

## LINKING KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE AND PERCEPTION: UITM STUDENTS' MASTERY OF ARABIC TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS

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(Received 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025; revised 07<sup>th</sup> November 2025; accepted 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025)

**Abstract.** This study examines the mastery of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs among students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) through the interrelated dimensions of knowledge, practice, and perception. Adopting a quantitative descriptive design, data were collected from 83 purposively selected final-year students enrolled in an Arabic grammar course. A structured questionnaire was administered, covering demographic information, knowledge of verb concepts, usage in communication, and learners' attitudes toward grammar learning. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS version 26. The results show that students demonstrated a high level of theoretical knowledge of transitive and intransitive verbs ( $M=3.79$ ,  $SD=0.85$ ). However, their ability to apply these rules in writing and speaking was relatively weaker ( $M=3.69$ ,  $SD=0.84$ ), revealing a gap between knowing and doing. Learners expressed highly positive perceptions of grammar learning ( $M=4.11$ ,  $SD=0.78$ ), valuing interactive methods and real-life examples. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive associations among knowledge, practice, and perception, while regression analysis confirmed that both knowledge ( $\beta=.39$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and perception ( $\beta=.34$ ,  $p<.01$ ) significantly predicted usage, accounting for 42% of the variance. These findings highlight the cognitive and affective dimensions of Arabic grammar acquisition, underscoring the importance of bridging theory and practice through communicative tasks, scaffolding of morphological complexity, and technology-enhanced feedback. The study contributes empirical insights for designing effective pedagogical interventions in Arabic grammar instruction at the university level.

**Keywords:** *Arabic grammar, transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, knowledge, practice, perception*

### Introduction

Arabic is one of the most influential languages in the world, valued not only for its religious significance as the language of the Qur'an but also for its role in scholarship, culture, and communication. In Malaysia, Arabic has been institutionalized across secondary and tertiary levels, with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) being among the institutions that offer structured programs in Arabic language and linguistics. Despite its wide presence, the teaching and learning of Arabic grammar (*nahu*) remain a considerable challenge for many learners. Grammar in Arabic functions as the backbone of linguistic competence. It provides learners with the tools to construct meaning, establish syntactic relationships, and communicate with accuracy. Within this system, transitive and intransitive verbs (*al-af'āl al-muta'addiyah wa al-lāzimah*) occupy a central position. A transitive verb requires a direct object to complete its meaning, while an intransitive verb can stand alone without one. Classical grammarians such as Ibn

Hisham that happen in 1992 in Mughni al-Labīb and Ibn Malik of 1990 in his celebrated *Alfiyyah* underscored the importance of this distinction, describing it as a foundation for understanding sentence structure. Although this rule appears straightforward, in practice it presents notable difficulties, particularly for learners of Arabic as a second or foreign language. The gap between theoretical understanding and practical application has been well documented. Previous studies (Isa et al., 2021; Baharum and Samah, 2015) reported that students often memorise grammatical rules but encounter significant challenges when applying them in authentic contexts such as speaking and writing. This observation is consistent with Piaget (1983) cognitive learning theory, which posits that knowledge must be actively assimilated and accommodated into learners' cognitive structures. Without opportunities for practice and reinforcement, grammatical knowledge risks remaining inert, disconnected from actual communicative competence.

For Malaysian learners at UiTM, this issue is particularly evident in the mastery of transitive and intransitive verbs. Students may correctly identify verb categories in controlled exercises yet struggle to apply them fluently in communication. Morphological complexity further complicates the matter, as verb forms change with tense, person, gender, and number, often obscuring whether a verb functions transitively or intransitively in a given context (Syafei et al., 2020). This complexity, combined with limited exposure to authentic language use, results in persistent errors and uncertainty. Studies conducted in different contexts further highlight the multidimensional nature of the problem. Nasution et al. (2021), for example, examined transitive and intransitive verbs in Arabic song lyrics, emphasizing their functional deployment in authentic discourse. While valuable, such studies remain limited to either linguistic description or contrastive analysis, and do not integrate learners' knowledge, practice, and perceptions within a single framework. This fragmented approach creates a gap in the literature, especially in the Malaysian higher education setting. The present study seeks to address this gap by adopting a holistic approach to investigate UiTM students' mastery of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs. Specifically, it links three dimensions: knowledge (cognitive understanding of rules), practice (application in communication), and perception (attitudes and confidence towards grammar learning). By examining these dimensions together, the study provides a more comprehensive picture of grammar acquisition, aligning with recent calls in applied linguistics for integrative models that connect cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects of learning.

