

The Development and Assessment of the Thinking Maps for Arabic Speaking Skill Among Secondary Religious School Students

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Abstract

Oral proficiency or conversation is a cornerstone of the communication process. It is also one of the purposes behind language teaching and learning. Arabic language students at secondary religious school have been found to face difficulties in their oral proficiency. They are facing in speaking Arabic fluently in the many and diverse situations of daily life and in expressing their thoughts and needs competently. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the problems impeding the development of the speaking skill among students of the secondary religious school, at Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River, by finding appropriate solutions that can improve this key skill.

This study has raised the following questions: what are the most important skills that students must earn to build a good conversation in Arabic? What is the main problem of communication skills among students of secondary religious school? How can thinking maps improve students' conversation skills? What are the suggestions that can help students make good communication with others? The study seeks to answer these questions by attempting to identify the methods that can help students to communicate effectively in Arabic with native speakers. The study also seeks to clarify the ways that students can use to express their past, present, future and experiences, as well as to identify issues in language communication among students. This study highlights how to use thinking maps to improve the speaking communicative activity among students. The study will apply the descriptive analysis methodology. The study will make use of observation and the questionnaire as data collection tools. The study will describe and analyse the problem using SPSS. The findings of this study will help Arabic language practitioners to improve the students' oral proficiency.

Keywords: Thinking maps, Arabic Language, speaking skill, conversation skills, communication

Introduction

Perhaps the most important thing that we can point out in this research, which deals with the importance of speaking skill, is that teaching and learning can be developed. This skill was achieved through the use of thinking maps, a method that played a prominent role in bringing the distance between learners and many educational aspects closer, that need more effort to learn communication skills (Ahmad, AL-Sa'di, 2015) Especially among non-Arabic speakers. Perhaps most of the efforts made to overcome learning the speaking skill

were not taken into consideration Learners' purposes, needs, goals and motives for learning Arabic language. (Abd Allah, Suwaid, 2017) The development taking place today in the teaching of the Arabic language dictates our attention. Especially in the field of communication. Communication with others through electronic means of communication has become a necessity of life (AL-Fawzan, (2017) and this aspect is one of the most important aspects that this research is concerned with. This research focused on the importance of studying learners' needs and their objectives, especially in (Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River). It also drew attention to the importance of purposes and needs, which in turn led to the emergence of new trends in teaching Arabic as a second language, including conversation and communication with others.

Problem Statement

Speaking is a fundamental language skill. (Russell, 2015). It is the primary way in which we communicate information. When we ask how well we can function in a second language, we ask the question “how well do you speak...?”, so it is the ability to speak well which best represents our proficiency in another language.

As teachers, however, we must be mindful that speaking involves more than simply using words to articulate what we are thinking, (Angela & Nur Ehsan 2019) and there is more at play than simply asking students to say the words that they know. Students at Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River have been found to face difficulties in their oral proficiency according to their teachers. They are facing difficulties in speaking Arabic fluently in the many and diverse situations of daily life and in expressing their thoughts and needs competently. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the problems impeding the development of the speaking skill among students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River. So this research attempts to find the reasons and clarify the appropriate solutions that enable students to speak Arabic and express their thoughts and needs fluently.

Research questions

What are the most important skills of conversation performance, which should be acquired by non-native speakers when learning Arabic?

What are the most important language communication problems facing students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River ?

How can thinking maps be used to develop conversation skills for students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River ?

How can learners' capabilities be developed and enhance self-confidence when speaking in Arabic and avoid mistakes?

Research objectives

This research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

To reveal the ways in which students can control the important skills of conversation

performance, which should be acquired by non-native speakers when speaks Arabic.

To identify the most important problems of language communication facing students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River and address them.

Clarify how to use thinking maps to develop language conversation skills among students of fSekolah Menengah Agama Slim River .

Clarify the ways that help learners to develop their capabilities and enhance self-confidence when speaking in Arabic and avoid mistakes.

Hypothesis

Students at Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River face difficulties in their oral proficiency.

When using Thinking Maps with Sekolah Menengah Agama students this will lead to develop their speaking skills.

The findings of this study will help Arabic language practitioners to improve the students' oral proficiency.

