

Original Research

Received 30 June 2026

Revised 05 Aug 2026

Accepted 18 Aug 2026

Natural Resources for Human
Health 2026, Vol. 6 (17s): 363–384

KEYWORDS:

Arabic language acquisition;
communication barriers;
motivation; communicative
competence; non-native Arabic
speakers

The Impact of Communication Barriers on Arabic Language Acquisition among Non-Native Speakers: The Mediating Roles of Motivation and Communicative Competence

Mazoun Al-Awni Nassab Al-Khamshi¹, Dr. Ahmed Ahmad Al-Sayed Shteivi², Dr. Ansam Muhammad Khaled Al-Husseini³

¹ Assistant Professor of Grammar and Linguistics, University of Hail, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Arabic Language, M.alanzey@UOH.EDU.SA

² Professor, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Arabic Language, University of Hail, A.shetewi@UOH.EDU.SA, ORCID: 0009-0006-6909-8941

³ Associate Professor, College of Arts and Arts, Department of Arabic Language, University of Hail, a.alhoseny@UOH.EDU.SA, ORCID: 0009-0002-6199-9631

ABSTRACT: This study investigates the impact of communication barriers on Arabic language acquisition among non-native speakers, with particular attention to the parallel mediating roles of motivation and communicative competence. Communication barriers were conceptualized across five dimensions: personal, linguistic, psychological, social, and cultural barriers. A quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 233 non-native Arabic learners enrolled in the Arabic Language Teaching Unit at the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia. The proposed model was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results demonstrated satisfactory measurement reliability and validity and showed that the model explained 60.6% of the variance in Arabic language acquisition. Personal and linguistic barriers had significant negative direct effects on Arabic language acquisition, whereas psychological, social, and cultural barriers had no significant direct effects. Motivation and communicative competence positively influenced Arabic language acquisition, with communicative competence demonstrating the stronger relationship. Mediation analysis further revealed that motivation significantly mediated the effects of personal, psychological, social, and cultural barriers, but not linguistic barriers. Communicative competence significantly mediated the relationships between all five communication barriers and Arabic language acquisition. These findings demonstrate that communication barriers operate through distinct direct and indirect mechanisms rather than affecting language acquisition uniformly. The study contributes to second-language acquisition research by integrating multidimensional communication barriers with psychological and communicative mechanisms within a single explanatory model. Practically, the findings emphasize the importance of reducing communication barriers while simultaneously

1. INTRODUCTION

Interest in learning Arabic as a second and foreign language has increased dramatically during the last two decades. Traditionally known for Islamic scholarship, the Arabic language has now become significant not only for higher education, diplomacy, international business, media, culture, but also for geopolitical interests. Therefore, universities, especially in Saudi Arabia, are witnessing rising enrolment of non-native Arabic speakers seeking to learn the language academically, professionally, culturally

and religiously (Aljanadbah & Al Sharef, 2024). However, despite this growing trend, learning Arabic remains one of the most difficult second languages due to its complicated morphology, rich phonology, flexible syntax, lexical derivation and coexistence of Classical, Modern Standard and regional dialects. These characteristics demand non-native speakers of Arabic to develop communicative competence in addition to grammatical knowledge (Alshammari et al., 2024; Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Current second-language acquisition research sees the language learning process as multidimensional, combining cognitive, psychological, linguistic, communicative and sociocultural aspects. Communication language teaching and interactionist approaches emphasise that language is acquired not through memorisation of grammar rules, but by interaction, comprehension and authentic communication (Long, 1983; Krashen, 1985; Littlewood, 1981; Brown, 2007). However, non-native Arabic speakers still experience numerous difficulties connected to communication (Bani Amer & Al-Rababah, 2020). These difficulties include problems with pronunciation and grammar, poor vocabulary, communication anxiety, lack of confidence, insufficient opportunities for interaction, unfamiliar cultural norms, and poor communicative experience. These findings are in line with Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1985) and Interaction Hypothesis by Long (1983), suggesting that communication barriers hinder learners' ability to receive input, negotiate meaning, produce output, and learn the language (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1983; Littlewood, 1981). Recent studies revealed the significance of psychological and communicative factors for Arabic language learning. For example, Alhamami (2025) found that attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, emotional experiences, and communication anxiety play a crucial role in learners' engagement in Arabic learning. At the same time, Alshammari et al. (2024) showed that Arabic learners are motivated by religious, cultural and educational reasons, but face difficulties due to poor communicative opportunities and discrepancies between Modern Standard Arabic and the spoken variety. More recently, Alhamami and Alalmay (2026) discovered that communication anxiety leads to burnout and disengagement, while perceived communicative competence improves academic effectiveness and learner intentions to learn Arabic. Thus, communication-related experiences affect Arabic language learning through psychological and communicative mechanisms. Despite these developments, some research gaps remain. Current research usually investigates separately the concepts of communication anxiety, motivation, communicative language teaching or learner intentions without considering multidimensionality of communication barriers. In addition, few studies explored Arabic language acquisition as the educational outcome, and none of them paid attention to the mediating roles of motivation and communicative competence in Arabic language learning. To fill these gaps, the current research builds and tests the integrated model of Arabic language acquisition by non-native learners enrolled in the Arabic Language Teaching Unit of the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia. The study investigates direct effects of five dimensions of communication barriers – personal, linguistic, psychological, social and cultural barriers, as well as the parallel mediating roles of motivation and communicative competence.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model developed for this study based on the literature on second-language acquisition and Arabic language learning. The model proposes that five dimensions of communication barriers—personal, linguistic, psychological, social, and cultural barriers—directly influence Arabic language acquisition while also affecting it indirectly through two parallel mediating variables: motivation and communicative competence. Motivation and communicative competence are further hypothesized to positively influence Arabic language acquisition. This framework provides the theoretical basis for examining both the direct and indirect mechanisms through which communication barriers shape Arabic language acquisition among non-native learners.

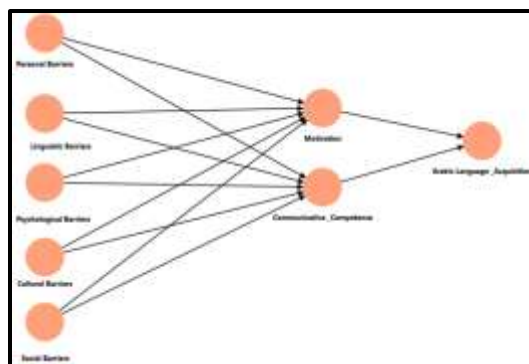


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Communication Barriers And Arabic Language Acquisition

Theoretical foundation of second-language acquisition (SLA) research consistently recognises that language learning involves more than just vocabulary and grammar, and includes ability to communicate. According to Input Hypothesis, Interaction Hypothesis and Communicative Language Teaching approach, language acquisition occurs through receiving comprehensible input, interaction, negotiating meaning and authentic use of the target language (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1983; Littlewood, 1981; Ellis, 2008; Brown, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). This idea is especially relevant for Arabic language since learners should acquire linguistic structures and develop sociocultural knowledge simultaneously. Therefore, communication barriers can hinder language acquisition since they reduce opportunities of receiving input, producing output, getting feedback and interacting authentically. Modern studies conceptualise communication barriers as multidimensional construct including personal, linguistic, psychological, social and cultural barriers, each of them affecting the language learning process in different ways (Abushihab et al., 2025).

2.1.1 Personal Barriers And Arabic Language Acquisition

Personal barriers are defined as individual characteristics of learners that reduce their participation in communication due to low self-confidence, fear of mistakes, communication apprehension, and reluctance to speak. This reduces learners' willingness to interact in the classroom and other authentic settings, limiting language practice and feedback opportunities (Ghazali et al., 2026). From interactionist perspective, decreased participation reduces opportunities of negotiation of meaning needed for language acquisition, while communicative language teaching emphasises the importance of frequent communication for turning linguistic knowledge into communicative abilities (Long, 1983; Littlewood, 1981; Brown, 2007). Empirical evidence from Arabic language education also shows that learners who participate in communicative activities confidently are more successful than those avoiding such activities due to personal barriers (Al-Hamoud, 2020). Therefore, personal barriers are expected to hinder Arabic language acquisition.