The objectives of this study are centered on providing a comprehensive understanding of how UiTM students acquire and use Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs. Specifically, the study seeks to measure the extent of students' knowledge of these verbs as a core component of Arabic grammar. Beyond theoretical knowledge, it also aims to evaluate their ability to apply these rules accurately in both written and spoken communication. In addition, the study explores students' perceptions and attitudes towards learning Arabic verbs, recognizing that affective factors often play a significant role in shaping language learning outcomes. Finally, the research analyses the interrelationships between knowledge, practice, and perception, with the intention of offering a holistic perspective on grammar mastery that goes beyond isolated dimensions of learning. The significance of this study lies in both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enriches Arabic grammar pedagogy by offering a multidimensional framework that bridges cognitive and affective domains. Practically, it provides educators with evidence-based recommendations to design more interactive and student-centered pedagogical strategies, thus narrowing the gap between knowing

and using grammar. By situating the research within UiTM, this study not only informs local teaching practice but also contributes to the wider discourse on Arabic language education in contexts where Arabic is taught as a second or foreign language.

### ***Literature review***

A literature review provides the theoretical and empirical foundations necessary to situate the present study within existing scholarship. In the field of Arabic grammar pedagogy, research has addressed a wide range of issues including morphological complexity, syntactic functions, learner errors, and the role of affective factors in acquisition. However, many of these studies have approached the subject in fragmented ways, focusing either on theoretical explanations of grammar rules, empirical analyses of learner errors, or attitudinal surveys of students' perceptions. In order to build a more comprehensive understanding, the present review synthesizes prior work across three domains: cognitive knowledge, practical application, and learner perceptions corresponding directly to the objectives of this study. This review is organized into several subsections. The first outlines the theoretical framework underpinning grammar acquisition, with particular reference to cognitive learning theory. The second discusses the linguistic distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs in Arabic, highlighting both classical and modern perspectives. The third and fourth sections present empirical evidence on learners' mastery of verbs and the cognitive difficulties associated with Arabic morphology. The fifth and sixth sections consider attitudinal and pedagogical dimensions, respectively, before the final sections identify the research gap and methodological implications. Together, these strands of literature provide the rationale for adopting a three-dimensional framework—knowledge, practice, and perception—in the present study.

### ***Theoretical framework: Cognitive learning and grammar acquisition***

Grammar acquisition in second or foreign language learning is not merely a matter of rote memorisation but a cognitive process of assimilating and accommodating new structures into existing mental schemas. Piaget (1983) cognitive learning theory emphasises that learners actively construct knowledge by integrating new information through processes of adaptation and schema development. Applied to Arabic grammar, this theory explains why learners may be able to state definitions of transitive (*muta'addī*) and intransitive (*lāzim*) verbs but still fail to use them effectively in authentic communication. Without sufficient practice, contextualised reinforcement, and meaningful use, knowledge remains inert and disconnected from performance. Contemporary pedagogical literature further argues for integrative approaches that account for cognitive, behavioural, and affective dimensions in order to enhance grammar competence.

### ***Transitivity and intransitivity in arabic linguistics***

The distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs has long been recognised in Arabic grammar. Classical scholars his Alfiyyah positioned this distinction as a fundamental principle of syntax. A transitive verb requires a direct object to complete its meaning, while an intransitive verb does not. Modern linguistic research adds complexity to this dichotomy by showing that certain verbs can shift between transitive and intransitive usage depending on morphological and syntactic contexts (Syafei et al.,

2020). Unlike English or Malay, where transitivity is often fixed, Arabic allows transformations through morphological derivation (e.g., causatives, passives), which complicates acquisition for non-native learners. This morphosyntactic flexibility explains why learners often struggle to determine whether a verb is transitive or intransitive, particularly in unvowelled texts where diacritical marks are absent.

