

Trends And Themes of Arabic Language Learning Modules for Debate: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT:

Arabic language learning modules that incorporate debate are increasingly viewed as effective tools for preparing learners and educators for the demands of 21st-century education. This study presents a bibliometric analysis of research on debate-based Arabic language learning to identify trends in research output, publication venues, authorship, institutions, and thematic focus. Data were collected from Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), and after data cleaning and duplicate removal, 236 documents and publications were analyzed using ScientoPy, OpenRefine, and VOSviewer. The results show a consistent increase in publications from 1990 to 2025, with accelerated growth after 2020 and a peak in 2024. BMC Medical Education and Journal of Language Teaching and Research were the most prolific journals, followed by PLOS ONE and GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies. Keyword co-occurrence analysis revealed prominent themes related to the United Arab Emirates, refugees, education, communicative competence, and cultural competence. Highly cited studies primarily addressed academic argumentation, speaking and writing skills, translation directionality, and debate-based pedagogy. Overall, the findings describe publication and keyword patterns within the screened corpus; however, they should not be interpreted as evidence that debate based Arabic language learning is an established field until the relevance of all records has been verified.

Keywords: Arabic language learning; debate pedagogy; argumentation; bibliometric analysis.

1. Introduction

Debate modules for learning Arabic as a second language are essential in developing knowledge and skills for future educators, professionals, and talented students to operate within the

complexity of the 21st century education context. In fact, the professional educators and talented students are being disrupted by rapid technological change, increasing globalization, and changing regulatory environments Cheok &

Lee, 2022 ;Van Damme, (2001). Thus, the first step in dealing with research is to consider research trends, influences, and foundational publications. Therefore, bibliometric analysis allows educators and researchers to identify areas where new ideas and discoveries are warranted Abdullah et al., (2023).

The current study takes advantage of bibliometric methods to examine the development of modules for learning Arabic through debate research, and to show trends, patterns and gaps in the literature Donthu et al., (2021). Specifically, using publication counts, examining citation sources and determining how keywords co-occur to indicate the development and trends in an area of research Abdullah, 2022 ;Zupic & Čater, (2015). Therefore, this study will use bibliometric methods to analyse the development of research in debate focussed Arabic language learning modules and to identify trends, patterns and possible gaps.

The instruction of Arabic has changed due to developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI), new expectations and needs of the profession from different stakeholders Yusuf, (2023). Additionally, employing data analytics and AI in technologies has meant that Arabic graduates need different skills Erlina et al., (2022). Therefore, it seems important for us to have a comprehensive understanding of the social and technological forces shaping Arabic education research, teaching practices and learning.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a meticulous bibliometric review of literature on

modules for developing Arabic language skills through debate. This essentially highlights key research areas that will inform future research on Arabic language learning modules for debate purposes. Therefore, awareness of the shifting landscape of research interests and tools, will better inform researchers of possibilities for research that remain unexamined Abdullah & Sofyan, (2023).

Moreover, the analysis also shows which authors have contributed most prominently in the field of debate-oriented modules for Arabic language learning research. The authors of the study have found individuals that lead this research area by looking at citation counts, and who collaborates with whom Abdullah, (2022) ;Merigó et al., (2020) Overall the analysis does provide useful information about the Arabic and teaching research structure, and there worthwhile collaborators connecting the research together.

In conclusion, the study identifies key articles that shaped the development of Arabic language learning modules for research in debate. The study identifies which articles have impacted the field most significantly Linnenluecke et al., (2019). The analysis above complements research into modules for learning Arabic through debate by providing the research with a background to earlier studies and significant theories that researchers can build on and contribute to knowledge in the subject area. The research questions directing the study and the rationale for each question are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Questions and Motivations. Source: Baharom & Abdullah, (2024)

No.	RQ	Research question	Motivations
1.	RQ1	What are the patterns and trends in the	To gain a better understanding of the current
2.	RQ2	Which journals, databases, and research	To identify the leading publication outlets and
3.	RQ3	Who are the most influential authors, and	To recognize the scholars and key contributions
4.	RQ4	What are the most productive institutions	To highlight institutions at the forefront of
5.	RQ5	What are the key research themes, and	To provide an overview of dominant topics in

The objective of this article is to undertake a thorough bibliometric analysis with the purpose of providing an overview of the literature on Arabic language learning modules, primarily centered on debate. Thus, understanding these

patterns will help researchers and /or practitioners to recognize new areas of interest and future undertakings. It will help policymakers to get a better picture of how Arabic learning modules constructed for debating purpose can be

practically applied to improve modules for developing Arabic language skills through the purposes of debating. These findings will subsequently be useful in the development of new research that will scaffold collaboration among scholars from other domains to improve practice and pedagogy for Arabic language and culture learning.