H1a: Personal barriers negatively influence Arabic language acquisition.

2.1.2 Linguistic Barriers And Arabic Language Acquisition

Linguistic barriers arise from learners' difficulties in pronouncing, using vocabulary, grammar, constructing sentences and special features of Arabic. These barriers reduce learners' communication abilities and lead them to avoid communication activities. Arabic adds extra complexity to the process due to the richness of morphological system, unusual phonological system, and existence of Modern Standard Arabic and regional dialects (Fauzi & Rahmawati, 2025). This hinders the process of interaction, produces less comprehensible output, and limits learners' feedback opportunities, slowing the language development (Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Recent studies also consistently reveal pronunciation difficulties, poor vocabulary and lack of speaking practice as major obstacles to Arabic proficiency among non-native learners (Alshammari et al., 2024). Therefore, linguistic barriers are expected to negatively affect Arabic language acquisition.

H1b: Linguistic barriers negatively influence Arabic language acquisition.

2.1.3 Psychological Barriers And Arabic Language Acquisition

Psychological barriers consist in learners' anxiety, stress and unpleasant feelings experienced during language use. Psychological barriers decrease learners' willingness to communicate, increase avoidance and prevent continued engagement in the learning activities (Mohammed Raffi et al., 2022). SLA research recognises anxiety as one of the most influential affective factors limiting second language acquisition because it inhibits learners' ability to process input, participate in interaction and perform confidently in communicative situation (Brown, 2007; Ellis, 2008). Recent studies in Arabic language education also show that communication anxiety negatively affects learners' engagement and academic functioning, reducing confidence in using Arabic in authentic situations (Alhamami, 2025; Alhamami & Alalmay, 2026). Therefore, psychological barriers are expected to hinder Arabic language acquisition.

H1c: Psychological barriers negatively influence Arabic language acquisition.

2.1.4 Social Barriers And Arabic Language Acquisition

Social barriers are defined as the limited availability or quality of communication with teachers, peers, and native Arabic speakers. Since language proficiency is developed in repeated social interaction, limited opportunities of communication lead to the

reduced exposure to authentic language use, feedback and collaborative learning. Interactionist theories emphasise the role of social communication as conditions for the negotiation of meaning and the refinement of linguistic knowledge (Long, 1983). The studies in Arabic language education also reveal that learners greatly benefit from collaborative learning, social communication and interaction with native speakers, while limited communicative opportunities hinder language acquisition (Al-Fozan, 2024). Therefore, social barriers are expected to negatively influence Arabic language acquisition.

H1d: Social barriers negatively influence Arabic language acquisition.

2.1.5 Cultural Barriers And Arabic Language Acquisition

Cultural barriers are created when learners have difficulties in understanding sociocultural norms regulating Arabic communication, including politeness norms, discourse and context of communication. Effective communication in Arabic language requires not only linguistic competence, but also ability to interpret the message and respond appropriately to the situation. Insufficient knowledge about culture may decrease learners' confidence and make it harder for them to participate successfully in authentic communication (Mokhtar & Haron, 2021). Previous research has repeatedly shown that combining cultural knowledge with language instruction enhances learners' communicative skills and overall language development among non-native Arabic learners (Alshammari et al., 2024). Therefore, cultural barriers are expected to negatively influence Arabic language acquisition.

H1e: Cultural barriers negatively influence Arabic language acquisition.

2.2 Communication Barriers, Motivation And Communicative Competence

Contemporary second-language acquisition (SLA) research increasingly recognises that the influence of learning conditions on learners' achievements is usually not direct. Instead, learners' experiences within the learning conditions shape certain psychological and communicative processes, which in turn determine the language learning success. Among these processes, motivation and communicative competence are consistently seen as the strongest predictors of language development. Motivation motivates learners to put efforts, persevere despite the difficulties and actively participate in learning, while communicative competence allows to translate linguistic knowledge into communicative abilities (Al Momani, 2024). Together, these concepts explain why learners exposed to similar learning conditions often show significantly different achievements (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 2008; Brown, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). This concept is especially relevant for Arabic language learning, since the language requires considerable psychological engagement and communicative practice.

2.2.1 Communication Barriers And Motivation

Motivation has always been recognised as the key factor of successful second language learning. Gardner's socio-educational model sees motivation as desire, efforts and positive attitudes towards language learning, while Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System emphasises that future self-image, learning experiences and environmental influences motivate learners to engage in learning (Gardner, 1985, 2000; Dörnyei, 2005). In any case, motivated learners participate more actively in communicative activities, persevere despite difficulties and seek opportunities to communicate in the target language outside of the classroom (Kuluşaklı & Genç, 2024).

In the context of Arabic language education, motivation is formed not only by the personal goals of learners, but also by their communication experiences. Arabic learners are usually motivated by religious, cultural, educational and professional reasons, but this motivation decreases when communication becomes hard or unsuccessful (Alshammari et al., 2024). Communication barriers have several interconnected mechanisms of undermining motivation. Personal barriers reduce learners' confidence and willingness to participate, linguistic barriers make learners see the learning process as difficult, psychological barriers cause anxiety and avoidance behavior, social barriers restrict opportunities for interaction, and cultural barriers lower the confidence in the correct communication in Arabic-speaking environment. As a result, learners' expectations of success, enjoyment of the process and willingness to put effort in learning Arabic are reduced (Makayev et al., 2021).

Several recent studies in Arabic language education support this integrative approach to motivation. For example, Alhamami (2025) discovered that emotional and social experiences influence psychological engagement of learners, while Alshammari et al. (2024) found out that communication opportunities strengthen learners' motivation, increasing their confidence and successful participation in Arabic-speaking environment. These findings suggest that although each communication barrier acts differently, they collectively reduce learners' motivation and their commitment to learning Arabic.

Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H2a: Personal barriers negatively influence learners' motivation.
- H2b: Linguistic barriers negatively influence learners' motivation.
- H2c: Psychological barriers negatively influence learners' motivation.
- H2d: Social barriers negatively influence learners' motivation.
- H2e: Cultural barriers negatively influence learners' motivation.

2.2.2 Communication Barriers And Communicative Competence

Communicative competence has always been seen as the main goal of modern language education because language learning requires more than just grammatical knowledge. After introducing the concept by Hymes, communicative competence has been defined as learners' ability to use language correctly from linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic points of view (Littlewood, 1981; Brown, 2007; Ellis, 2008). It thus shows learners' ability to understand messages, negotiate meaning, express ideas, and adjust to different sociocultural situations.

The development of communicative competence depends on frequent opportunities for authentic communication. Communication barriers hamper this process by reducing learners' participation in communication and limiting the opportunities for receiving input, producing output, negotiating meaning and getting feedback. Even though the mechanisms of each type of barrier are different, their influence is similar. Personal barriers discourage learners to communicate, linguistic barriers decrease communication accuracy and fluency, psychological barriers cause communication anxiety, social barriers reduce interaction with teachers and native speakers, and cultural barriers impede learners' ability to interpret and use culturally appropriate communication. As a result, learners have fewer opportunities to develop the communication skills needed for successful Arabic language use.

Empirical evidence from Arabic language education fully supports this connection. Almelhes (2024) revealed that authentic communication, collaboration, teacher feedback, and communication outside of the classroom were the main contributing factors to the communicative development, while poor speaking opportunities and pronunciation difficulties significantly hindered learners. Similarly, Alhamami and Alalmay (2026) showed that perceived communicative competence improved learners' academic performance while reducing exhaustion, disengagement, and cynicism in intensive Arabic language courses. These findings indicate that communicative competence develops primarily through communication and thus is highly sensitive to communication barriers.

Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H3a: Personal barriers negatively influence communicative competence.
- H3b: Linguistic barriers negatively influence communicative competence.
- H3c: Psychological barriers negatively influence communicative competence.
- H3d: Social barriers negatively influence communicative competence.
- H3e: Cultural barriers negatively influence communicative competence.