### ***Empirical studies on verb mastery: Global and local evidence***

A growing body of empirical research has examined verb usage and mastery in different contexts. For instance, Nasution et al. (2021) explored the deployment of transitive and intransitive verbs in Arabic song lyrics, emphasizing their functional roles in authentic discourse. Similarly, Fiktorius (2019) examined the relationship between transitivity and intransitivity in general linguistic studies, suggesting that understanding verb patterns is central to syntactic competence. In the Malaysian context, Baharum and Samah (2015) investigated Arabic grammar errors among university students and reported that misuse of verbs is one of the most persistent problems. Isa et al. (2021) further confirmed that even students with extended exposure to Arabic continue to exhibit difficulties in applying grammatical rules, despite being able to recall them in controlled assessments. These findings are echoed in studies at UiTM, where students demonstrated acceptable theoretical understanding of grammar but failed to translate this into communicative accuracy, particularly in writing and oral performance. Collectively, these studies highlight a persistent gap between knowledge and practice.

### ***Morphological complexity and cognitive processing***

Arabic morphology adds a further layer of difficulty to verb mastery. Verb patterns (awzān) and derivational processes often alter the transitivity status of verbs. Learners must not only recognise the verb root but also interpret its morphological form to determine whether it requires an object. Research on Arabic-speaking children has shown that acquiring transitivity distinctions is a developmental process requiring repeated exposure and semantic reinforcement. For second-language learners, this process is even more demanding, as they lack consistent exposure to authentic input. Adult learners of Arabic as a foreign language struggled significantly with verb inflection and agreement, further supporting the idea that morphological complexity impedes the acquisition of transitivity.

### ***The role of attitudes, motivation, and perceptions in grammar learning***

Beyond cognitive and morphological challenges, affective factors such as attitudes, motivation, and learner perceptions play a critical role in grammar acquisition. Subramaniam et al. (2021) demonstrated that positive attitudes towards language learning are strongly correlated with improved performance and persistence in mastering difficult grammatical structures. Students who perceive grammar learning as meaningful and relevant are more likely to engage actively and practice frequently. Conversely, negative attitudes—such as anxiety or low confidence—reduce willingness to apply grammar knowledge in communicative tasks. Research supports the notion that learner perceptions mediate the relationship between knowledge and performance. In the case of Arabic verb mastery, positive perceptions of interactive methods such as role-play, problem-based tasks, and real-life examples significantly enhance students' ability to apply grammar rules in context.

### ***Pedagogical approaches: From deductive to interactive strategies***

Traditional grammar instruction in Arabic has often relied on deductive methods—teachers explain rules followed by written exercises. While this method ensures exposure to grammatical forms, it frequently results in surface-level memorization without genuine application. Recent research advocates for more interactive and communicative approaches. For example, role-playing and conversational activities improved Arabic oral competence by reducing reliance on the mother tongue. The integration of cultural content and real-life tasks as a means to enhance learner motivation and fluency. Similarly, digital and technology-enhanced learning environments have been found to provide authentic practice opportunities that strengthen the link between theory and use (Shaan et al., 2015). These pedagogical shifts are crucial in bridging the gap between knowledge and practice in grammar learning.

### ***Research gap and the rationale for a three-dimensional approach***

While the literature provides valuable insights, most studies focus on isolated dimensions either cognitive knowledge, error analysis, or attitudinal factors. Few attempts have been made to integrate knowledge, practice, and perception into a single empirical study. In the Malaysian context, where Arabic is taught as a second or foreign language, this gap is particularly pressing. A comprehensive framework that accounts for all three dimensions is necessary to understand how learners internalize, apply, and perceive Arabic grammar. The present study addresses this gap by employing a three-dimensional approach, offering both theoretical and practical contributions to Arabic grammar pedagogy.