Research questions

- What are the most important skills of conversation performance, which should be acquired by non-native speakers when learning Arabic?
- What are the most important language communication problems facing students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River ?
- How can thinking maps be used to develop conversation skills for students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River ?
- How can learners' capabilities be developed and enhance self-confidence when speaking in Arabic and avoid mistakes?

Literature Review

The researcher have benefited from the previous studies that dealt with the topic of thinking maps. Following is a sample of such studies. The first of which was a study by Salah Hammouda (2019) entitled: Thinking Maps and their Role in Learning. The research dealt with the problem of the study which was represented in explaining the scientific concept of the map and its types, and how to benefit from them in the teaching and learning process. The importance of the study came from being a deep study that focused on explaining the concept of the map and its types and the attempt to benefit from it in teaching the Arabic language. The study took the descriptive analytical method as a way to reach the research results. Among the most important results of the study was the need to take into account the following points when using the thinking map:

- Training teachers and students to use the thinking map.
- Allowing students to build a thinking map on their own so that they do not fall into the rote

learning framework again.

-Students are not required to memorize thinking maps prepared in the classroom.

-Thinking maps do not reflect all the concepts that exist in the minds of students, but rather express some of them, which are important for both the teacher and the learner to move forward in learning and teaching.

-There is no single, specific way to build a thinking map for a topic.

Another study was conducted by Hazza Abdo Salem Al-Hamidi (2002) under the title: The Impact of Using Thinking Maps on Achievement and Modification of Misconceptions, Operations, and Scientific Trends among a Sample of Secondary Students in the Republic of Yemen. The importance of this research lies in its attempt to identify the impact of the use of the thinking map on achievement and the amendment of misconceptions, processes and practical trends among a sample of high school students in the Republic of Yemen. In particular, the study attempted to solve the following questions:

What is the effect of using thinking maps on achievement and adjusting misconceptions, processes, and scientific trends in the study sample?

Are there differences in achievement, processes and practical trends attributable to the method or gender?

Is there a correlation between achievement and modification of misconceptions and between processes and scientific trends of students?

Is there an interaction between the teaching method and gender in achievement, operations, and scientific attitudes?

The researcher has prepared a guide for the teacher that includes how to teach using the thinking map of the experimental group and for teaching without it for the control group. The guide also included suggestions and activities that can be followed in the teaching process and evaluation questions.

The researcher also prepared an achievement test, an amendment of the misconceptions, and a test of operations. Then the tools were applied to a survey sample in two schools, one for boys and one for girls, and variance was calculated.

After that, the field study was conducted on four study divisions of two secondary schools in Sana'a, Sana'a, two males and two female divisions. Each of the divisions represented an experimental sample and a male and female control sample. The total number of students reached 304. The experimental group was taught using the method of thinking maps, while the control group was taught in the usual way and the tools were applied before and after. The researcher then used SPSS to analyse the data. The results showed the effectiveness of thinking maps in achievement in general, and at the three levels of remembering, understanding, and applying, and the absence of a difference attributed to gender, as well as the effectiveness of thinking maps in amending misconceptions. The results also showed that

there were no statistically significant differences in the selection of scientific processes and the scale of trends and that there was a positive correlation between science and trends processes and there was no correlation between achievement and scientific processes or between achievement and trends.

Study by Leary Jr. Samuel F. (2016) entitled: The effect of thinking maps instruction on the achievement of fourth-grade students

The researcher used a nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design to compare student achievement between fourth-grade students in two elementary schools within a school division. A total of 78 students participated in the study; 41 in two classes in the treatment group and 37 in the two classes in the control group. The treatment group received instruction in the Thinking Maps program for seven months. The instrument used to measure the dependent variables (reading, mathematics, and language).

Study by RubaFahmiBataneh & Alaeddin Khalid Alqatnani (2017) entitled: How effective is thinking maps instruction in improving Jordanian EFL learners' creative reading skills?

