

## **The Use Of Google Meet In Learning Arabic Language During Covid-19 Pandemic**

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*Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic has shifted the education landscape from conventional learning to online learning. As reported by the United Nations, Covid-19 has affected roughly 1.6 billion learners. Most instructors need to deliver their teaching activities online including instructors in higher education institutions as all higher education institutions in Malaysia are also closed due to this pandemic. Hence, the academicians need to prepare themselves with the technological knowledge and skills in providing an effective learning environment for students while students need to adapt to this new educational process. There are various online platforms that have been implemented to engage the students in language online learning and one of them is Google Meet. Google Meet is widely used in many higher education institutions to disseminate knowledge. The two theories used in this study are TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) and CoI (Community of Inquiry) to guide the implementation of the use of Google Meet in Arabic language learning. This paper analyses the advantages and disadvantages of using Google Meet in language learning and the implementation of Arabic language learning by employing it.*

*Keywords: Covid-19, Google Meet, Arabic Language, Vocabulary Learning, Online Learning,*

## INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 is the disease that started from Wuhan, China and it has spread to all over the world expeditiously. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Covid-19 as a pandemic in March 2020. The pandemic has created a big impact not just to the health sector but other sectors too, especially in the education sector. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the education system has been seriously affected due to the abrupt switch from face-to-face learning into online learning. As reported by the United Nations (2020), Covid-19 has affected roughly 1.6 billion learners from more than 190 countries. Concerning this issue, many countries have ordered schools to be shut down including higher education institutions in order to slow down the spread of Covid-19. To ensure the sustainability of education, the mode of learning has switched to online learning as (Wahab Ali, 2020).

Likewise in Malaysia, the Ministry of Higher Education has been instructed to close all universities and colleges due to the Movement Control Order (MCO) announced by the Prime Minister. The teaching staff need to embrace the new challenges in integrating the technology and instructional learning whilst equipped themselves with the training provided by university as a means of up-skilling their teaching approaches as well as expanding their capabilities. This situation also affected the students in many aspects such as motivation, emotion and achievement.

Arabic language is a third language class offered by Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and it is a prerequisite course before graduation. Students are allowed to choose any third language class offered such as Arabic language, Mandarin language, Japanese language, French language and so forth. Learning vocabulary is a very important part in any language with the four basic language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. As mentioned by Muhammad Naufal (2021), one of the issues in learning vocabulary is the suitability of the teaching methods used as it would influence the learners' vocabulary acquisition. The research by Norhana (2017) suggested that introducing digital technology in teaching and learning will improve vocabulary acquisition. Due to the deadly pandemic, educators have to integrate technology and instructional learning from face-to-face learning to online learning in order to ensure vocabulary learning is at optimum level.

A study focusing on student's acceptance of Google Meet while using TAM Model as a theoretical background, revealed that students' intention in employing the technology amid Covid-19 pandemic is higher when the online platform has positive effects in teaching and learning process (Rana Saeed et al., 2021). Online learning is an inevitable alternative and it became the most popular teaching approach due to practicality aspects during the Covid-19 outbreak (Rizal Wahid, 2021). There are a plethora of online learning platforms that make teaching more effective and interactive in order to overcome that predicament. For instance, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Zoom Meeting, Cisco Webex, Microsoft Teams and instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram and so on.

Google Meet is one of video conferencing softwares that has been widely used in schools and higher education institutions since the Covid-19 outbreak. Previous studies has shown that the use of Google Meet in learning English was able to improve the students' motivation and determination (Rizal Wahid, 2021) However, the feeling of fear as consequences from the spread of Covid-19 is scaled down to its lowest possible level (Rana Saeed et al., 2020). Similarly, a study using Google Meet as a synchronous language learning tool found that learning outcomes could be achieved via lessons conducted on Google Meet and language activities delivered in online classes are more organized (Chinaza, 2021).

There are many researches conducted to investigate online education in the English language, yet there are hardly any researches pertaining to Arabic language learning during the pandemic especially in Malaysia. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to fill the gap in the relevant literature. This paper also intended to focus on the implementation of Google Meet in learning vocabulary by identifying its advantages and disadvantages particularly in Arabic language.