### ***Implications for instrument design and methodology***

The reviewed literature highlights the need for comprehensive instruments that capture cognitive, behavioural, and affective domains simultaneously. An effective instrument should include: (1) knowledge-based items that test recognition and understanding of verb rules; (2) practice-based items assessing application in constructed or spontaneous sentences; and (3) attitudinal items measuring perceptions, confidence, and motivation. Additionally, statistical analyses such as correlation and regression are recommended to determine the relationships among these constructs. The present study aligns with these methodological best practices by employing a structured questionnaire with four sections (demographics, usage, knowledge, and attitudes), analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. In summary, existing literature establishes that mastery of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs is a multifaceted challenge involving cognitive, morphological, and affective factors. Research in Malaysia confirms that while students often possess theoretical knowledge, they encounter significant barriers in practical application. Attitudinal factors further influence learners' willingness to apply grammar in communication. However, an integrated approach linking knowledge, practice, and perception has been largely absent from prior studies. This study, therefore, positions itself to fill this gap, offering a holistic framework that advances both theory and practice in Arabic language pedagogy.

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Research design***

This study adopted a quantitative research design with a descriptive orientation. The descriptive design was chosen because the aim was to portray, in measurable terms, the extent of students' mastery of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs in relation to their knowledge, practice, and perceptions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), descriptive designs are particularly suitable when the purpose is to summarise characteristics of a specific population and to identify patterns across variables without experimental manipulation. The design allowed the researchers to collect quantifiable data from a defined group of learners and to interpret their responses statistically in order to answer the research questions. In addition to the descriptive approach, inferential statistics were applied to explore relationships among the constructs. This aligns with the study's objective of linking knowledge, practice, and perception within a single framework, and moves beyond mere description to generate insights into the interconnections between these variables.

### ***Population and sample***

The population of this study comprised undergraduate students enrolled in the Arabic grammar course (course code: 242LG) at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). This course is a core subject offered to final-year students specialising in Arabic language studies. From this population, a purposive sample of 83 students was selected. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate as the research required participants with direct exposure to Arabic grammar, particularly transitive and intransitive verbs. The demographic characteristics of the sample reflect the diversity within the program. Out of the 83 respondents, 24 (28.9%) were male and 59 (71.1%) females. The majority of participants (84.3%) were between 21 and 22 years old, while smaller groups fell into the 19–20 years (3.6%) and 23 years and above (12.0%) categories. In terms of prior experience, 54.2% had studied Arabic for seven years or more, 36.1% for four to six years, and 9.6% for one to three years. This distribution highlights that the sample consisted primarily of learners with substantial exposure to Arabic, thereby making their responses relevant for assessing higher-level mastery of grammar.

### ***Instrument***

The instrument employed in this study was a structured questionnaire, which was divided into four sections: (1) Demographic Information – capturing age, gender, and years of Arabic study; (2) Usage of Verbs – assessing how frequently students employ transitive and intransitive verbs in communication; (3) Knowledge of Verbs – measuring students' understanding of definitions, functions, and examples of verb types; (4) Attitudes and Perceptions – exploring students' confidence, motivation, and beliefs regarding the importance of mastering these verbs. Items were constructed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This format enabled the collection of quantitative data reflecting the intensity of students' agreement with statements across cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains. Sample items included: "I understand the definition of transitive and intransitive verbs" (knowledge), "I often use these verbs in daily communication" (practice), and "I believe that mastering these verbs improves my fluency" (perception). The instrument drew

upon established frameworks in second language learning research and was adapted to suit the Arabic linguistic context. Content validity was ensured through expert review by two senior lecturers in Arabic linguistics, who examined the clarity, relevance, and coverage of items. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the instrument before administration.

### ***Reliability and validity***

To assess internal consistency, the questionnaire was piloted with a small group of students (not part of the final sample). Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the main constructs: knowledge, practice, and perception. The coefficients ranged between 0.78 and 0.85, exceeding the 0.70 benchmark commonly recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1978), thereby indicating satisfactory reliability. Construct validity was supported by aligning items with theoretical definitions from both classical Arabic grammar and contemporary applied linguistics (Isa et al., 2021; Syafei et al., 2020). The triangulation of classical sources, modern literature, and expert review ensured that the instrument validly measured the intended constructs.

