledge economy and market globalization. Since power has become increasingly based on knowledge, the language of knowledge has acquired unprecedented influence in the economic sphere. Industrial production is linked to linguistic production, and countries that are advanced in industrial production tend, consequently, to be advanced in linguistic production as well.

Because communication is both an existential need and an economic necessity, selling in the language market is always more advantageous than buying. The seller not only produces the commodity but also produces its name and the method of its use in the language he speaks. Consequently, the language of industrialized countries becomes the language of the labor market. Conversely, an individual's ability to compete in the labor market decreases if he lacks adequate knowledge of that market's language and sufficient linguistic competence to benefit from it and facilitate integration into the workforce.

For example, Arabic is demanded only to a limited extent in the labor market because the requirements of the global market and modern technologies necessitate proficiency in English. On the other hand, an American businessman generally does not seek to learn Arabic in order to conduct business with counterparts in Arab markets, whereas the opposite is often true for Arabs, who strive to acquire an adequate command of English. It is the power of the economy that imposes the power of language. Furthermore, the employment opportunities available to an Arab who is proficient in English within Arab countries are greater than those available to an Arab who speaks only Arabic in the American labor market.
[2]

1.1. Language: From a Means of Communication to an Instrument of Trade and Exchange

Over time, with the development of human life and the flourishing of civilization in various spheres as a result of the remarkable scientific advances achieved by humankind, human language has naturally acquired considerable value. This is due to "the profound impact that globalization has had on our contemporary society, which has clearly influenced the role

Language plays in trade and business activities, as well as the extent to which speaking a particular language affects the ability of those working in commerce and business to increase the economic returns of their organizations.

In addition, there has emerged a strong tendency to view language as a marketable commodity within the environment of the knowledge economy, the features of which began to appear during the first decade of the new millennium. The digital economy has come to rely, in a tangible manner, on language as an effective tool in decision-making and in persuading customers through the environment provided by e-commerce websites on the Internet.

The issue of multilingual discourse has become unavoidable after economic globalization opened its doors to all parts of human society, whose individuals and organizations now operate through information networks spread across cyberspace. There are no longer geographical boundaries or spatial constraints that can hinder e-commerce activities or limit their movement."[3]

2.1. On the Nature of the Economic Analysis of Language

According to one scholar, "the economic analysis of language consists in viewing it as a tool within the economy and within the process of economic and social development of states and nations. The effective and efficient use of language constitutes a fundamental basis for achieving a knowledge-based economy and, consequently, overall economic growth. It is also considered essential to the process of development."[4]

Furthermore, according to this analysis, language is viewed as an industry and a commodity within the economic sector. The role of cultural industries, whose foundation is language, has witnessed a very significant increase in the global economy in recent years.[5]

2. Language and Tourism Development

Discussing the relationship between language and development is justified in this section of the study for several reasons, among which two are particularly important. The first is "the tremendous progress witnessed in the fields of technology and communication, the wave of globalization that has swept through all aspects of life, the emergence of a new type of economy the knowledge-based economy and the capacity of knowledge to provide movement, development, and revitalization to the economy."[6]

3. The Importance of Foreign Languages in the Tourism Sector

The importance of foreign languages in the tourism sector can be summarized as follows:

a. Communication and Interaction with the Guest: This stems from the fact that one of the most important functions of language is the function of "information," as it serves to convey knowledge and information. It also performs a "directive" function, since language influences the behavior of others, as well as an "expressive" function, as it is used to communicate emotions in all their forms.

b. Service Quality: Through the provision of services in the best possible manner, in accordance with the guest's needs and interests.

c. Persuading and Satisfying the Guest: This can only be achieved effectively and smoothly through the availability of linguistic skills that facilitate communication and interaction, enable the delivery of high-quality services, and ensure mastery of the art of dealing with others objectively, humbly, and with broad-mindedness.

d. **Self-Confidence:** Language skills foster a sense of self-confidence while providing services, owing to the knowledge they provide about the cultures, customs, traditions, and values of different peoples around the world.

e. **Competitive Advantage:** This is a natural outcome, since building a profitable relationship with the guest requires marketers to understand the guest's needs better than their competitors do. Consequently, they are able to offer more distinctive benefits and higher-quality services.[7]

Second: Teaching the Arabic Language to Tourist Guides in Malaysia: Dimensions and Prospects

1. The Arabic Language and Economic Activity

The Arabic language is considered "the first language to have endured for a long period approximately seventeen centuries while preserving all of its characteristics and internal structure. This constitutes a source of strength for Arabs in accumulating knowledge."[8]

a. Is the Arabic Language a Product of the Marketplace?