2. Materials And Methods

Bibliometric analysis

Bibliometric analysis refers to the analysis of research publications through a detailed analysis of quantitative metrics. Bibliometric analysis examines the development and structure of a research domain using quantitative publication and citation indicators how the field of scientific research has grown by assessing metrics relative to publications, citation responses, which keywords are ranked and co-occurrence patterns Abdullah & Sofyan, (2023) ;Donthu et al., (2021). Oftentimes, bibliometric studies focus more on figuring out the publication numbers of the academic outputs, citation counts, and key relationships among specific outputs. Then, with these data, it is also analyzed in statistical analysis and network analysis to examine conclusions that are practically useful Zupic & Čater, (2015). In contemporary academic disciplines (including business and management studies), bibliometric methods are employed for its utility in providing a topology of the field, expansion and emergence

of key themes over time Merigó et al., (2020) ;Linnenluecke et al., (2019).

Dataset Retrieval and Analysis

The data for this study was obtained from Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). These databases contain substantial data on a variety of academic topics and are often used by researchers for bibliometric studies Hafiar et al., (2024) ;Abdullah, (2022) ;Prancutè, (2021). The search string included terms associated with Arabic language learning modules for debate, using keywords such as ("Arabic" OR "Arab" OR "Arabic language" OR "Arab dialect") AND ("learning" OR "acquisition" OR "education" OR "study") AND ("debate" OR "discussion" OR "argumentation" OR "dialogue") AND ("skills" OR "competence" OR "proficiency" OR "fluency") AND ("method" OR "approach" OR "technique" OR "strategy") and Wos ("Arabic" AND "debate") to run the search. The examination of appropriate research articles was done by checking the dataset, which examined titles, abstracts, and keywords in that order on August 19, 2026. The initial dataset contained 267 articles, of which 241 were on Scopus and 21 on WoS. The datasets underwent additional processing with ScientoPy, OpenRefine, and VOSviewer, which are popular programs used in bibliometric research Abdullah & Sofyan, (2023) ;Moral-Muñoz et al., (2020) ;Ruiz-Rosero et al., (2019).

Table 2 :Dataset Search

Database	Search String	No	Date
SCOPUS	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Arabic" OR "Arab" OR "Arabic language" OR "Arab dialect") AND ("learning" OR "acquisition" OR "education" OR "study") AND ("debate" OR "discussion" OR "argumentation" OR "dialogue") AND ("skills" OR "competence" OR "proficiency" OR "fluency") AND ("method" OR "approach" OR "technique" OR "strategy")	241	August 19 2026
WoS	TS= ("Arabic" AND "debate")	21	
Total		267	

Combining and Cleaning Duplicates

Bibliometric analysis frequently yields repeated records, stemming from adding records to databases with mistakes (i.e., duplicates from errors), author name variations, and

inconsistencies in publication metadata. Identifying and removing duplicates is designed to improve validity and reliability much of the research process Donthu et al., (2021) ;Linnenluecke et al., (2019). The research team used ScientoPy to combine Scopus and WoS

datasets, and systematic removal of duplicate records occurred. Merging metrics to find overlaps included record titles, author(s), years of publication, and DOI in previous research Moral-Muñoz et al., (2020). The study's results, with duplicate records removed, provide a more focused and applicable snapshot of the research area in discussion-oriented modules for Arabic Language Learning.

General Overview of the Preprocessed Bibliographic Datasets

The first search in Scopus and WoS returned 267 articles, with Scopus accounting for 91.60% (217) and WoS for 8.40% (20). We excluded 30 articles (11.20%) that did not meet the standards of scholarly articles in order to feature significant works. This research included articles, reviews,

proceedings, and conference papers for additional analysis. After filtering out irrelevant documents, 237 documents remained. Of these 237 documents, 217 (91.60%) were sourced from Scopus and 20 (8.40%) from WoS. The duplicate removal procedure identified one duplicate document, accounting for 0.40% of the total sample. Scopus removed one document due to duplication, accounting for 0.50%, and no documents were removed from WoS. After the removal of duplicates, the sample dataset contained 236 documents; 216 documents (91.50%) from Scopus and 20 documents (8.50%) from WoS. Figure 1 represents the flow of research steps deriving from the original database search to the final sample dataset and explains the important steps taken during data preprocessing and duplicate removal process.