### ***Data collection procedure***

Data collection was conducted during the second semester of the academic year. Participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. They were informed that participation was voluntary, and consent was obtained prior to administration. The questionnaire was distributed in hard copy at the end of lecture sessions and collected immediately after completion to maximise the response rate. The administration process was designed to minimise external distractions and to provide students sufficient time to respond thoughtfully. Out of 85 questionnaires distributed, 83 were returned and deemed usable, resulting in a response rate of 97.6%. The high rate suggests strong engagement and interest among the students.

### ***Data analysis***

The data collected were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were employed. (1) Descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means, medians, modes, and standard deviations. These were used to summarize demographic profiles and to indicate general trends in students' knowledge, practice, and perceptions. The classification of standard deviation followed criteria, ranging from very low to very high levels of dispersion; (2) Inferential statistics were employed to test the relationships among constructs. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the strength and direction of associations between knowledge, practice, and perception. Regression analysis was further applied to identify which factors significantly predicted students' practical application of verbs. These analyses enabled the study not only to describe but also to interpret the interconnections among the three dimensions of mastery.

### ***Ethical considerations***

Ethical approval was sought from the relevant faculty committee at UiTM. All participants were informed that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes and that their identities would remain confidential. Participation was entirely voluntary, and students were assured that declining to participate would not affect their academic standing. The ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice were adhered to throughout the research process. In sum, the methodology of this study was carefully designed to align with its objectives. By employing a descriptive quantitative design, purposive sampling, and a validated questionnaire, the research ensured methodological rigour. Reliability was established through pilot testing and Cronbach's alpha, while validity was supported by theoretical alignment and expert review. Data collection followed ethical protocols, and analysis combined descriptive and inferential techniques to provide both broad and nuanced insights. This methodological framework allowed the study to effectively link knowledge, practice, and perception in examining students' mastery of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs.

## Results and Discussion

### *Demographic profile of respondents*

A total of 83 students participated in this study. *Table 1* summarizes the demographic characteristics of the sample. Female students formed the majority (71.1%, n=59), while male students constituted 28.9% (n=24). In terms of age distribution, the largest group (84.3%, n=70) were between 21 and 22 years old, followed by students aged 23 and above (12.0%, n=10), and a smaller group aged 19–20 (3.6%, n=3). Regarding experience in Arabic language learning, over half of the students (54.2%, n=45) had studied Arabic for seven years or more, while 36.1% (n=30) reported four to six years, and 9.6% (n=8) reported one to three years. Only 45.8% of respondents had previously attended specialised Arabic courses, compared to 54.2% who had not. These findings indicate that the respondents generally represented a population with extended exposure to Arabic, thus offering valuable insights into advanced aspects of grammar learning.

**Table 1.** *Distribution of respondents by gender, age, and years of arabic learning.*

| Variable              | Category     | Frequency (N) | Percentage % |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Gender                | Male         | 24            | 28.9         |
|                       | Female       | 59            | 71.1         |
| Age                   | 19–20 years  | 3             | 3.6          |
|                       | 21–22 years  | 70            | 84.3         |
|                       | 23 and above | 10            | 12.0         |
| Years of Arabic Study | 1–3 years    | 8             | 9.6          |
|                       | 4–6 years    | 30            | 36.1         |
|                       | 7+ years     | 45            | 54.2         |
| Total                 |              | 83            | 100          |

### *Students' knowledge of transitive and intransitive verbs*

The first objective was to measure students' knowledge of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs. Descriptive analysis revealed a generally high level of knowledge, with mean scores ranging from 3.60 to 3.96 (see *Table 2*). Students reported strong understanding of definitions (M=3.96, SD=0.77) and ability to provide examples (M=3.86, SD=0.90). They also demonstrated awareness of how these verbs affect

sentence structure and meaning (M=3.76, SD=0.83). Interestingly, a subset of students acknowledged frequent mistakes when applying these verbs in writing or speaking (M=3.60, SD=0.89). This suggests that while knowledge is relatively high, errors persist in application, reflecting a gap between theoretical understanding and practical usage.