## **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF GOOGLE MEET**

There are diverse features in the Google Meet application for teaching and learning purposes. Google Meet is a free Google product with an easy setup and one of the best tools for group video conferencing. Hence, as a complimentary application (Silvisca & Latifah, 2020) made it a convenience tool for both teachers or instructors and learners to access Google Meet

effortlessly under any circumstances. In order to make the learning process easier, Google Meet has completely featured a digital whiteboard (Aswir et al., 2021) which allows instructors to write and explain Arabic language lessons comprehensively via an interface provided called 'Jamboard'.

Besides that, this platform is supported by Android, iOS systems and web browsers which make it possible to join the video meeting using computers or/and mobile devices (Basilaia et al., 2020). Therefore, this handy tool allows learners to access the application easily either from their smartphones or laptops. On the other hand, the 'share screen' function in Google Meet helps instructors to deliver teaching materials (Aswir et al., 2021). The function of 'share screen' is not only limited to instructors who host the Google Meet, yet it is also applicable for learners to present their screen materials to others. This promotes a positive learning environment and builds a good rapport between the instructor and learners. In the meantime, the learners also can contribute ideas through this function while the instructor can display various forms of teaching materials such as texts, videos, or even digital textbooks.

Moreover, Google Meet can support up to 250 participants for video conferencing (Gowda & Ayush, 2020). The total number of participants that can be accepted by Google Meet is significant for learners in Universiti Teknologi MARA especially in teaching and learning Arabic language. Each group of students accommodate only up to 30 students which make this application suitable for virtual class. Another useful function of Google Meet among instructors in UiTM is meeting recordings. This function helps instructors to record all activities during the teaching and learning process as well as be able to share the recorded lessons to the learners as their references. Thus, video recordings will assist both instructor and learners to revise any lessons in a short period.

Despite the advantages of Google Meet that has been drawn into teaching and learning sessions, there are some disadvantages related to its usage especially in teaching and learning foreign languages. Learners may face some barriers such as the low signal of the internet and drained quota (Juniartini & Rasna, 2020). Internet stability is necessary for learners and instructors to achieve the best view and quality for both audio and video applications. Taken together, sufficient internet data and quota can also be

defined as an important thing to take into consideration in order to achieve a great learning experience for both instructors and learners in UiTM. Table 1.0 summarises the advantages and disadvantages of Google Meet in learning Arabic language.

**Table 1: Summary of Advantages and Disadvantages Google Meet in Arabic Language Learning**

| <b>Advantages</b>            | <b>Disadvantages</b>   |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Complimentary                | Internet stabilization |
| Jamboard / whiteboard        | Excess internet data   |
| Compatible devices           |                        |
| Share screen                 |                        |
| Large number of participants |                        |

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOGLE MEET IN LEARNING ARABIC VOCABULARY**

In obtaining extensive Arabic vocabulary, learners are encouraged to read Arabic texts, listen to audios and memorize the root words. Once a learner has a vast Arabic vocabulary, he/she will be able to comprehend any Arabic texts easily and transform his ideas into a powerful speech. Learning a third language is an advantage for UiTM's learners especially for Arabic language learners as it is the official language of over 20 countries in the Middle East and the learners will be in high demand in the global job market.

In UiTM's Arabic text book, every chapter starts with the pictorial vocabulary, followed by the dialogues and passages as shown in pictures below.



Fig. 1 Pictorial vocabulary, dialogues and passages in Arabic text book.

By employing Google Meet, instructors and learners are able to share screens by clicking on the present now icon. They can choose to present either their entire screen or select an application window. Learners will listen carefully to the pronunciations from the instructor and will be asked to pronounce words clearly and correctly by turning on the microphone in Google Meet. Every letter in Arabic language has its articulation points otherwise known as makhraj, either from mouth or throat. The learners need to guess the meaning of words based on the pictures or context of sentences while the instructor will correct their mistakes. Meanwhile, the instructor would use the Google Jamboard to illustrate the meaning as learners will get a slight or indirect indication of words. As such, learners can channel their responses or answers through two ways, which are unmuting the microphone or typing the answers in the chat box provided whereby it is visible to other learners as well. Additionally, if there are any questions or opinions, the learners can click on the icon raise hand to allure the attention of the instructor. This will make the learning environment more interactive as it encourages two-way communication between the instructor and learners. Subsequently, Google Meet allows the instructor to present the vocabularies in PowerPoint format through share screen features and it would help learners in gaining a better understanding on how to use the vocabularies precisely.