One scholar answers this question by noting that Arabic is often described in common discourse as "the daughter of the marketplace," since it emerged and flourished within the sphere of trade. Commerce had a profound impact on expanding the functions of the Arabic language and enriching its lexical and semantic wealth through the commercial transactions that took place among its speakers.

Evidence of the Arabs' extensive engagement with economic matters can be seen in the abundance of Arabic vocabulary related to wealth and finance. Arabic contains more than twenty terms associated with money, each carrying a distinct economic meaning linked to investment and other financial activities. Examples include "rikāz" (buried wealth) and "ḍimār" (wealth that is not expected to be recovered), in addition to numerous names for currencies and types of gold and silver coinage.[9]

b. The Relationship between the Arabic Language and Modern Economic Activity

Despite the contribution of the Arabic language to various forms of commercial and economic activity throughout Arab history and across different regions, as "the primary means for promoting and exchanging goods and commodities through processes of buying and selling," the importance of language in general has increased significantly in modern economic activity. This is due to the multiplicity of its uses and fields of application, corresponding to the diversity of commercial communication tools among individuals and peoples. Language has thus come to be viewed as a commodity possessing exchange value, whose sales increase with growing demand. However, it differs from other commodities in one important respect: its stock never runs out.

The determination of the market value of a given language at a particular time is subject to economic factors.[10] Owing to its extensive practical value in the global market and its dominance over modern technological tools and software, the English language continues to occupy the leading position among the world's most widely used and demanded languages. In contrast, Arabic, despite being more capable and deserving in terms of its characteristics and features, continues to struggle under the burden of a weak economy that gives it little consideration in its calculations and fails to provide it with the support it deserves in economic activities.[11]

2. Teaching Arabic for Specific Purposes

From the foregoing discussion, it becomes evident that language occupies a central and indispensable role in advancing the economy across its various sectors and fields. Arabic is no exception. On the contrary, it has become one of the languages most sought after by foreigners, who strive to learn it and attain proficiency in its use according to their particular needs.

a. The Concept of Teaching Language for Specific Purposes

The concept of teaching Arabic for specific purposes is multidimensional, as reflected in the variety of definitions proposed for it. Among the most common definitions, two may be cited for illustrative purposes:

First: Teaching a language for specific purposes is an approach to language instruction in which all elements objectives, content, and teaching methods are based on the reasons that motivate learners to study the language.[12]

Second: The more comprehensive and recent definition proposed by "Tony Dudley-Evans" and "Maggie Jo St John".[13] According to their definition, language teaching for specific purposes is based on three primary characteristics (rather than four, as in earlier definitions) and four secondary or subsidiary characteristics.

The Primary Characteristics of a Language for Specific Purposes Program are as follows:

- It is designed to meet specific learner needs;
- It employs methodologies and activities appropriate to the field it serves;
- It focuses on linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary, and discourse styles), as well as the skills and discourse practices relevant to those activities.[14]

b. Types of Arabic Language Programs for Non-Native Speakers

Arabic language programs for non-native speakers can generally be divided into two categories. The first consists of "Arabic-for-life programs", which are general programs attended by learners from diverse backgrounds whose primary objective is to communicate in Arabic in various everyday situations. The second category comprises "Arabic-for-Specific-Purposes (ASP) programs", which are specialized programs designed for learners with particular characteristics and clearly defined needs.