This study examines the potential effect of a Thinking Maps based treatment on the creative reading skills (viz., fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration) of Jordanian learners of English as a foreign language. The researchers drew a purposeful sample of two intact 10th-grade sections ($N = 57$) from a public school in Zarqa, Jordan. The two sections were randomly assigned into an experimental group of 28 students taught through Thinking Maps and a control group of 29 students taught per the guidelines of the prescribed teacher's book. Following the 8-week treatment, the researchers collected data by means of a creative reading skills test and an interview. The findings reveal not only significant differences (at $\alpha = 0.05$) in the students' creative reading skills in favor of the experimental group, but also general favorable opinions about the effectiveness of the treatment.

Study by Russell, Leslie (2015) entitled: The Impact of Thinking Maps on the Reading Comprehension of Elementary School Students.

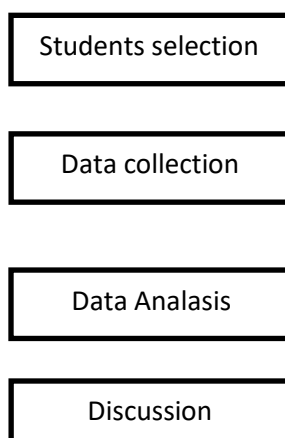
This study used a mixed measures design to explore the impact of a specific set of graphic organizers, Thinking Maps, on the reading comprehension achievement of students over a two-year period, and further analyzed the impact on the reading achievement of students when compared by socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP). A causal comparative research design examined the Texas Growth Index (TGI) scores of eight elementary schools. The comparison group was comprised of four elementary schools purposefully selected by the researcher based on the criterion of similar demographics, administrative consistency. The results of the surveys were used to guide and analyze any questions that might arise from the data analysis that were indicative of a difference in teaching technique, teaching experience, administrative support, or learning opportunities for both teachers and students. The qualitative portion consisted of a constant comparative analysis of two open-ended questions from principal and teacher surveys. While the results were not significant for differences in student achievement and growth between the two groups, there were several factors which may have impacted the results.

Study by Angela Michelle Neo & Nur Ehsan Mohd Said (2019) entitled: The Effectiveness of Thinking Maps to Improve Reading Comprehension. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using thinking maps to improve the learner's reading comprehension. This quasi-experimental study was conducted in a sub-urban school in Kapit, Sarawak. 56 participants from year 5 were involved in this study. The non-equivalent group design data were collected through pre-test and were analysed using t-test. Based on the result, using thinking maps in the teaching and learning process has facilitated the learners to comprehend their reading texts better and promoting Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).

Methodology

This research is considered a descriptive analytical research, and it is a quantitative research. It depends on observation, interpretation and analysis by collecting and tabulating information. It depends in collecting data on the observation, analysis, and several study units for this purpose.

The study applied descriptive analysis methodology. The sample of this study consists of 60 respondents of the Arabic language students at Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River. The framework of the research procedures:



Research Impact

- To address the benefit of using thinking maps in teaching and learning speaking skills.
- To address the problems that face students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River school when they deal with Arabic language.
- To find appropriate solutions to develop students' Arabic conversation skills.
- In response to the requirements of keeping pace with modern methods of teaching Arabic speaking skills.
- Highlights the most important factors affecting the level of Arabic conversation skills among students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River.

-The research results will contribute to motivate students to learn the skills of Arabic conversation.

-Opens new horizons for those who interested to do research in this field.

-Finding appropriate solutions that can improve this key skill to helps students in their Arabic communication process.

-Help teachers to teach Arabic speaking skills.

In the researcher's quest to obtain information that is useful for the research, he prepared two achievement tests, pre- and post-achievement tests in order to achieve the purpose of the research.

First: The pre-achievement test:

The researcher aims from this test to measure the skills possessed by the students of the exploratory sample speaking Arabic language they studied in previous school years. It also aims to know the weakness of these students in speaking Arabic language. The researcher will try to find solutions for students who have difficulties in speaking Arabic language. The questions of this test are in the following aspects:

1. Direct questions from the teacher to the students on topics: (Acquaintance - School- Family - Friends – Hobbies).
2. Conducting bilateral dialogues between students about: (Food - Sports - Library - Market).