2.3 Motivation, Communicative Competence And Arabic Language Acquisition

While communication barriers shape the conditions of language learning, successful Arabic language acquisition ultimately depends on learners' psychological engagement and their ability to communicate effectively. Current SLA research increasingly sees language learning as the dynamic process in which the motivational and communicative processes interact and complement each other to transform the opportunities into actual language development. Motivation motivates learners to invest effort, participate in learning activities and persevere despite the difficulties, while communicative competence helps to implement linguistic knowledge into authentic communication. Together, these complementary processes help to explain why learners with the same instructional experience show different levels of language achievements (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 2008; Brown, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Motivation has been consistently recognised as one of the strongest predictors of second language achievement because it determines learners' willingness to start, sustain and regulate their learning behaviors. Gardner's socio-educational model emphasises desire, efforts and positive attitudes towards language learning, while Dörnyei's motivational framework highlights future self-concept and learning experiences as key factors in engaging in learning (Gardner, 1985, 2000; Dörnyei, 2005). In the context of Arabic language education, motivation is especially important because learners should stay motivated while learning complicated linguistic structures and adapting to new cultural and communication norms. Recent studies show that motivated

learners participate actively in authentic communication, persevere despite difficulties and achieve higher levels of Arabic proficiency (Alshammari et al., 2024; Alhamami, 2025).

Communicative competence complements motivation by allowing learners to transform their efforts into effective language use. Unlike seeing proficiency simply as linguistic knowledge, modern language education sees language acquisition as learners' ability to use language in authentic communication (Littlewood, 1981; Brown, 2007; Ellis, 2008). Within Arabic language learning, communicative competence includes not only accurate language production, but also the ability to interpret the cultural meaning, negotiate meaning in interaction and adapt the communication to authentic situation. Studies consistently show that learners who engage in authentic communication frequently receive more linguistic input, get feedback and have more opportunities to develop their language skills. A study by Alhamami and Alalmay (2026) reveals that authentic interaction and perceived communicative competence contribute to stronger language development and successful learning experience.

All of these considerations suggest that motivation and communicative competence represent two complementary paths to Arabic language proficiency. Motivation encourages the sustained engagement in learning activities, while communicative competence allows learners to implement their efforts in authentic communication. Studying both constructs simultaneously therefore provides a more complete explanation of Arabic language acquisition compared to considering them separately.

Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Motivation positively influences Arabic language acquisition.

H5: Communicative competence positively influences Arabic language acquisition.

2.4 The Mediating Roles Of Motivation And Communicative Competence

While communication barriers are widely seen as obstacles to successful language learning, current SLA research suggests that their impact on language acquisition is mostly indirect. Communication barriers do not affect learning outcomes directly, but rather influence learners' psychological engagement and communicative development, which in turn determine the extent of language acquisition. This perspective reflects a more general shift in applied linguistics from identifying predictors of achievement to explaining mechanisms of impact of the learning environment on the educational outcomes. Motivation and communicative competence are therefore conceptualised in the current study as complementary mediators of multidimensional communication barriers on Arabic language acquisition (Ellis, 2008; Brown, 2007; Dörnyei, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

The mediating role of motivation is strongly supported by the theories of second-language learning. The socio-educational model of Gardner predicts that environmental conditions influence language achievement through learners' motivation, while Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System proposes that learning experience influences learners' willingness to invest effort and persist in language learning (Gardner, 1985, 2000; Dörnyei, 2005). Communication barriers are therefore the negative learning conditions decreasing learners' confidence, enjoyment and expectations of success, ultimately reducing their sustained engagement in Arabic language learning. Empirical evidence from Arabic language education also supports this perspective. Alshammari et al. (2024) showed that learners' motivation is closely related to opportunities of authentic communication and successful integration into Arabic-speaking environment, while Alhamami (2025) found that anxiety and other communication-related experiences affect psychological engagement in Arabic learning. These findings suggest that communication barriers are likely to hinder Arabic language acquisition by reducing learners' motivation first.

Communicative competence provides a second mechanism. According to interactionist and communicative language teaching approaches, language proficiency is developed through communication, negotiation of meaning and feedback (Long, 1983; Littlewood, 1981; Ellis, 2008). Communication barriers disrupt this process by discouraging participation, reducing interaction, and limiting communication practice. As a result, learners have fewer opportunities to develop communicative skills needed for language use. This relationship is supported by empirical evidence from Arabic language education. Almelhes (2024) revealed that authentic communication, collaboration, teacher feedback and communication outside of the classroom were among the strongest contributing factors to Arabic language development, while poor speaking opportunities and pronunciation difficulties limited communicative development. Similarly, Alhamami and Alalmay (2026) found that high perceived communicative competence improved learners' academic performance while reducing their psychological experiences in Arabic language learning. These findings suggest that communication barriers may influence Arabic language acquisition by hindering the development of communicative competence.

All of these considerations suggest that motivation and communicative competence operate simultaneously and not in competition. Communication barriers influence learners' psychological engagement while also limiting their opportunities for developing communication skills. These complementary mechanisms provide a more complete explanation of Arabic language

acquisition than the models considering only direct relationships. Despite increasing attention to motivation, communication anxiety, communicative competence and learners' engagement in Arabic language education, empirical studies considering simultaneously both motivation and communicative competence as parallel mediators of multidimensional communication barriers on Arabic language acquisition are scarce. This represents one of the principal theoretical contributions of the current study.

Thus, the following mediation hypotheses are proposed.

Motivation

H6a: Motivation mediates the relationship between personal barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H6b: Motivation mediates the relationship between linguistic barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H6c: Motivation mediates the relationship between psychological barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H6d: Motivation mediates the relationship between social barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H6e: Motivation mediates the relationship between cultural barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

Communicative Competence

H7a: Communicative competence mediates the relationship between personal barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H7b: Communicative competence mediates the relationship between linguistic barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H7c: Communicative competence mediates the relationship between psychological barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H7d: Communicative competence mediates the relationship between social barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

H7e: Communicative competence mediates the relationship between cultural barriers and Arabic language acquisition.

3. Methodology

The current study used a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional research design to investigate the relationships between communication barriers, motivation, communicative competence, and Arabic language acquisition among non-native Arabic learners. The quantitative approach was appropriate for the study since the purpose was to test the theoretically constructed structural model and analyse both direct and indirect relationships between multiple constructs. The explanatory design allowed to investigate the causal relationships proposed in the conceptual framework, while the cross-sectional survey was a practical way to collect data from learners at one point in time under natural educational conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

The study was conducted at the Arabic Language Teaching Unit of the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia, which provides intensive Arabic language programmes for international and non-native Arabic speakers with different linguistic and cultural background. This educational context provides learners not only with classroom instruction, but also with opportunities of authentic communication in Arabic-speaking environment, which makes it appropriate for investigation of factors influencing Arabic language acquisition. The target population was all non-native learners enrolled in the unit during the study period. The data was collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire with 233 valid responses for further analysis.

The questionnaire was constructed based on the literature on second-language acquisition, Arabic language education, communication barriers, motivation, communicative competence, and language acquisition. Measurement items were adapted from existing instruments and adjusted to the context of Arabic language learning by non-native speakers. Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in Arabic language teaching and educational research to make sure of its content validity and linguistic appropriateness. Several minor changes were made according to their suggestions. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The conceptual model included five dimensions of communication barriers as independent variables: personal, linguistic, psychological, social, and cultural barriers. Motivation and communicative competence were specified as parallel mediators, while Arabic language acquisition was the dependent variable. All constructs were operationalised as reflective latent variables because their indicators reflected the constructs themselves.

The data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics and SmartPLS 4. SPSS was used for data screening and descriptive statistics analysis, including checking for missing values, outliers, and demographic characteristics of respondents. The proposed relationships between constructs were then analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM was chosen as the method of analysis since it is well-suited for prediction-oriented research with multiple latent constructs, mediation analysis, and structural models and has become increasingly common in educational and applied linguistics research (Hair et al., 2022). Following PLS-SEM procedures, the analysis was performed in two steps. First, the measurement model was tested by estimating indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability, convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the

Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Second, the structural model was tested by evaluating collinearity, path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and mediation effects. The significance of all direct and indirect relationships was evaluated using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, resulting in standardized path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and bias-corrected confidence intervals for hypothesis testing.