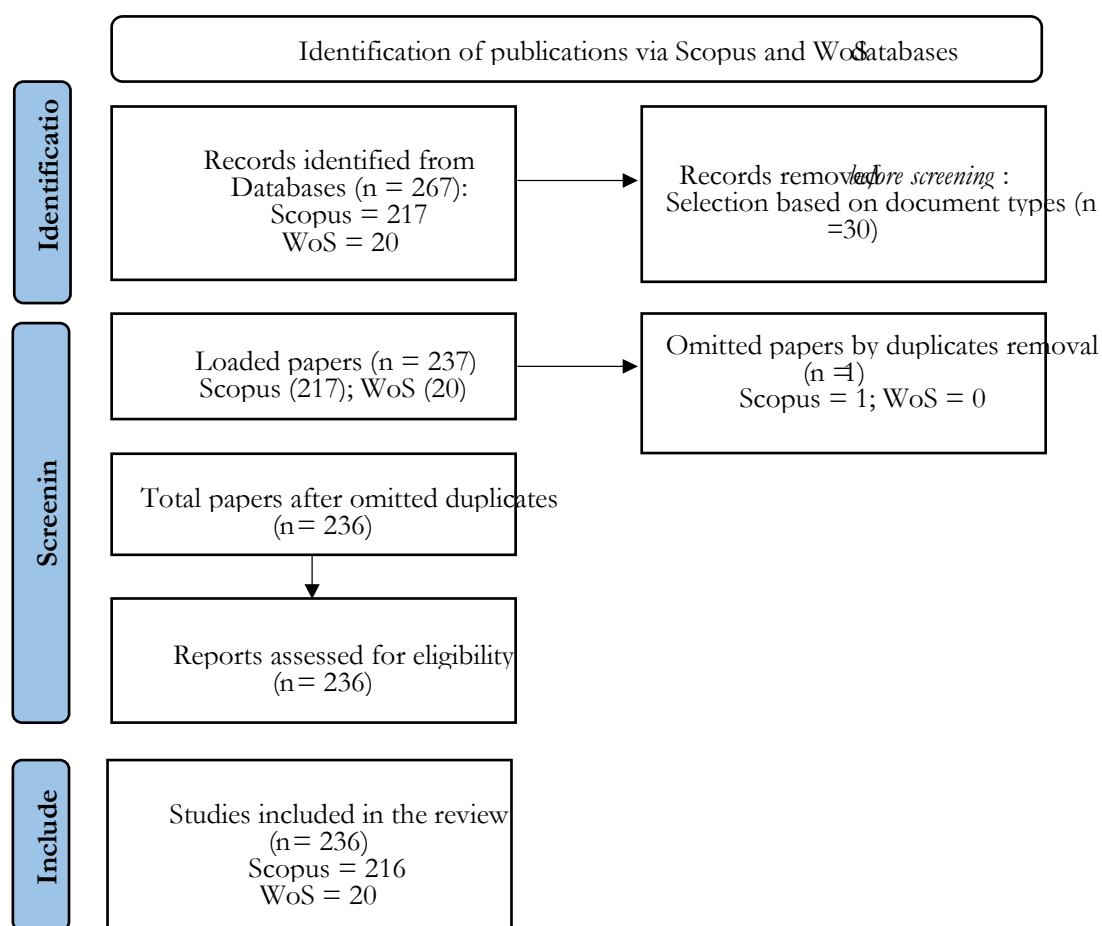


Figure 1 : Flow diagram of database and register research

3. Results And Finding

Publication Growth Trends

Figure 2 presents the publication trends broken down by the indicated intervals from 1990 to 2025 (5 year intervals). The search period began in 1990, but the dataset contained no publications before 2000, and only a marginal number of output until 2008, after which there was a slow but steady increase in publications after 2010, especially in Scopus. The volume of output in

WoS remained consistently low. From 445-457, the number of publications continued to grow, with fluctuations in multiple years before experiencing notable growth from 2021. The number of documents published in Scopus almost tripled in volume compared to 2021. The number of output peaked in 2024, with more than thirty publications in Scopus. Throughout the timeline, WoS exhibited relatively low publication outputs.