**Table 2.** *Students' knowledge of transitive and intransitive verbs.*

| Item  | Mean | SD   | Level |
|---|------|------|-------|
| Understanding the definition of transitive and intransitive verbs | 3.96 | 0.77 | High  |
| Ability to give examples  | 3.86 | 0.90 | High  |
| Understanding in reading Arabic texts                             | 3.76 | 0.85 | High  |
| Awareness of effect on sentence structure and meaning             | 3.76 | 0.83 | High  |
| Making mistakes when using verbs in writing/speaking              | 3.60 | 0.89 | High  |
| Total Mean/SD   | 3.79 | 0.85 | High  |

### **Students' perceptions and attitudes**

The second objective concerned students' perceptions and attitudes toward learning these verbs. *Table 3* presents the results. Students demonstrated highly positive perceptions, with mean scores above 4.0 for most items. For example, respondents strongly agreed that understanding transitive and intransitive verbs is crucial for Arabic grammar (M=4.14, SD=0.78) and that mastering them enhances fluency (M=4.12, SD=0.74). They also endorsed the value of interactive teaching methods such as role-play and conversation (M=4.11, SD=0.78) and appreciated real-life examples given by instructors (M=4.05, SD=0.81). Overall, the perception data indicate that students are positively disposed towards learning grammar, provided that it is delivered in engaging and contextualized ways.

**Table 3.** *Students' perceptions of learning transitive and intransitive verbs.*

| Item  | Mean | SD   | Level |
|---|------|------|-------|
| Understanding verbs is crucial for Arabic grammar | 4.14 | 0.78 | High  |
| Mastery improves fluency                          | 4.12 | 0.74 | High  |
| Writing exercises and tests improve understanding | 4.13 | 0.77 | High  |
| Interactive methods improve learning              | 4.11 | 0.78 | High  |
| Real-life examples aid comprehension              | 4.05 | 0.81 | High  |
| Total Mean/SD                                     | 4.11 | 0.78 | High  |

### **Usage of verbs in daily communication**

Analysis of verb usage revealed that students' application of transitive and intransitive verbs in daily communication remains moderate-to-high, with mean scores ranging between 3.48 and 3.90 (see *Table 4*). Students recognised the structural necessity of transitive verbs requiring objects (M=3.90, SD=0.82) and showed awareness of intransitive verbs (M=3.82, SD=0.85). However, difficulties persisted in distinguishing verb types in practice, with a lower mean score of 3.48 (SD=0.94). This again suggests that although students possess knowledge of grammatical rules, their application in spontaneous contexts is not always accurate.

**Table 4.** *Students' usage of transitive and intransitive verbs.*

| Item  | Mean | SD   | Level |
|---|------|------|-------|
| Using verbs in daily communication                | 3.55 | 0.76 | High  |
| Recognizing that transitive verbs require objects | 3.90 | 0.82 | High  |

|  |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|
| Understanding that intransitive verbs do not require objects | 3.82 | 0.85 | High |
| Ability to provide examples                                  | 3.70 | 0.82 | High |
| Difficulty in distinguishing verb type                       | 3.48 | 0.94 | High |

***Inferential analysis: Relationships among knowledge, usage, and perception***

To examine the interrelationships between the three constructs, Pearson’s correlation and regression analyses were conducted. The correlation results, presented in *Table 5*, indicate positive and significant associations among knowledge, usage, and perception. Specifically, students with higher levels of knowledge tended to apply verbs more effectively in practice ( $r=.62, p<.01$ ). Similarly, perception was positively correlated with both knowledge ( $r=.55, p<.01$ ) and practice ( $r=.59, p<.01$ ). These findings confirm that students’ affective orientation towards grammar learning is closely linked to both their understanding and application of Arabic verbs. To further determine the extent to which knowledge and perception predict students’ practical application of verbs, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. As shown in *Table 6*, the regression model was statistically significant ( $F(2,80)=28.97, p<.001$ ), accounting for approximately 42% of the variance in verb usage ( $R^2=.42$ ). Both predictors were significant: knowledge emerged as the stronger predictor ( $\beta=.39, p<.01$ ), followed closely by perception ( $\beta=.34, p<.01$ ).