The latter category includes several subtypes, such as "Arabic for Academic Purposes (AAP)", including the teaching of Arabic for scientific purposes in faculties of medicine;[15] "Arabic for Occupational Purposes (AOP)"; "Arabic for Business Purposes (ABP)"; and "Arabic for Educational Purposes (AEP)", among others. Despite the diversity of these programs, they all fall under the broader umbrella of "Arabic for Specific Purposes".[16]

One scholar emphasizes, "The importance of studying learners' needs and objectives has been firmly established within the field of education. The concept of needs and purposes as a foundation for curriculum design has now become widely recognized and accepted, and efforts to apply it in practice have become a reality. Furthermore, curriculum development based on this principle places the learner at the center of the educational process, ensuring that educational programs are not determined solely by the subject matter, the content itself, or the teacher's interests and personal judgments."[17]

Third: Examining the Malaysian Experience in Teaching Arabic to Tourist Guides

Human resources constitute a fundamental factor in the advancement and development of the tourism sector and in promoting and sustaining tourism activity in any country. This is because they represent the sector's direct interface with tourists who visit countries other than their own. Tourism personnel are responsible for providing services, ensuring visitors' well-being, offering guidance, and responding to their various concerns and inquiries.

In this context, the importance of language becomes evident in enhancing the competence and overall performance of employees in this sensitive sector. Language serves as the primary medium through which tourism workers communicate and interact with tourists, enabling them to provide effective services and satisfy visitors' expectations. Consequently, proficiency in foreign languages contributes significantly to improving employees' efficiency and performance by allowing them to communicate effectively with tourists, understand their precise needs, avoid misunderstandings and errors, and become familiar with their social customs and traditions. Moreover, language skills enable tourism professionals to keep pace with the latest developments and international standards in tourism services.[18]

2. The Malaysian Experience in Teaching the Arabic Language

a. Arabic Language Education for Tourist Guides in Malaysia

Malay is the official language of Malaysia and serves as the national and mother tongue of the Malay people. English is widely used in schools and spoken extensively throughout the country, particularly in the fields of commerce and industry. The Chinese community uses several dialects, including Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hakka, while the principal languages of the Indian community are Tamil and Hindi.[19]

a. 1 Arabic for Tourism

Scholarly writings on Arabic for tourism remain relatively limited. In this regard, Dr. "Abdul Rahman Chek", during the World Languages Conference held on 14–15 August 2007 at Universiti Putra Malaysia and the Putrajaya Marriott Hotel, noted that the course "Arabic for Tourism" was being taught in the form of instructional modules at the university. Furthermore, a number of master's and doctoral students had begun conducting research on the subject of Arabic for tourism.

Likewise, "Ibrahim Suleiman Ahmad" designed the textbook "Arabic for Scientific Purposes in the Faculty of Medicine" after spending a full year collecting and preparing its materials. The book aims to teach Arabic to students enrolled in medical sciences programs at the International Islamic University Malaysia.[20]

a. 2 Interest in Teaching Arabic for Tourism in Malaysia: Early Developments, Initial Research, and Justifications

This section examines the early signs of interest in Arabic language education in Malaysia, identifies some of the pioneering scholars who contributed to the field, and highlights the major factors and motivations that encouraged Malaysians to promote the teaching of Arabic for tourism-related purposes.

a. 3 Early Attention to Arabic Language Education

Interest in teaching Arabic in Malaysia generally began in the late 1980s with the emergence of several university-based research projects. Recognizing the importance of Arabic in the global community, a number of researchers sought to apply the principles of Language for

Specific Purposes (LSP) to Arabic, leading to the production of studies concerned with Arabic for Specific Purposes.

Among the earliest Malaysian scholars to advocate a specialized approach to Arabic language instruction was "Abdul Rahman Chek", whose significant study in 1988 addressed Arabic for Specific Purposes with particular emphasis on reading skills. He argued for the need to establish such programs in Malaysia and to develop teaching materials tailored to the needs of students at the International Islamic University, especially those enrolled in the faculties of law and economics, which existed at that time.[21]

Following this brief overview of Malaysian efforts in Arabic language education in general, we may now turn to the specific developments related to the tourism sector.

b. Arabic for Tourism in Malaysia: Early Scholarly Contributions

With regard to the teaching of Arabic for professional or vocational purposes, some scholars note that several initiatives emerged during the early years of the twenty-first century in a variety of disciplines. These included programs such as "Arabic for Nursing", "Arabic for Diplomatic Relations" (Islam Yousri Ali, 2008), and "Arabic for Economics", among others.