Table NO (1)

Distribution of Pre-test questions

NO	Topics	Number of Questions
1.	Acquaintance	5-4-3-2-1
2.	School	11-10-9-8-7-6
3.	Family	15-14-13-12
4.	Friends	18-17-16
5.	Hobbies	25-24-23-22-21-20-19

Table NO (2)

The characteristics of the exploratory sample according to the variables gender, nationalities and grades

Variables	Ranking	Frequency	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	8	22	36.4%
	Female	14		63.6%
Nationality	Malaysian	22	22	100%

	Non- Malaysian	-		-
Grades	High	8	22	36.4%
	Medium	12		54.5%
	Weak	2		9.1%

Table NO (3)**Pre-test result**

Variables	High grade	Medium	Weak	Total
Experience group	12	11	07	30
Control group	10	12	06	30
Total	22	23	15	60

It is clear in this table that the experimental and control groups in the pre-achievement test sample. The scores are close to each other, and this indicates that the level of the students are in each group excellent good and weak.

Table NO (4)**Equality of the two groups in the pre-achievement test**

Group	Number	SMA	Standard deviation	T value	Indicative level
Control group	30	65.07	19.348	0556	non-functional
	30	62.20	18.159		

It was found from the previous table that there were no significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the equality of the two groups before the experiment in terms of the level of achievement.

The development and assessment of the thinking maps:**Module**

Perhaps the most important thing that we can point out in this research, which deals with the importance of speaking skill, is that it can be developed through using thinking maps this skill played a prominent role in understanding the language and especially among the non-Arabic speakers. Perhaps most of the efforts made to overcome learning the skill of communication were not taking into consideration the learners' purposes, needs, goals and motives in learning the Arabic language.

The development taking place today in learning the Arabic language dictates that we pay attention to it, especially in the field of communication.

This research emphasizes the importance of studying the learners' needs and learning objectives, as well as the importance of the objectives and the needs that, in turn, led to the emergence of new trends in teaching Arabic as a second language, including communication and contact with others. The overwhelming interest in learning Arabic in both Asia and Africa, both in educational institutions in those countries Or in the educational institutions established in the Arab countries for this purpose, in addition to the extensive activity of learning Arabic sin European and American countries, proved important facts in this context, which are that those who are approaching to learn Arabic are only They accept that motivated by purposes and factors that enable them to acquire their necessary needs in life and achieve their goals Their goals in society and the practice of life with others in the communities around them, these purposes and factors It plays an important role in activating the motivation of those who are approaching the education process, so it is important to study this aspect, and developed to meet the needs of learners. The needs of the learners also play a major role in determining the objectives of the curriculum, its standards, its teaching and its activities. Its evaluation and development, (AL-Khatib, 2019). It is known that the final goal, and The ultimate goal of teaching any living foreign language is to enable the student, after a period determined by the school curriculum, to adjust Linguistic skills, the most important of which are effective conversation with understanding, with the ability to express in a language understandable to others when contact them to achieve the purposes for which the contact was made. (Elsayed, Hassan 2019) also the communication skill enables speakers to understand and interact with the community around them. So the technology that abounds with the means and communication techniques represents the most important aspects of life in this era. (Khadijah, 2017). Therefore, the design of this module comes in the skill of Arabic communication to develop and measure the impact of maps.

Figure NO (1)Circular map

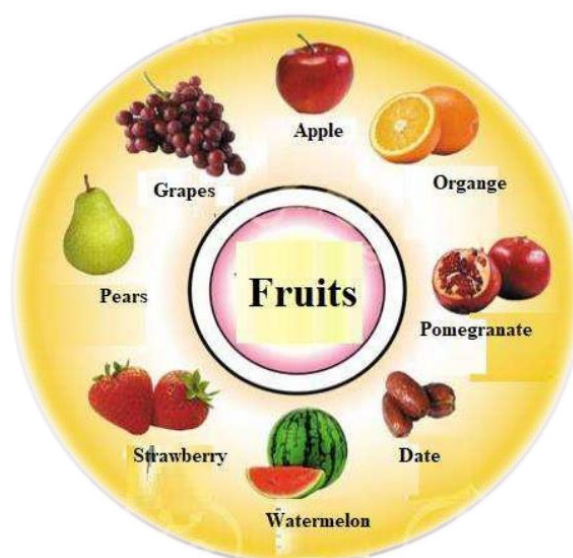


Figure No. (1) Shows the circular map, which is one of the educational maps that were used with students in a school Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River. Where the students got to know this form and found its usefulness when learning the speaking skill