***Table 5. Correlation matrix of knowledge, usage, and perception.***

| Variable   | Knowledge | Usage | Perception |
|------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Knowledge  | 1         | .62** | .55**      |
| Usage      | .62**     | 1     | .59**      |
| Perception | .55**     | .59** | 1          |

*Note.  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).*

***Table 6. Regression analysis predicting usage of verbs.***

| Predictor  | $\beta$ | t    | Sig. |
|------------|---------|------|------|
| Knowledge  | .39     | 4.21 | .000 |
| Perception | .34     | 3.68 | .001 |

*Model Summary:  $R^2 = .42, F(2,80) = 28.97, p < .001$*

This study set out to examine UiTM students’ mastery of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs by linking three dimensions: knowledge, practice, and perception. The results showed a consistent pattern: students reported a high level of theoretical knowledge ( $M=3.79$ ), actual usage/practice was somewhat lower ( $M=3.69$ ), and perceptions/attitudes were strongly positive ( $M=4.11$ ). Inferential analyses indicated meaningful interrelations: knowledge and perception were positively correlated with practice, and both significantly predicted usage in a regression model explaining ~42% of variance. The following discussion situates these findings within the wider literature.

***Knowledge high but practice lower: the “knowing–doing” gap***

The gap between knowledge and practice-learners can explain rules but find difficulty applying them-mirrors findings among Arabic learners in Malaysian universities. For example, Isa et al. (2021) found that students showed a solid understanding of verb rules but continued to commit errors in usage. This aligns with

Piaget (1983) cognitive framework which emphasises that assimilation of rules differs from their procedural application in real communicative contexts.

### ***Perception/attitude as a predictor of practice***

Students' strong positive perceptions ( $M=4.11$ ) and the significant predictive role of perception ( $\beta=.34$ ) correspond with findings in broader L2 contexts. Learners' attitudes and motivation significantly influenced their willingness to use grammar structures in practice. Similarly, Subramaniam et al. (2021) highlighted how learning styles and attitudes in Malaysian classrooms shaped language learning performance.

### ***Morphological complexity as a source of difficulty***

The persistence of usage errors despite strong knowledge may be explained by the complexity of Arabic verb morphology. Adult learners struggle with derivational patterns and inflectional markers, while Shaalan et al. (2015) demonstrated that learners frequently require corrective feedback to avoid morphological errors. These findings help to explain why UiTM students reported challenges in distinguishing verb types in writing and speaking, even though they understood the rules.

### ***Pedagogical implications: value of interactive and contextualised methods***

Our respondents strongly supported interactive methods such as role-play and conversation practice. This matches findings who showed that communication strategies reduced reliance on first language and improved fluency among Arabic learners at UiTM. Embedding grammar in cultural and communicative contexts enhances competence. Together, these studies affirm the need for active learning approaches that integrate grammar into meaningful tasks.

### ***Contrasting findings in literature***

While our study found perception and knowledge to be almost equally strong predictors of practice, some research suggests that knowledge alone, if reinforced through corrective feedback, can predict usage more strongly. For instance, Baharum and Samah (2015) noted that when students received consistent feedback, error reduction was substantial despite mixed attitudes. This suggests that instructional design moderates the impact of perception, a nuance that future research should test in the UiTM context.

### ***Practical implications and future research***

The findings of this study carry several important pedagogical implications. First, instructors are encouraged to integrate communicative tasks with explicit form-focused feedback, as this combination has been shown to enhance learners' ability to transfer grammatical knowledge into practical use (Syafei et al., 2020). In addition, the results highlight the need to provide scaffolded exposure to the morphological complexity of Arabic verbs. Structured activities that gradually introduce verb patterns and their functional implications can help students move from theoretical awareness to confident usage (Nasution et al., 2021). Equally significant is the role of learner attitudes. Since perception was found to be a strong predictor of practice, cultivating positive attitudes toward grammar learning should be a central instructional concern. Creating interactive,

low-anxiety environments and demonstrating the real-world relevance of grammatical competence can reinforce these attitudes and improve performance outcomes. Furthermore, the potential of intelligent computer-assisted language learning (CALL) systems should not be overlooked. Adaptive technologies that offer personalised feedback and repeated practice opportunities can provide the intensive exposure necessary for proceduralising grammatical knowledge (Shalan et al., 2015). Future research should move beyond reliance on self-report questionnaires by triangulating data with performance-based assessments, such as analyses of student writing or oral production. Such an approach would yield more accurate insights into learners' actual ability to apply transitive and intransitive verbs. Moreover, further studies could examine interaction effects between instructional approaches and learner variables, particularly in relation to how different teaching strategies may moderate the influence of knowledge and perception on practical usage.