To test the understanding of the learners and increase their engagement in virtual classes, the learning process of Arabic vocabulary will be reinforced with game-based learning platforms that could be conducted via the screen sharing function. For instance, Kahoot! Quizizz, and QuizWhizzer are just a few examples. The use of these game-based learning platforms boost the level of energy of the learners as they will feel excited while competing with each other. The experience can also be enhanced through background music available in the platforms which could be broadcast through the microphone in Google Meet as adds on to the excitement. Game-based learning can aid learners to achieve higher academic performance in Arabic language courses and increase their motivation by exploiting game-based learning (Eltahir et al., 2021). Instead of having long lectures sleepy headed, learners are divided into small groups and are given translation tasks to be completed within the prescribed time. After finishing the tasks, learners need to present their translations in Google Meet facilitated by the instructor. The intention of these activities are to encourage collaborative learning and teamwork skills among learners. The instructor also utilizes the meeting recording features offered by Google Meet as it would ease the learners for revision at any time.

In short, Google Meet is one of the cutting-edge online platforms that suit the needs of the learners in learning vocabulary amidst the global lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic.

## **LEARNING THEORY ADOPTED IN LEARNING ARABIC LANGUAGE**

In this section, researchers will briefly derive some learning theories that can be adopted in current study which covers the suitability and appropriateness of learning Arabic language online.

### **4.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory**

The rapid evolution in technology has affected many aspects in human lifestyles as well as the education system across the world. The technology adoption has demands technology savvy skills in order to fulfil some elements in educational sectors. Gopal, Singh and Aggarwal (2021) proved that students' satisfaction in online

classes has a positive effect on their perceived academic performance throughout the pandemic period. As pandemic Covid-19 hits the world, technology adoption is no longer an option instead it has become a necessity. Technology plays a vital role in all educational levels in the blink of an eye. Most higher education institutions around the world have widely adopted distance learning programs and open educational applications which involve students' engagement virtually as recommended by UNESCO. Various online platforms are used in order to functionalize teaching and learning processes and at the same time servicing students' needs.

TAM is one of the basic models that is used in this study, it is crucial to understand two determinants or underlying factors of accepting and rejecting information technology. Davis (1989) summarised it as; firstly, perceived usefulness which defined here as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance. Secondly, perceived ease of use, in contrast, refers to "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort. There are various models of technology acceptance that can be employed depending on the nature of the studies (Siti Fatimah, Melor & Harwati, 2019). Tsai (2015) for example deploys TAM as course evaluation which integrates Course Management Systems (CMSs) and TAM. The studies show that most students displayed positive learning outcomes, indicating that the instruction model could contribute to the effectiveness of learning English writing. Studies also emphasize the role of student attitude, since the success of e-learning depends largely on student acceptance of the system and willingness to use it. Some studies also indicate that the employment of suitable digital tools would enrich the methods of teaching and learning which also contribute favourable impacts for the learners as well.

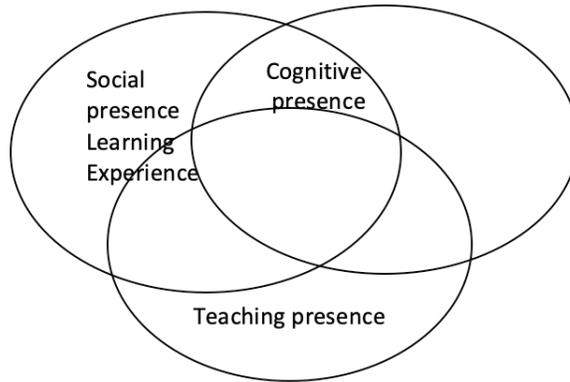
#### 4.2 Community of Inquiry (CoI)

The three components (social, cognitive, and teaching) as shown in figure 2 introduced in The Community of Inquiry (CoI) are merged together in identifying the presence of learning experience in teaching and learning process. This model initiated by Garrison, Anderson and

Archer (2000) supports the idea of an active online learning community in which caters the needs for both learners and teachers as well. It manifests the interactions between learners and teachers. Many highly interactive learning models for online and blended courses among students and teachers are designed based on the CoI model (Picciano, 2017). These three dimensions have shown a plausible and meaningful learning online as it stimulates an affectionate, “real” learning environment, both self-satisfaction among students and teachers, and a sense of belonging.