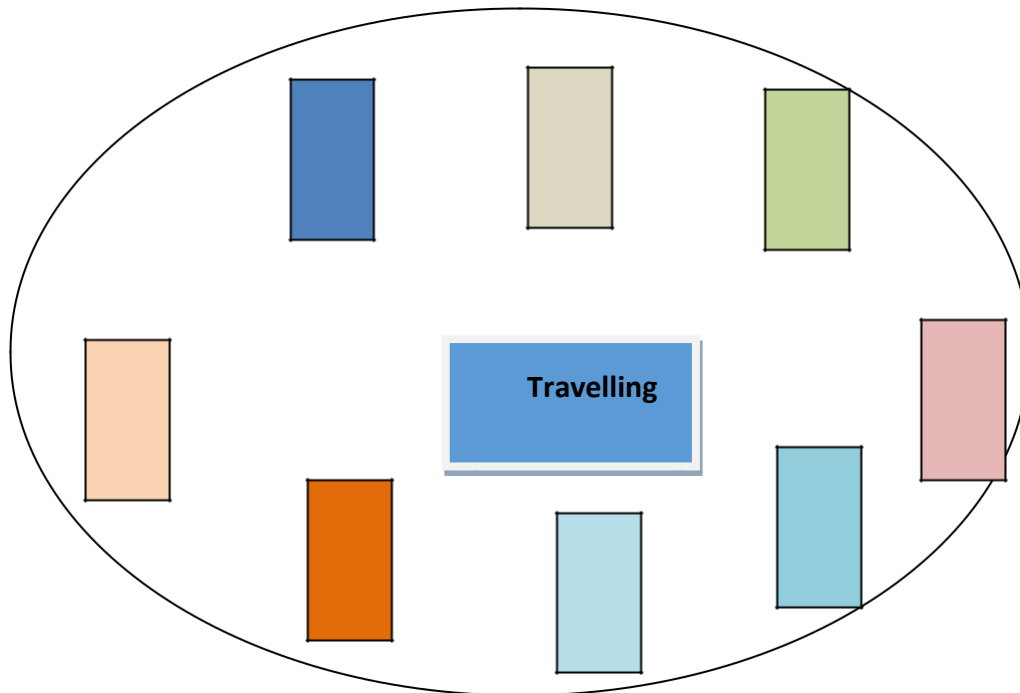


Figure NO (2) Developing circular map

Figure No. (2) Shows the process of developing the circular map, which is one of the educational maps that were used with student's in Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River. School Where the students trained on this form and developed it by using new models of dialogue when learning the skill of conversation, with Adding a new mental concept is identification and definition.

Figure (3): Bubble Map



Figure No. (3) Shows the bubble map, which is one of the educational maps that were used with students in a school Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River. Where the students get acquainted with this form and found its usefulness when learning the speaking skill.

Figure (4): Development of the bubble map

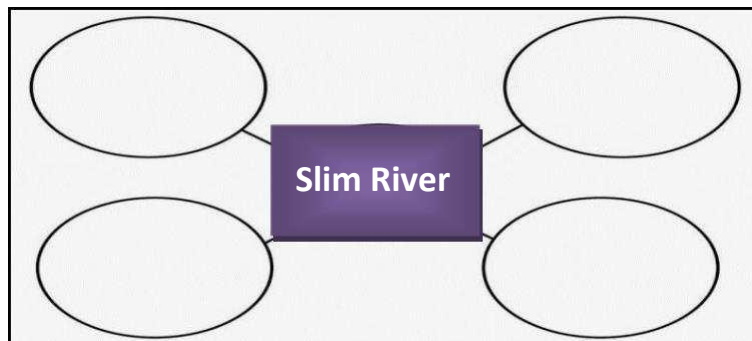


Figure No. (4) Shows the process of developing the bubble map, which is one of the educational maps that were used with student's in Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River School. Where students trained in this form and developed it using new models of dialogue when learning a skill conversation, with the addition of a new mental concept of description