4. RESULTS

The results were obtained using SmartPLS 4 based on the PLS-SEM algorithm and bootstrapping procedures. The results section reports the respondent profile, common method bias and collinearity statistics, measurement model assessment, structural model assessment, direct effects, indirect effects, total effects, and hypothesis summary.

Respondent Profile

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Less than 25 years	233	100%
Level	Diploma	151	%65
	Bachelor's	82	%35
Duration	Less than 1 year	89	%38
	1-2 years	144	%62
Reason	Religious	75	%32
	Academic	51	%22
	Work	107	%46
Nationality	Nigeria	1	%0
	Ghana	39	%17
	Chad	27	%12
	Indonesia	58	%25
	Afghanistan	42	%18
	Cameroon	28	%12
	Spain	18	%8
	Bangladesh	6	%3
	Benin	4	%2
	United States of America	3	%1
	Philippines	7	%3
Total		233	%100

The demographic characteristics in Table 1 show that all 233 participants were younger than 25 years. Most were diploma-level students (65%), while 35% were bachelor's students. Regarding duration, 62% had been enrolled for 1–2 years, compared with 38% for less than one year. Work was the most frequently reported reason (46%), followed by religious (32%) and academic reasons (22%). The sample was internationally diverse, with Indonesia representing the largest nationality group (25%), followed

by Afghanistan (18%) and Ghana (17%), while the remaining participants came from Chad, Cameroon, Spain, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Benin, Nigeria, and the United States.

Common Method Bias And Collinearity Assessment

Table 2. Outer Collinearity Statistics (Indicator VIF)

Indicator	VIF	Indicator	VIF
ALA1	2.669	LB4	2.2
ALA2	2.122	LB5	1.979
ALA3	2.003	LB6	1.815
ALA4	1.898	MOT1	2.187
ALA5	1.915	MOT2	2.498
ALA6	2.018	MOT3	2.116
ALA7	2.226	MOT4	2.136
ALA8	2	MOT5	2.151
ALA9	2.103	MOT6	2.226
CB1	1.942	MOT7	2.101
CB2	1.829	MOT8	2.207
CB3	1.63	MOT9	1.794
CB4	1.51	PB1	1.899
CC1	2.032	PB2	2.235
CC2	2.282	PB3	1.776
CC3	2.05	PB4	2.122
CC4	2.27	PB5	1.923
CC5	2.078	PSB1	1.857
CC6	1.935	PSB2	1.825
CC7	2.616	PSB3	1.763
CC8	2.007	PSB4	1.56
CC9	1.812	SB1	1.73
LB1	1.936	SB2	1.983
LB2	2.602	SB3	2.041
LB3	1.907	SB4	1.716

Table 2 reports the outer collinearity statistics for the measurement indicators. The indicator VIF values ranged from 1.510 to 2.669 across the indicators included in the measurement model.

Table 3. Inner Collinearity Statistics (Path VIF)

Path	VIF
Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	1.945
Cultural Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	1.162
Cultural Barriers -> Communicative Competence	1.078
Cultural Barriers -> Motivation	1.078

Path	VIF
Linguistic Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	1.281
Linguistic Barriers -> Communicative Competence	1.151
Linguistic Barriers -> Motivation	1.151
Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	1.759
Personal Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	1.273
Personal Barriers -> Communicative Competence	1.116
Personal Barriers -> Motivation	1.116
Psychological Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	1.272
Psychological Barriers -> Communicative Competence	1.156
Psychological Barriers -> Motivation	1.156
Social Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	1.282
Social Barriers -> Communicative Competence	1.096
Social Barriers -> Motivation	1.096

Table 3 presents the inner collinearity statistics for the structural paths included in the model. The path VIF values ranged from 1.078 to 1.945 across the endogenous constructs and their predictors.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated prior to testing the structural relationships to ensure the reliability and validity of the latent constructs. Following the recommended PLS-SEM procedures (Hair et al., 2022), the assessment included indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability was examined using standardized outer loadings, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), convergent validity was evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Only after establishing satisfactory measurement properties was the structural model evaluated. Figure (2) shows the measurement model