Interest in "Arabic for Tourism" in Malaysia began in 2005 when "Abdul Halim Saleh" discussed the teaching of Arabic for Malaysian pilgrims undertaking Hajj and Umrah. Subsequently, numerous studies and research projects sought to establish connections between Arabic language education and the Malaysian tourism sector. Among the most prominent contributors were "Zalika Adam" (2008, 2009, 2011, 2013), "Rosni Samah" (2007), "Mohamed Ibrahim Jalo" (2008), "Sulaiman Ismail" (2008), "Azman Che Mat et al." (2009), "Mohamed Najib Jaafar and Mohamed Imran" (2013), "Nur al-Hasna" (2015), and "Mohamed Nazwan Musling" (2015).[22]

b. 1 Motivations behind Malaysian Efforts to Promote the Use of Arabic in the Tourism Sector and Their Manifestations

There is no doubt that states and governments seek to develop their economic mechanisms in order to advance development and prosperity within their societies at the economic, cultural, health, and educational levels. Malaysia, as one of the emerging nations striving for progress and development, adopted a far-sighted economic vision regarding the teaching of Arabic for tourism-related purposes among employees working in this vital sector. The objective was to encourage the arrival of Arab tourists and to provide them with services under the best possible conditions.

c. 2 Justifications for Interest in Arabic for Tourism

According to one researcher, the number of Arab tourists visiting Malaysia rose to approximately 156,000 visitors since the year 2000. Each Arab tourist spent around 5,000 Malaysian Ringgit per trip. These figures clearly demonstrate the considerable potential for utilizing Arabic within the Malaysian tourism sector, given its positive impact on the tourism industry and its contribution to strengthening and developing the Malaysian economy.[23]

The principal reasons underlying the use of Arabic with Arab tourists include the following: "The shortage of human resources capable of communicating with Arab tourists in Arabic", and the urgent need for personnel with strong linguistic competencies in reception and tourism services. In this regard, a Malaysian tourist guide stated "The annual report of the Ministry of

Tourism for 2008 indicated that twenty-two million tourists visited Malaysia. However, there were only four thousand licensed tourist guides, and there was a need for guides proficient in both English and Arabic."[24]

This need arises because organizing Arabic-language training courses for employees in the Malaysian tourism sector "helps improve staff performance, particularly when dealing with Arab tourists or Arab diplomats. Trainees learn appropriate ways of interacting with Middle Eastern visitors and receive instruction in customer service, hotel operations, emergency situations, and reservation procedures."[25]

"The limited English-language proficiency of many Arab tourists", which increases the importance of providing services in Arabic.

"Research findings demonstrating that Arabic communication skills among front-office hotel staff have a significant influence on attracting and retaining Arab tourists". Effective communication in Arabic encourages repeat visits and contributes to preserving Malaysia's tourism market, economic vitality, and competitive position within the tourism industry.[26]

Having outlined the major factors that contributed to Malaysian interest in Arabic within the tourism sector, it is appropriate to examine the practical measures that were implemented to support this specialized form of language education.

c. Manifestations of Interest in Arabic for Tourism

One of the most notable indicators of the Malaysian government's strong commitment to this issue is the elevated status granted to Arabic as a language of communication within the tourism sector. This commitment was reflected in a carefully planned strategy, examples of which include:

- Signage at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) being displayed in three languages, including Arabic;
- The appointment of Arabic-speaking personnel at the airport to assist Arab visitors;
- Encouragement of travel agencies, hotels, and restaurants to recruit additional Arabic-speaking employees;
- The provision of Arabic-language menus in some restaurants;
- The availability of Arabic television channels in hotels to reduce Arab tourists' sense of cultural distance and make them feel more at home.

Malaysia also launched its first Arabic-language tourism magazine, "Ahlan wa Sahlan" ("Welcome"), which aimed to provide detailed information about tourism activities throughout the country. As a result of such initiatives, Arabic came to occupy second place after English within the Malaysian tourism sector.[27]

This view is further supported by "Ibrahim Suleiman" in his study entitled "Arabic for Occupational Purposes: Teaching Arabic to Tourist Guides", which serves as a summary of the book "The Arabic Language Curriculum for Tourism". He explains that the work was motivated by the authors' strong awareness of Malaysia's need for Arabic-language textbooks designed for professional purposes. This need became evident through the growing number of visitors arriving from Arab countries and the shortage of linguistically qualified human resources, particularly those capable of oral communication with Arab tourists in their native language. In

addition, the responsible ministry required such curricula both to improve services provided to Arab visitors and to strengthen Malaysian-Arab relations.[28]