The implementation of this model as suggested by Huang et.al (2020) can be carried out through various examples in learning and activities which accommodate those three dimensions in which:

1. Teaching presence: facilitate students’ learning activity, provide sound and positive feedback.
2. Social presence: promotes a “real” online environment through social participation. Make use of online activities such as announcements, emails, videos comprehension. Offers a flexible time table for students and teachers to deliberate with answers and any concerns throughout the courses by using common web video conferencing tools such as Google Meet, WebEx, Zoom and Skype. Also, encourage students to share information and initiate collaborative works.
3. Cognitive presence: provide an interactive activity, experiments, simulations to support student’s development on skills, thinking and even knowledge itself. Encourage diversity from multiple perspectives and points of view, promote open discussions regarding any differences that take place.



**Fig. 2 Community of Inquiry Model (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000)**

The CoI can be positively instilled in any foreign language online learning especially Arabic language by using the Google Meet platform which offers convenient and free access options. Ironsi (2021) showcased the efficiency of Google Meet. However, many issues related to internet constraints such as unavailability of Internet data and poor Internet connection needs to be tackled. It is demonstrated that the use of Google Meet was somewhat effective as a language learning tool for the online distant program especially during this situation. In fact, students and teachers have the equal chance to create an effective interaction even though the teaching and learning process conducted virtually in this pandemic outbreak. The learning experience can make its presence assisted by any online learning platform such as video conferencing like Google Meet. This practice would definitely benefit students as they can apply their previous experience and knowledge in Arabic language skills synchronously and teachers may also highlight some linguistic errors made by students.

## **EFFECTS ON USING GOOGLE MEET IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

It seems that instructors and learners' acceptance in using Google Meet is positively acceptable as this application is the easiest and the most flexible one among other online learning applications. By having a google account, anyone can easily register for any other applications from google such as Google Mail, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Google Drive, Google Calendar and so on. Each and every of these applications that are available from Google were very useful and have been used by a lot of people around the world.

Evidence from previous studies that were conducted by previous researchers about students' acceptance of using Google Meet that can make learning more understanding and organized, for example a study by Ironsi (2021). Besides, the study also stated that the preservice teachers perceived the use of Google Meet as a language learning tool that enhances clarity in language teaching, stimulates understanding of lessons and collaborative learning as suggested by other studies. A study conducted by Amrizal, Zohri Hamdani (2021) also provides evidence that using Google Meet can increase students' writing skills by data analysis that were made through pre-test and post-test. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Fakhruddin (2018) showed that the use of Google Meet as the teaching media combined with the use of speaking activities and classroom English was proven to be effective to improve the students' speaking skills. Thus, from the previous studies we also can conclude that using Google Meet for learning Arabic also can be a helpful tool as it gives many positive impacts throughout the learning process.

Google Meet provides many user-friendly features that can help students to learn language easily. As we know, there are senior lecturers or teachers that struggle every day to cope with the new technologies in teaching because they are familiar with the traditional "chalk and talk" method. Thus, by using Google Meet that was easy to handle and flexible to interact with, it gives a positive impact to instructors and students. Among the Google Meet's free features are an unlimited number of meetings. It allows the instructor to conduct as many classes as they want. After that, live captioning during meetings also will help students to get the captions on the screen when the instructor starts to talk, it will appear on screen and it works like subtitles

in movies which aids the note taking process of students during lessons. In addition, Google Meet also possesses the live meeting recording function. The instructor can provide the recorded videos for students, and this is very helpful for students to do revision.

Furthermore, other features such as video and audio preview screen, screen sharing with participants and messaging with participants also provide an interactive learning environment for students. Not only instructors can share their materials, but students also can share their materials during the teaching and learning process. Besides, this application also can be used by smartphones, tablets and laptops at any time and anywhere. All of these features are very helpful in language learning and the further explanations about the implementations of Google Meet in learning Arabic vocabulary were explained precisely at part three of this paper.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, this study shows the advantages and disadvantages of using Google Meet in language learning. Besides, this study also emphasizes the role of Google Meet as an ODL platform in learning Arabic language in UiTM, since the success of online learning depends on acceptance of the system and the willingness to use it. Hence, Google Meet is considered as one the best alternative for online learning during this pandemic outbreak. Google Meet can be considered as the easiest and famous application as it has several advantages and it's user-friendliness. It is recommended to conduct further research and investigation by collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Thus, it would be interesting to include respondents from students, teachers or instructors and assess other aspects of languages such as skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) and motivation.

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