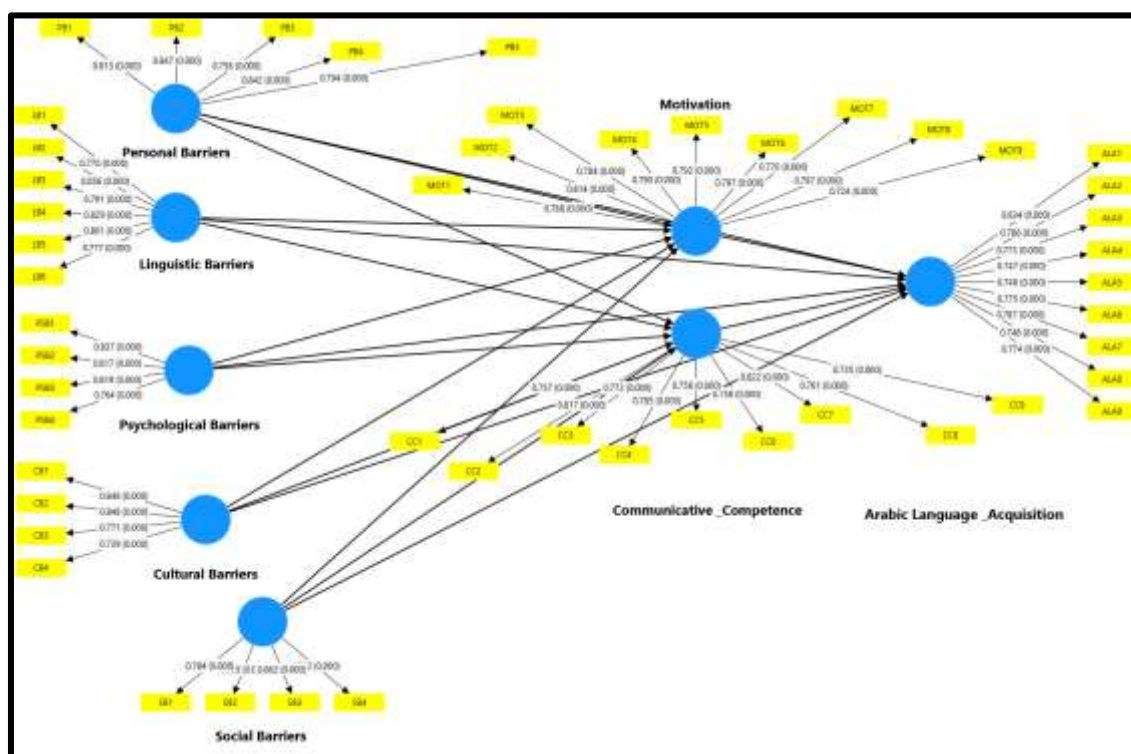


Figure (2): the measurement model

Table 4. Standardized Outer Loadings of the Measurement Model

Construct	Indicator	Loading	t-value	p-value
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA1	0.834	43.069	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA2	0.786	31.617	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA3	0.773	28.148	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA4	0.747	24.016	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA5	0.748	23.023	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA6	0.775	29.850	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA7	0.787	30.517	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA8	0.748	26.115	< .001
Arabic Language Acquisition	ALA9	0.774	28.901	< .001
Cultural Barriers	CB1	0.848	36.546	< .001
Cultural Barriers	CB2	0.848	39.864	< .001
Cultural Barriers	CB3	0.771	19.803	< .001
Cultural Barriers	CB4	0.739	15.944	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC1	0.757	25.357	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC2	0.817	38.504	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC3	0.772	26.763	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC4	0.785	28.027	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC5	0.758	23.082	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC6	0.758	26.024	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC7	0.822	33.718	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC8	0.761	24.921	< .001
Communicative Competence	CC9	0.735	21.541	< .001
Linguistic Barriers	LB1	0.770	23.265	< .001
Linguistic Barriers	LB2	0.856	45.351	< .001
Linguistic Barriers	LB3	0.791	28.996	< .001
Linguistic Barriers	LB4	0.829	39.343	< .001
Linguistic Barriers	LB5	0.801	30.373	< .001
Linguistic Barriers	LB6	0.777	27.250	< .001
Motivation	MOT1	0.788	30.677	< .001
Motivation	MOT2	0.814	33.139	< .001
Motivation	MOT3	0.784	29.479	< .001
Motivation	MOT4	0.790	32.171	< .001
Motivation	MOT5	0.792	30.192	< .001
Motivation	MOT6	0.797	32.368	< .001
Motivation	MOT7	0.770	26.196	< .001
Motivation	MOT8	0.797	31.033	< .001
Motivation	MOT9	0.724	21.522	< .001
Personal Barriers	PB1	0.813	32.272	< .001
Personal Barriers	PB2	0.847	41.609	< .001
Personal Barriers	PB3	0.758	20.486	< .001
Personal Barriers	PB4	0.842	39.686	< .001
Personal Barriers	PB5	0.794	28.250	< .001
Psychological Barriers	PSB1	0.837	38.297	< .001
Psychological Barriers	PSB2	0.817	30.342	< .001
Psychological Barriers	PSB3	0.819	31.888	< .001
Psychological Barriers	PSB4	0.764	23.413	< .001

Construct	Indicator	Loading	t-value	p-value
Social Barriers	SB1	0.784	24.086	< .001
Social Barriers	SB2	0.858	47.677	< .001
Social Barriers	SB3	0.862	45.028	< .001
Social Barriers	SB4	0.782	23.036	< .001

Table 4 presents the standardized outer loadings for all indicators included in the measurement model. The table reports the loading, t-value, and p-value for indicators measuring Arabic Language Acquisition, Communicative Competence, Cultural Barriers, Linguistic Barriers, Motivation, Personal Barriers, Psychological Barriers, and Social Barriers.

Table 5. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	AVE
Arabic Language Acquisition	0.917	0.918	0.931	0.601
Communicative Competence	0.916	0.919	0.931	0.599
Cultural Barriers	0.817	0.837	0.879	0.645
Linguistic Barriers	0.891	0.894	0.917	0.647
Motivation	0.922	0.922	0.935	0.615
Personal Barriers	0.871	0.884	0.906	0.659
Psychological Barriers	0.825	0.829	0.884	0.656
Social Barriers	0.841	0.861	0.893	0.676

Table 5 presents the reliability and convergent validity statistics for all latent constructs. The table reports Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extracted for Arabic Language Acquisition, Communicative Competence, Cultural Barriers, Linguistic Barriers, Motivation, Personal Barriers, Psychological Barriers, and Social Barriers.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity Assessment Using HTMT

Construct	Arabic Language Acquisition	Communicative Competence	Cultural Barriers	Linguistic Barriers	Motivation	Personal Barriers	Psychological Barriers	Social Barriers
Arabic Language Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communicative Competence	0.719	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cultural Barriers	0.378	0.369	-	-	-	-	-	-
Linguistic Barriers	0.516	0.482	0.128	-	-	-	-	-
Motivation	0.662	0.605	0.328	0.326	-	-	-	-
Personal Barriers	0.548	0.424	0.274	0.193	0.451	-	-	-
Psychological Barriers	0.459	0.413	0.206	0.346	0.471	0.232	-	-
Social Barriers	0.353	0.485	0.125	0.268	0.418	0.189	0.228	-

Table 6 reports the heterotrait-monotrait ratio values for the latent constructs in the measurement model. The HTMT matrix includes pairwise values among Arabic Language Acquisition, Communicative Competence, Cultural Barriers, Linguistic Barriers, Motivation, Personal Barriers, Psychological Barriers, and Social Barriers.

Structural Model Assessment

After confirming the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs. Following the PLS-SEM guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2022), the assessment included the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), model fit indices, and the significance of the direct and indirect relationships using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. The structural model assessment provides evidence regarding the model's explanatory power and the empirical support for the proposed hypotheses. Figure (3) shows the structural model

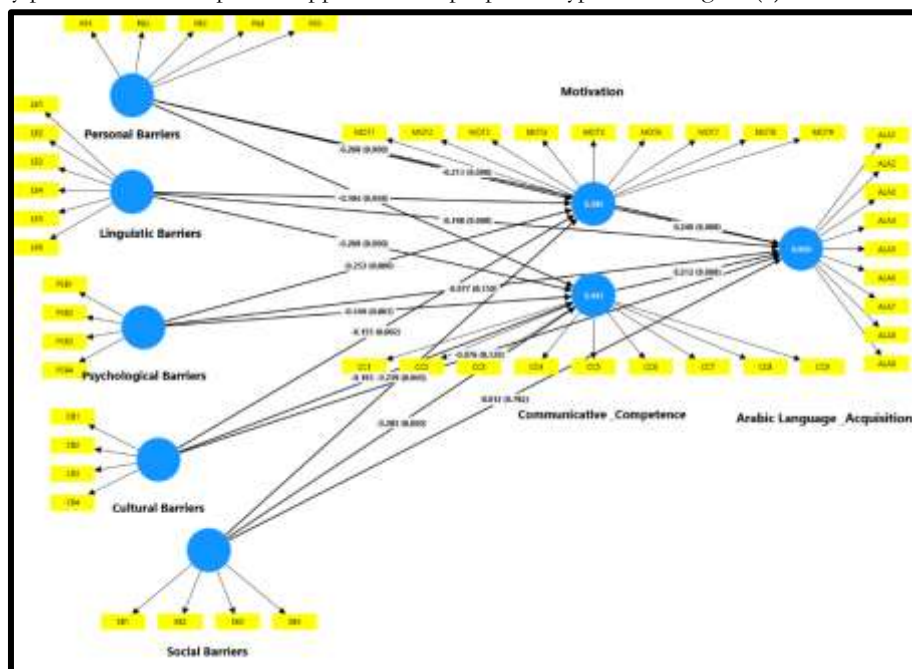


Figure (3): the structural model

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Descriptive level
Arabic Language Acquisition	0.606	0.594	Moderate
Communicative Competence	0.441	0.429	Weak
Motivation	0.382	0.368	Weak

Table 7 presents the coefficient of determination and adjusted coefficient of determination for the endogenous constructs.

The reported endogenous constructs are Arabic Language Acquisition, Communicative Competence, and Motivation.

Table 8. Effect Size (f^2)

Path	f^2	Descriptive level
Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.127	Small
Cultural Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.012	No effect
Cultural Barriers -> Communicative Competence	0.062	Small
Cultural Barriers -> Motivation	0.036	Small
Linguistic Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.078	Small
Linguistic Barriers -> Communicative Competence	0.112	Small
Linguistic Barriers -> Motivation	0.015	No effect
Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.083	Small
Personal Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.090	Small
Personal Barriers -> Communicative Competence	0.075	Small
Personal Barriers -> Motivation	0.104	Small

Path	f ²	Descriptive level
Psychological Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.012	No effect
Psychological Barriers -> Communicative Competence	0.034	Small
Psychological Barriers -> Motivation	0.090	Small
Social Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.000	No effect
Social Barriers -> Communicative Competence	0.131	Small
Social Barriers -> Motivation	0.084	Small

Table 8 reports the f² effect size values for all structural paths included in the model. The table includes each predictor-outcome relationship and the corresponding f² value obtained from the PLS-SEM algorithm.