Among the objectives of this book are:

- To assist Malaysian tourist guides in accompanying and directing Arab tourists who do not speak English, enabling them to access a wider range of Malaysia's tourist attractions with greater ease;
- To create broader employment opportunities for Malaysians specializing in Arabic language studies;
- To contribute to the support and growth of the Malaysian economy through enhanced tourism services.[29]

d. Indicators of the Impact of Teaching Arabic for Tourism on the Malaysian Economy

Although it is difficult to obtain official reports that directly demonstrate the contribution of Arabic language education within the tourism sector to the Malaysian economy, due to the limited availability of such documentation, several indicators nevertheless point to its positive impact.

First, regarding the influence of Arabic language education for tourism on the Malaysian economy, there is broad agreement among scholars that the Arabic language plays an important role in the tourism industry. It has created employment opportunities and contributed to economic growth in many countries. In Malaysia, for example, it has helped increase contributions to the balance of payments, supported the development of numerous regions, generated job opportunities, enhanced overall national income through multiplier effects, and contributed to social development.[30]

A second indicator appears in the study entitled "The Development of Tourism in Malaysia" by "Adam Zalika" (2009), which concluded that tourism growth in Malaysia was significantly promoted through extensive marketing and advertising highlighting the country's natural beauty and cultural heritage. Students specializing in Arabic language studies also benefited through their involvement in tourism-related development activities.

With regard to the development of Arabic language learning in Malaysia following its incorporation into the tourism sector, both educationally and professionally, the following examples may be cited:

First, Dr. "Abdul Rahman Chek", at the World Languages Conference held on 14–15 August 2007 at Universiti Putra Malaysia and the Putrajaya Marriott Hotel, indicated that the course "Arabic for Tourism" was being taught in the form of instructional modules at the university. He also noted that a number of master's and doctoral students had begun conducting research on Arabic for tourism.

Second, the study "Teaching Arabic for Tourism from an Islamic Perspective: A Curriculum Study" by "Adam Zalika" and "Abdul Rahman Chek" concluded that programs in Arabic for tourism are beneficial for university students, whether enrolled in Arabic language departments or Islamic studies programs, particularly in light of the continued expansion of the tourism industry.

Conclusion

- Human languages play a significant role in developing and strengthening national economies when they are invested in systematically and scientifically, just as financial and commercial resources are invested.
- Language can serve as a powerful and effective pillar of economic development in any country.
- Foreign languages have a substantial and effective role in stimulating tourism activity when they are taught to targeted groups within the tourism sector and mastered by its workforce.
- Human resources are essential to the development of tourism, particularly those who represent the host country in direct interaction with tourists and visitors from around the world, namely tourist guides.
- Malaysia has demonstrated a sustained commitment to enhancing its economy through investment in the tourism sector, which has become a sophisticated and strategically important industry in the contemporary world. One aspect of this effort has been the teaching of Arabic to tourist guides, enabling them to acquire specialized linguistic skills and communicate more effectively with the large numbers of Arab tourists who visit Malaysia annually for leisure, recreation, and exploration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that those responsible for language planning and language policy in Arab countries should:

- Develop well-designed curricula and effective strategic plans aimed at improving the teaching of Arabic language education.

This should include:

- Teaching Arabic to non-native speakers residing and working in Arab countries in order to equip them with essential language skills that facilitate their intellectual, cultural, social, and tourism-related integration into the societies in which they live.
- Providing workers in the tourism sector of Arab countries with two complementary forms of linguistic preparation:

1. Training in functional Arabic that enables them to communicate smoothly and effectively with Arabic-speaking tourists.
2. Teaching them major international languages such as English, Spanish, Chinese, and others in order to prepare them linguistically, cognitively, and professionally to serve foreign visitors who do not speak Arabic.

- Producing specialized textbooks, manuals, and dictionaries related to tourism and travel in Arabic as well as in foreign languages, while also promoting the digitalization of these resources to facilitate access for researchers, practitioners, and interested users around the world.

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