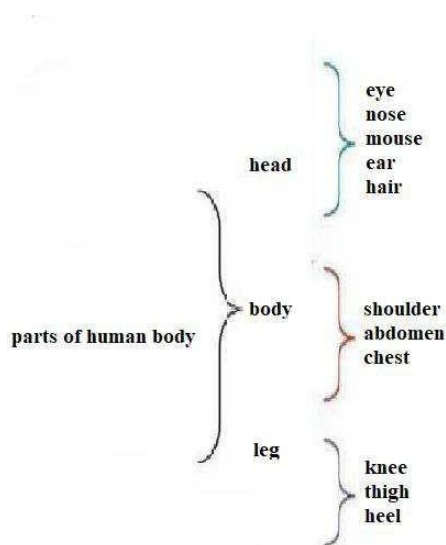


Figure No. (5): Support map

Figure No. (5) Shows a type of educational map used by students in in a Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim Riverschool, Where the students got to know this form and found its usefulness when learning the speaking skill.

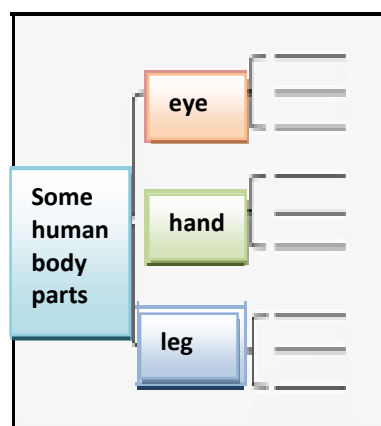
Figure No. (6) Development of the supporting map

Figure No. (6) Shows the process of developing the support map, which is one of the educational maps that were used with student's in Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River School. The students have been trained to this map and they developed it using new models to develop Communication skill and they added a new mental concept which is "partial analysis".

Figure (7) models of mental operations which applied to the students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River

Number	The name of different thinking maps	Usage
.1	circular map	Identification and definition
.2	Bubble map	Description
.3	Double bubble map	Comparison and differences
.4	Tree map	Category
.5	Support map	Partial analysis
.6	Flow map	Follow up and sequence
.7	Multi follow map	Cause and result
.8	Bridge map	Relationships and similarities

Figure No. (7) Shows the types of mental operations model used to train students of Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River school during the educational process.

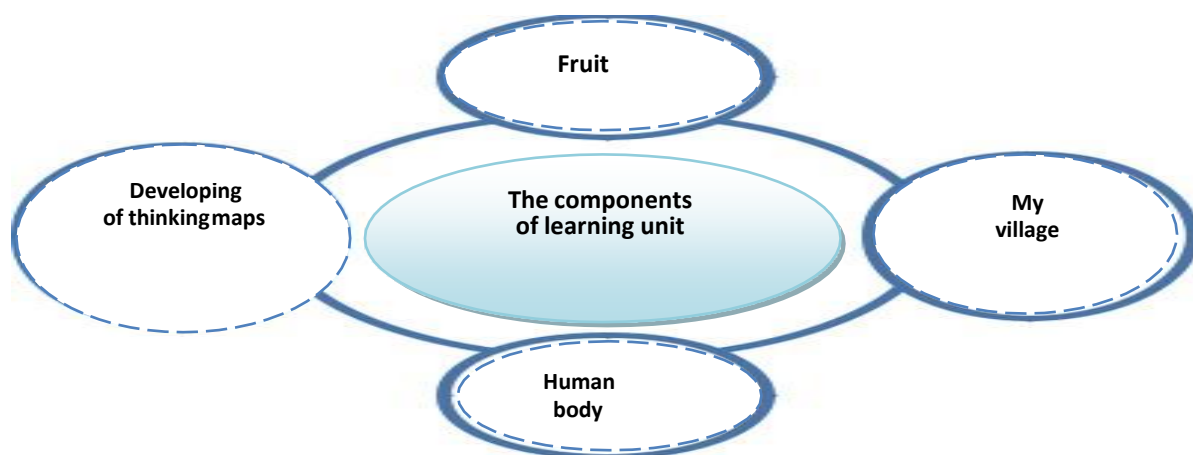


Figure No. (8) Components of learning unit

Figure No. (8) shows the requirements of the study that were addressed during the teaching period using thinking maps, as this was before the post achievement test.