Table 9. Model Fit Indices

Index	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.051	0.057
d ULS	3.373	4.202
d G	1.222	1.243
Chi-square	1517.261	1524.798
NFI	0.796	0.795

Table 9 presents the model fit indices reported by SmartPLS. The table includes SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and NFI values for both the saturated model and the estimated model.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 10. Direct Effects Based on Bootstrapping

Path	β	STDEV	t-value	p-value	2.5% CI	97.5% CI	Decision
Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.313	0.065	4.810	< .001	0.180	0.434	Supported
Cultural Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.076	0.049	1.557	0.120	-0.170	0.021	Not supported
Cultural Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.193	0.050	3.827	< .001	-0.293	-0.097	Supported
Cultural Barriers -> Motivation	-0.155	0.049	3.141	0.002	-0.250	-0.059	Supported
Linguistic Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.198	0.048	4.171	< .001	-0.292	-0.104	Supported
Linguistic Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.269	0.055	4.870	< .001	-0.376	-0.161	Supported
Linguistic Barriers -> Motivation	-0.104	0.057	1.817	0.069	-0.217	0.010	Not supported
Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.240	0.054	4.439	< .001	0.134	0.345	Supported
Personal Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.213	0.044	4.875	< .001	-0.302	-0.128	Supported
Personal Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.217	0.055	3.979	< .001	-0.323	-0.110	Supported
Personal Barriers -> Motivation	-0.268	0.052	5.177	< .001	-0.368	-0.165	Supported
Psychological Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.077	0.054	1.439	0.150	-0.181	0.026	Not supported
Psychological Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.149	0.055	2.705	0.007	-0.260	-0.046	Supported
Psychological Barriers -> Motivation	-0.253	0.058	4.353	< .001	-0.368	-0.142	Supported

Path	β	STDEV	t-value	p-value	2.5% CI	97.5% CI	Decision
Social Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.013	0.050	0.263	0.792	-0.084	0.110	Not supported
Social Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.283	0.054	5.260	< .001	-0.384	-0.178	Supported
Social Barriers -> Motivation	-0.239	0.059	4.017	< .001	-0.356	-0.120	Supported

Table 10 presents the bootstrapping results for the direct effects in the structural model. The table reports the path coefficient, standard deviation, t-value, p-value, confidence interval limits, and decision for each direct relationship.

Table 11. Specific Indirect Effects Based on Bootstrapping

Specific indirect effect	β	STDEV	t-value	p-value	2.5% CI	97.5% CI	Decision
Cultural Barriers -> Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.060	0.021	2.902	0.004	-0.107	-0.025	Supported
Personal Barriers -> Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.064	0.019	3.333	< .001	-0.105	-0.030	Supported
Linguistic Barriers -> Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.084	0.024	3.543	< .001	-0.135	-0.043	Supported
Psychological Barriers -> Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.061	0.021	2.933	0.003	-0.107	-0.026	Supported
Social Barriers -> Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.057	0.019	2.947	0.003	-0.100	-0.024	Supported
Personal Barriers -> Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.068	0.020	3.340	< .001	-0.111	-0.031	Supported
Psychological Barriers -> Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.047	0.020	2.338	0.019	-0.090	-0.012	Supported
Social Barriers -> Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.088	0.028	3.165	0.002	-0.151	-0.040	Supported
Cultural Barriers -> Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.037	0.015	2.410	0.016	-0.071	-0.012	Supported
Linguistic Barriers -> Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.025	0.015	1.687	0.092	-0.057	0.002	Not supported

Table 11 presents the specific indirect effects obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. The table reports the indirect effect coefficient, standard deviation, t-value, p-value, confidence interval limits, and decision for each mediated relationship.

Table 12. Total Indirect Effects Based on Bootstrapping

Total indirect effect	β	STDEV	t-value	p-value	2.5% CI	97.5% CI
Cultural Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.098	0.028	3.469	< .001	-0.001	-0.160
Linguistic Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.109	0.029	3.801	< .001	0.000	-0.173
Personal Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.132	0.025	5.251	< .001	0.000	-0.186
Psychological Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.107	0.031	3.407	< .001	-0.001	-0.176
Social Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.146	0.036	4.007	< .001	-0.001	-0.225

Table 12 presents the total indirect effects for the relationships reported in the SmartPLS bootstrapping output. The table includes the total indirect coefficient, standard deviation, t-value, p-value, and confidence interval limits.

Table 13. Total Effects Based on Bootstrapping

Total effect	β	STDEV	t-value	p-value	2.5% CI	97.5% CI
Communicative Competence -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.313	0.065	4.810	< .001	0.180	0.434
Cultural Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.173	0.052	3.310	< .001	-0.275	-0.070
Cultural Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.193	0.050	3.827	< .001	-0.293	-0.097
Cultural Barriers -> Motivation	-0.155	0.049	3.141	0.002	-0.250	-0.059
Linguistic Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.307	0.051	6.066	< .001	-0.406	-0.206
Linguistic Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.269	0.055	4.870	< .001	-0.376	-0.161
Linguistic Barriers -> Motivation	-0.104	0.057	1.817	0.069	-0.217	0.010
Motivation -> Arabic Language Acquisition	0.240	0.054	4.439	< .001	0.134	0.345
Personal Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.345	0.047	7.406	< .001	-0.437	-0.255
Personal Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.217	0.055	3.979	< .001	-0.323	-0.110
Personal Barriers -> Motivation	-0.268	0.052	5.177	< .001	-0.368	-0.165
Psychological Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.184	0.050	3.691	< .001	-0.282	-0.087
Psychological Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.149	0.055	2.705	0.007	-0.260	-0.046
Psychological Barriers -> Motivation	-0.253	0.058	4.353	< .001	-0.368	-0.142
Social Barriers -> Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.133	0.048	2.786	0.005	-0.226	-0.041
Social Barriers -> Communicative Competence	-0.283	0.054	5.260	< .001	-0.384	-0.178
Social Barriers -> Motivation	-0.239	0.059	4.017	< .001	-0.356	-0.120

Table 13 presents the total effects obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. The table reports the total effect coefficient, standard deviation, t-value, p-value, and confidence interval limits for each relationship.

Table 14. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H5	Communicative Competence → Arabic Language Acquisition	0.313	4.810	< .001	Supported
H1e	Cultural Barriers → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.076	1.557	0.120	Not supported
H3e	Cultural Barriers → Communicative Competence	-0.193	3.827	< .001	Supported

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H2e	Cultural Barriers → Motivation	-0.155	3.141	0.002	Supported
H1b	Linguistic Barriers → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.198	4.171	< .001	Supported
H3b	Linguistic Barriers → Communicative Competence	-0.269	4.870	< .001	Supported
H2b	Linguistic Barriers → Motivation	-0.104	1.817	0.069	Not supported
H4	Motivation → Arabic Language Acquisition	0.240	4.439	< .001	Supported
H1a	Personal Barriers → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.213	4.875	< .001	Supported
H3a	Personal Barriers → Communicative Competence	-0.217	3.979	< .001	Supported
H2a	Personal Barriers → Motivation	-0.268	5.177	< .001	Supported
H1c	Psychological Barriers → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.077	1.439	0.150	Not supported
H3c	Psychological Barriers → Communicative Competence	-0.149	2.705	0.007	Supported
H2c	Psychological Barriers → Motivation	-0.253	4.353	< .001	Supported
H1d	Social Barriers → Arabic Language Acquisition	0.013	0.263	0.792	Not supported
H3d	Social Barriers → Communicative Competence	-0.283	5.260	< .001	Supported
H2d	Social Barriers → Motivation	-0.239	4.017	< .001	Supported
H7e	Cultural Barriers → Communicative Competence → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.060	2.902	0.004	Supported
H6a	Personal Barriers → Motivation → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.064	3.333	< .001	Supported
H7b	Linguistic Barriers → Communicative Competence → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.084	3.543	< .001	Supported
H6c	Psychological Barriers → Motivation → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.061	2.933	0.003	Supported
H6d	Social Barriers → Motivation → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.057	2.947	0.003	Supported
H7a	Personal Barriers → Communicative Competence → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.068	3.340	< .001	Supported
H7c	Psychological Barriers → Communicative Competence → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.047	2.338	0.019	Supported
H7d	Social Barriers → Communicative Competence → Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.088	3.165	0.002	Supported

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H6e	Cultural Barriers $\rightarrow$ Motivation $\rightarrow$ Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.037	2.410	0.016	Supported
H6b	Linguistic Barriers $\rightarrow$ Motivation $\rightarrow$ Arabic Language Acquisition	-0.025	1.687	0.092	Not supported

Table 14 summarizes the hypothesis testing results based on the direct and specific indirect effects reported in the bootstrapping output. The table includes the hypothesis number, relationship, standardized coefficient, t-value, p-value, and decision.