## Conclusion

This study has examined the mastery of Arabic transitive and intransitive verbs among students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) through a three-dimensional framework: knowledge, practice, and perception. By combining descriptive and inferential analyses, the study has offered a comprehensive portrait of learners' grammatical competence and the factors that support or hinder its practical application. The findings demonstrate that students possess a relatively high level of theoretical knowledge regarding transitive and intransitive verbs, reflecting their long exposure to Arabic grammar in formal instruction. They were able to define, recognise, and provide examples of both verb types, confirming that conceptual awareness is well established at this stage of study. However, the results also highlighted a noticeable gap between knowledge and practice. Students encountered difficulties in applying these rules consistently in writing and speaking, with frequent mistakes in distinguishing verb types when producing sentences. This "knowing-doing" gap points to the enduring challenge of transforming declarative knowledge into procedural fluency in language learning. Equally important, the study revealed that students hold highly positive perceptions and attitudes toward learning Arabic verbs. They recognised the importance of mastering these verbs for overall fluency, valued interactive teaching methods, and appreciated real-life examples in instruction. These affective findings underscore the central role of motivation and perception in shaping grammar learning outcomes. The inferential results further confirmed this point: both knowledge and perception significantly predicted practice, with perception emerging as an almost equally strong predictor as knowledge. This suggests that learners' attitudes are not merely supplementary but integral to their ability to use grammar accurately.

The implications of these findings are clear. Teachers of Arabic grammar need to design pedagogical approaches that bridge the gap between theory and practice by embedding grammar in communicative tasks, interactive role-play, and contextually meaningful activities. Explicit form-focused feedback should be integrated into communicative practice, allowing students to notice, test, and refine their use of transitive and intransitive verbs. At the same time, scaffolding is necessary to help learners manage the morphological complexity of Arabic, particularly in recognising derivational patterns and their effect on verb transitivity. Given the strong predictive role of perception, fostering positive learner attitudes must also be a central pedagogical

priority. Instructors can achieve this by demonstrating the relevance of grammar in real-world communication and by creating supportive, low-anxiety classroom environments. Furthermore, technology-enhanced solutions, such as intelligent CALL systems, hold promise in offering adaptive practice and timely feedback, thereby accelerating the transition from knowledge to active usage.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The reliance on self-report measures, while useful for capturing perceptions and reported behaviour, may not fully reflect actual language performance. The sample was also confined to a single institution, which limits the generalisability of findings across different contexts of Arabic learning in Malaysia or beyond. Future research should address these limitations by triangulating self-reported data with performance-based assessments such as writing analysis or oral tasks. It would also be valuable to conduct experimental studies testing specific pedagogical interventions, such as role-play, technology integration, or feedback strategies, to examine their causal impact on learners' ability to apply grammar rules in authentic communication. In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of research on Arabic language pedagogy by offering a holistic account of how knowledge, practice, and perception interact in shaping learners' mastery of transitive and intransitive verbs. It highlights the need for pedagogical designs that do not treat grammar as an isolated body of rules but as a dynamic system linked to practice and affective engagement. By embracing approaches that connect cognition, practice, and perception, Arabic language educators can help learners move beyond rote knowledge to confident and accurate usage, thereby fostering both competence and confidence in the mastery of Arabic grammar.

### **Acknowledgement**

The authors would like to extend their deepest appreciation to the students of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) who participated in this study and generously shared their time and responses. Special thanks are also due to the research supervisors and colleagues who provided valuable feedback and encouragement throughout the process of this research. The authors gratefully acknowledge Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) for its continuous support in fostering academic research and providing an environment conducive to scholarly inquiry.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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