Second: Post-Achievement Test:

The post-test was applied to the study sample after the completion of the teaching process, and the researcher aims to determine the level of students' achievement at the end of the teaching-learning process. Aspects of the post-achievement test come as follows:

- Explanation of the post achievement test instructions regarding the method of answering.
- Correcting the post-achievement test answers.
- Analyzing the results of the post achievement test in order to know the impact of using maps.
- The results of the students' answers were divided into three groups: the upper category - the middlecategory – the weak category.

Statistical treatment methods used in the study:

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research tools, to analyze and process data results, and to answer To answer the research questions and the hypotheses, the following statistical methods were used:

- Cronbach's Alpha test to ensure the validity of the test questions.
- Split-Half Coefficient test to ensure the validity of the test questions.
- Descriptive Statistics to find out the percentages of those examined.
- Independent Samples T-test to find the arithmetic mean.

- Correcting the answer sheets at the end of the teaching period. Conclusions and interpreting.

Findings and Discussions:

First: Presentation of the results of the experimental process and its analysis This part shows the results of the students participating in the experimental process and its statistical analyzes show that the use of mind maps ifan effective role in teaching and learning the skill of Arabic conversation.

Table (5)

Characteristics of students participating in this experiment according to their nationality and sex

Variable	Ranking	Repetition	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	60	33.3%
	Female	40		66.7%
Nationality	Malaysians	60	60	100%
	Non Malaysians	-		-
Group	Control	30	60	50%
	experiment	30		50%

Table No. (5), males are less numerous than females in the experiment sample, and they represent (33.3%), While females represent (66.7%), and this variance is due to the percentage of students enrolled in Sekolah Menengah Agama Slim River. It was found from this table that all the subjects tested were Malaysians.

It was also found that the number of subjects in the experimental and control groups was equal. Experimental group used the method of thinking maps, while the control group was taught by the lecture method.

The following tables, we find that the students' scores for the experiment were higher than those of their peers from the control group.

Table (6)

The scores of the two groups in the post-test

Group	Excellent	V.Good	Good	Acceptable	Total
Experiment	06	10	09	05	30
Control	03	08	07	12	30

It is clear from this table that the students of the experimental group have outperformed their peers from the control group in Post test.

Table No. (7)**Statistical differences between the average scores of the two groups in the post achievement test**

Group	Number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T-test	Indication value	Indication level
Experiment	30	59,47	14,911	2,433	0,18	0,05
Control	30	49,93	15,434			

It is clear from Table No. (7) that there are statistically significant differences in favor of the experiment at the level of Significance (0.05), which confirms the effectiveness of using mind maps compared to the traditional lecture in teaching Arabic conversation skill.

Table No. (8)**Statistical differences between the mean scores of the pre and post tests**

Test	Number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T-test	Indication value	Indication level
pre	60	54,70	15,795	2,831	0,005	0,01
post	60	63,63	18,659			

It is clear from Table No. (8) that there are statistically significant differences in favor of the experiment group at the level of significance ((0.01), which confirms the effectiveness of using thinking maps compared to the traditional lecture in teaching Arabic speaking skill.

Conclusion

Through the study conducted by the researcher on THE DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE THINKING MAPS FOR ARABIC SPEAKING SKILL AMONG SECONDARY RELIGIOUS SCHOOL STUDENTS and After the educational process and the application of the pre and post tests on a group of students, it became clear the following:

-The effectiveness of using thinking maps method in teaching Arabic speaking skill compared with the traditional way of teaching in the same school.

-The students of the experimental group outperformed the students of the control group in the post achievement test.

-There are statistically significant differences in favor of the experiment at the level of significance (0.05) and what confirms the effectiveness of using thinking maps compared to the traditional lecture in teaching Arabic speaking skill.

- The necessity of improving and developing the methods of teaching Arabic speaking skill.
- Training the teachers on the good use of thinking maps in teaching Arabic speaking skill.
- Not being restricted to using the traditional lecture method when teaching Arabic speaking skill.

The necessity of carrying out similar studies to develop the process of teaching and learning Arabic speaking skill among students.

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