5. DISCUSSION

The present research explores the links between personal, linguistic, psychological, social, and cultural communication barriers and acquisition of the Arabic language among non-native speakers where motivation and communicative competence are regarded as parallel mediators. The proposed theoretical model explains 60.6% of variance in Arabic language acquisition and shows high explanatory power. Moreover, the obtained results suggest that communication barriers are not related to Arabic language acquisition in the same way. In particular, there are barriers which have direct effect on language acquisition while others affect acquisition by reducing motivation or communicative competence. Thus, the obtained information goes beyond a barrier-outcome model of explanation and shows how different barriers influence language acquisition.

The hypothesis H1a is supported based on the significant negative relationship between personal barriers and Arabic language acquisition ($\beta = -.213, p < .001$). Fear of participating in language activities, making mistakes, and personal unconfidence can hinder learners' engagement in Arabic language acquisition despite their relevant knowledge of Arabic. This finding is consistent with interaction approaches which stress the importance of language production, meaning negotiation, and feedback in second language acquisition process (Ellis, 2008; Long, 1983). This finding also supported the results of Almelhes (2024) who emphasized active communication as a solution to difficulties of non-native Arabic learners. Thus, personal confidence seems to be the decisive factor that determines utilization of learning opportunities.

H1b was supported: the linguistic barrier was a negative predictor of Arabic language acquisition ($\beta = -.198, p < .001$). Linguistic barriers associated with difficulties related to vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and sentence construction might make learning the language more difficult. This finding corroborates previous studies reporting that linguistic complexity is one of the most important barriers encountered by non-native Arabic speakers (Mansour et al., 2024). The role of linguistic barriers might be especially significant as they prevent from learning language structures and interacting with them.

In turn, H1c was not supported since there were no direct negative relationships between psychological barriers and acquisition ($\beta = -.077, p = .150$). However, this finding does not mean that psychological difficulties are insignificant. Instead, the following mediating analysis has demonstrated that they impact acquisition through motivation and communicative competence. Thus, anxiety and other forms of psychological distress may harm acquisition when they decrease persistence and hinder communication. This finding extends the literature on the adverse effects of anxiety in second-language settings (Han et al., 2022; Saito et al., 2025) by clarifying the processes that make psychological barriers educationally relevant.

Finally, H1d was not supported either. Social barriers had an almost negligible direct effect on acquisition ($\beta = .013, p = .792$), yet they negatively impacted motivation and communicative competence, and therefore yielded considerable indirect effects. Therefore, social barriers should be treated as distal barriers instead of proximal ones. Low opportunities for interaction with teachers, peers, and Arabic-speaking people hinder learning and interacting with language structures, which corresponds to interactionist theories of language acquisition (Long, 1983).

H1e was also not supported, as cultural barriers did not predict acquisition directly ($\beta = -.076, p = .120$). However, their significant correlations with the two mediators suggest that unfamiliar cultural context may impede learning indirectly by reducing engagement and learners' ability to speak appropriately. Arabic communication involves sociocultural norms of politeness, interpersonal relations, contexts, and appropriacy. Thus, learners may know how to express themselves linguistically but lack knowledge of when and in what way to do that, emphasizing the significance of combining linguistic and intercultural communicative competencies (Ghasemi & Ahmadian, 2023).

With respect to motivation, all hypotheses related to that construct were proven, namely H2a, H2c, H2d, and H2e. Personal ($\beta = -.268$), psychological ($\beta = -.253$), social ($\beta = -.239$), and cultural barriers ($\beta = -.155$) predicted motivation significantly. These results agree with the perspectives on motivation which state that learners' efforts are partially determined by their

experiences in the process of learning (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 1985). Personal barriers were correlated with motivation most strongly, which suggests that the fear of mistakes and lack of self-confidence may undermine learners' efforts over time. Psychological and social barriers also played a considerable role, showing that motivation is not only an internal attribute of the learner but is affected by emotional experiences and opportunities for interaction.

However, H2b was the exception among the hypotheses regarding motivation, as linguistic barriers did not significantly predict it ($\beta = -.104$, $p = .069$). It is the result distinguishing linguistic difficulty from demotivation. Learners may find Arabic structure difficult but still be motivated to learn it. In other words, linguistic difficulty may be perceived as an inevitable component of the process of learning. Thus, the simplification of linguistic structure and maintaining motivation are related but distinct tasks.

All hypotheses related to communicative competence (H3a-H3e) were supported. Personal ($\beta = -.217$), linguistic ($\beta = -.269$), psychological ($\beta = -.149$), social ($\beta = -.283$), and cultural barriers ($\beta = -.193$) negatively predicted communicative competence. Out of all five barriers mentioned above, social barriers had the greatest impact, followed by linguistic barriers. It should be noted that the aforementioned finding is theoretically meaningful as communicative competence can be considered the result of language use. Limited social contact reduces the number of practice opportunities, whereas language problems interfere with the immediate application of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Thus, the research findings imply that communicative competence could be viewed as the result of the interplay between linguistic, personal, psychological, social, and cultural factors rather than pure linguistic knowledge.

Hypothesis H4 proved that motivation positively predicted acquisition of Arabic ($\beta = .240$, $p < .001$) which supports the idea that motivated students exert more efforts, stick to learning despite difficulties, and search for opportunities to practice the target language (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 1985; Wu, 2022). Hypothesis H5 was also supported; communicative competence positively predicted acquisition ($\beta = .313$, $p < .001$). The greater coefficient of the latter suggests that it is closer to acquisition. Motivation provides learners with the necessary energy for constant learning, while communicative competence allows for transforming knowledge and efforts into proper use of Arabic.

The mediation analysis represents one of the biggest contributions of the research. Hypotheses H6a and H7a were supported; personal barriers influenced acquisition indirectly via motivation ($\beta = -.064$, $p < .001$) and via communicative competence ($\beta = -.068$, $p < .001$). Since there was a significant direct effect, it means that partial complementary mediation occurred. As a result, personal barriers have a multilevel effect on acquisition reducing not only the process of language development but also motivational and communicative components of it.

A pattern was established with regard to linguistic barriers. The hypothesis H6b did not get any support because of nonsignificance of the mediation process via motivation ($\beta = -.025$, $p = .092$); however, H7b got support via communicative competence ($\beta = -.084$, $p < .001$). Therefore, it can be said that linguistic barriers hinder acquisition both directly and through limiting communication competence of learners without decreasing motivation. It once again supports the importance of communicative competence as a mediator between linguistic problems and lower acquisition level.

In case of psychological barriers, both H6c and H7c hypotheses were supported. Nonsignificant direct effect took place but indirect one appeared via motivation ($\beta = -.061$, $p = .003$) and via communicative competence ($\beta = -.047$, $p = .019$). It is indirect-only mediation because psychological barriers influence negatively on motivation to acquire knowledge and/or communicative capabilities of learners.

Social barriers have shown similar results. Indirect effect via motivation ($\beta = -.057$, $p = .003$) was supported in the case of H6d and through communicative competence ($\beta = -.088$, $p = .002$) in the case of H7d despite nonexistence of direct effect. It means that social barriers influence negatively on communication skills of learners more than motivational ones.

Cultural barriers had indirect character as well. H6e hypothesis was supported in the form of indirect effect via motivation ($\beta = -.037$, $p = .016$) but H7e in the form of indirect effect through communicative competence ($\beta = -.060$, $p = .004$). Greater effect via communicative competence reveals the fact that cultural unfamiliarity plays its role when learners cannot understand communicative situation or choose appropriate language.

As a whole, these mediation processes show that communication barriers are not interchangeable in their impact. Personal barriers have direct impact and mediate through both mechanisms; linguistic barriers have direct impact and mostly through communicative competence; psychological, social, and cultural barriers mediate mostly through motivation and communicative competence. Thus, the attention paid only to the direct impact would be misleading since several communication barriers are very important also because of indirect impact.

6. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The current study makes a contribution to theoretical perspective by putting motivation and communicative competence forward as independent mechanisms mediating the effect of communication barriers on acquisition process. Motivation is a set of psychological factors which help to work hard, while communicative competence reflects the learners' ability to make use of their linguistic knowledge in practical way. The joint analysis of these mechanisms shows why a particular communication barrier may have a weak direct effect on acquisition process but remains significant due to its indirect effect.

The absence of significant link between linguistic barriers and motivation gives additional theoretical insight. Structural difficulty does not necessarily lead to a decrease in motivation. The factor of motivation seems to be more sensitive to personal, emotional, social, and cultural aspects rather than to structural difficulty.

Pragmatically, barriers to the success of Arabic language classes should be approached based on the mechanism of each barrier rather than a one-time effort. Barriers related to personality require low-risk speaking opportunities, feedback, and a classroom environment in which errors are part of the learning process. Linguistic barriers need assistance in vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and sentence structure through a communicative framework rather than in isolation. Interventions for psychological issues must be a combination of emotional support and gradual speaking successes. Social barriers require more social interaction through conversational partners, task collaboration, peer learning, and interactions with native Arabic speakers. Cultural learning requires more than factual knowledge but also pragmatics and language use in social and inter-personal situations. Since communicative competence had a stronger relationship with acquisition than motivation, evaluation should take into consideration authentic communicative performance in addition to written grammatical knowledge.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The cross-sectional design makes it impossible to draw conclusions about the order and time of occurrence; longitudinal designs should study how barriers, motivation, communicative competence, and acquisition change over time. This research's specific educational setting restricts its generalization to other Arabic learning settings especially those lacking immersion in Arabic speaking communities. Replication in different nations can improve external validity. Self-reporting is a limiting factor to this research; future research should combine perceptions with objective measures of proficiency such as language tests, oral evaluation, teacher judgment, or observation of communicative performance. Other factors that deserve research include willingness to communicate, self-efficacy, enjoyment of foreign languages, learner autonomy, teacher support, and classroom environment. Moderation analysis can help establish whether social support helps overcome psychological and cultural barriers, and multi-group analysis can help establish differences according to proficiency, linguistic background, study period, and purpose of studying Arabic.

8. CONCLUSION

What is discovered by the study is that communication barriers impact Arabic language acquisition in distinct ways. Personal and linguistic barriers remain directly correlated to the negative effect on acquisition, while psychological, social and cultural barriers work mostly by the way of affecting motivation and communicative competence. In particular, communicative competence proves to be especially important – each barrier negatively predicts it, and the connection between it and acquisition is even stronger than between motivation and acquisition. Thus, the main contribution to the field made by this study is not just the fact that communication barriers interfere with Arabic language acquisition, but that different types of barriers affect it in different ways. Distinguishing between direct influence and the effects caused by motivation and communicative processes, the study provides an explanation for the process of Arabic acquisition for those who learn Arabic as a second language. Thus, Arabic language acquisition has to be approached in a complex manner, combining the development of linguistic skills and motivational support, psychological safety and communicative interaction.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

FUNDING

This research has been funded by Scientific Research Deanship at University of Hail, Saudi Arabia through project number BA-25 023

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors gratefully acknowledge the Deanship for its financial support of this research.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abushihab, E. F., Alkhateeb, H. M., Alkhateeb, R. H., & Alkhateeb, B. H. (2025). Motivation and attitudes toward learning Arabic as a second language: A study of Arab-American and Arab expatriate middle school students in the U.S. and Qatar. *Dibon Journal of Languages*, 1(1), 3–23. <https://doi.org/10.64169/djl.32>
- [2] Al Momani, H. A. (2024). Linguistic communication and its effect on teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 51(5), 479–489. <https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v51i5.4120>
- [3] Al-Fozan, A. B. A. B. I. (2024). Arabic language communication outside the classroom among non-native learners: Opportunities and challenges. *Arts for Linguistic & Literary Studies*, 6(4), 612–635. <https://doi.org/10.53286/arts.v6i4.2199>
- [4] Alhamami, M. (2025). Intention over motivation: A holistic analysis of psychological constructs in Arabic as a foreign language learning. *Acta Psychologica*, 256, 105083.
- [5] Alhamami, M., & Alalmay, A. (2026). Communication anxiety, communication competence, burnout, and intention to learn Arabic as a second language. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 13.
- [6] Al-Hamoud, A. R. (2020). Kifāyat al-tawāṣul al-lafẓī li-mu‘allim al-lughah al-‘Arabiyyah lil-nāṭiqīn bi-ghayrihā wa-atharuhā fī najāh al-muta‘allim [Verbal communication competence of Arabic language teachers for non-native speakers and its impact on learner success]. *Academic Journal of Research and Scientific Publishing*, 10, 169–191.
- [7] Aljanadbah, A., & Al Sharef, A. (2024). Improving the language competencies of non-native Arabic speakers through the communicative approach. *International Journal of Learning and Teaching*, 10(3), 418–427. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijlt.10.3.418-427>
- [8] Almelhes, S. Enhancing Arabic Language Acquisition: Effective Strategies for Addressing Non-Native Learners' Challenges. *Educ. Sci.* 2024, 14, 1116. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14101116>
- [9] Alshammari, A., Alghamdi, A., Alshammari, M., & Alzahrani, A. (2024). Instruments measuring motivation to learn Arabic as a second language: A systematic review. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, Article number.
- [10] Bani Amer, A., & Al-Rababah, I. H. M. (2020). Communicative competence by learners of Arabic as a second language (the writing skill as a model). *Journal of Social Sciences (COES&RJ-JSS)*, 9(1), 95–111. <https://doi.org/10.25255/jss.2020.9.1.95.111>
- [11] Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Longman.
- [12] Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- [13] Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [14] Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- [15] Fauzi, A., & Rahmawati, S. (2025). Evaluation of speaking competence in Arabic language learning: A performance assessment approach. *IJAS: International Journal of Arabic Studies*, 2(1), 12–22.
- [16] Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold.
- [17] Gardner, R. C. (2000). Correlation, causation, motivation, and second language acquisition. *Canadian Psychology*, 41(1), 10–24.
- [18] Ghasemi, A. A., & Ahmadian, M. (2023). Research into Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Model Test. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 23(2), 75–87. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v23i2.75>
- [19] Ghazali, M., Mirzan, M., Hidayati, F., & Gusti. (2026). Learner motivation in Arabic language acquisition: A review of theoretical and empirical studies. *JISRev: Journal of Islamic Studies Review*, 2(1), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.69548/jisrev.2.1.75>

- [20] Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- [21] Han S, Li Y and Haider SA (2022) Impact of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety on Higher Education Students Academic Success: Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence and Moderating Influence of Classroom Environment. *Front. Psychol.* 13:945062. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.945062
- [22] Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- [23] Kuluşaklı, E., & Genç, G. (2024). L2 communication apprehension and communicative competence of pre-service English teachers. *Helijon*, 10(16), e32587. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.helijon.2024.e32587>
- [24] Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- [25] Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- [26] Long, M. H. (1983). Native speaker/non-native speaker conversation and the negotiation of comprehensible input. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 126–141.
- [27] Makayev, K., Makayeva, G., & Sigacheva, N. (2021). Factors of formation of foreign language communicative competence of future construction specialists through overcoming the language barrier. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 274, 12002. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202127412002>
- [28] Mansour, M. S., Wan Muhammad, W. S., Abd Rauf, H., & Pabiyah, H. (2024). Impact of Linguistic Problems on Learning Arabic Speaking Skills among Non-Native Arabic-Speaking Students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(4), 3269-3285.
- [29] Mohammed Raffi, M. S., Ghazuddin, F., Mhd Rusdi, M. I., Amat Suparia, F. A., & Abdullah, I. (2022). The level of Arabic language anxiety based on student's academic background in learning Arabic language. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 7(11), e001910. <https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v7i11.1910>
- [30] Mokhtar, M. I. M., & Haron, S. C. (2021). Are Arabic language learners anxious to speak Arabic? *American Journal of Sciences and Engineering Research*, 4(2), 43–49.
- [31] Saito, K., Dewaele, J. M., & Abe, M. (2025). Disentangling the causal role of motivation, enjoyment, and anxiety in second language speech learning: A final report. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 47(2), 461-487.
- [32] Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2020). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach* (8th ed.). Wiley.
- [33] Wu X. (2022). Motivation in second language acquisition: A bibliometric analysis between 2000 and 2021. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 1032316. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1032316>