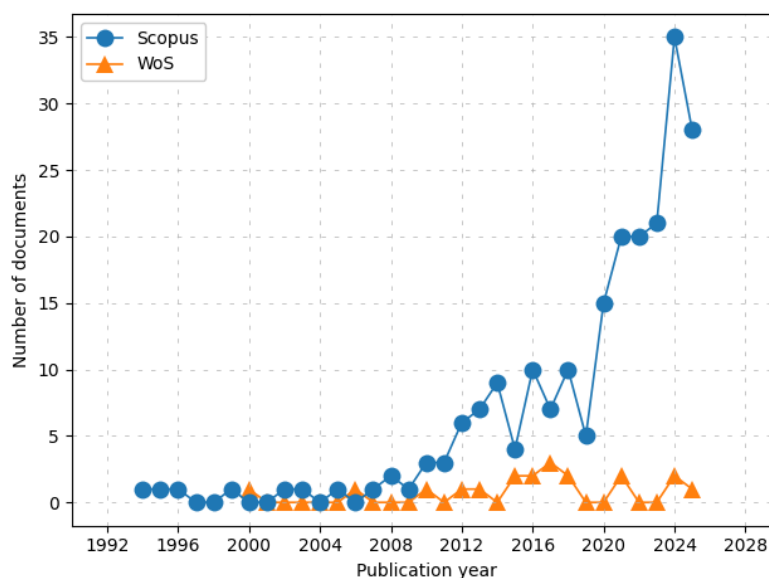


Figure 2: Publication Growth Trends

Source: Scopus and WoS databases

Prominent Scientific Publication and Fields of Research

Figure 3 illustrates the leading scholarly publications that published studies on Arabic language learning modules for debate. Specifically, BMC Medical Education and Journal of Language Teaching and Research received the highest ranking at 50%, with publications between 2024 and 2025, while GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies and PLOS ONE received the next highest rank at 25% within the same year. Other notable contributors include Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences and Frontiers in Public Health, obtaining 33% of their

articles in the past two years, while Frontiers in Education ranked at 100%, highlighting the journal's newest and only focus for articles. Additionally, Medical Teacher and International Nursing Review had no publications in 2024–2025. This distribution suggests that debate-oriented Arabic language learning modules have increased interest from journals focusing on education, health, and interdisciplinary scholarly studies. This trend indicates a scholarly preference for connecting an Arabic debate module with larger contexts of pedagogy, communication, and professional development, suggesting the interdisciplinary nature of this field.

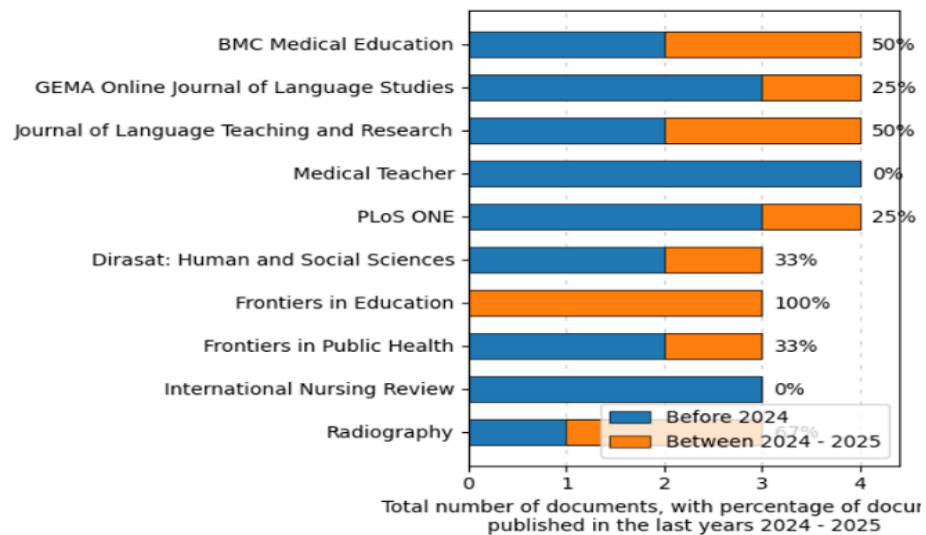


Figure 3 : The top ten scientific journals

Source: Scopus and WoS databases

Highly Cited Publications

Table 3 presents ten most frequently cited works in Arabic language teaching modules for debate. The number of cited works reveals the level of impact or influence that a work has had in the sciences Wang et al., (2019). In Wang et al., (2019) the authors concluded that influence is associated with citation frequency and impact. The work by Bacha, (2010) teaching the academic argument in a university EFL context has the most citations (73) in this list, which suggests that it is the most influential work when looking at all the cited works. The work of Rajab, (2013) Developing speaking and writing skills of

L1 Arabic EFL learners through teaching IPA phonetic codes is cited 21 times and is another recognized work on the list. The book by Husni & Newman, (2015) Arabic-English translation: issues and strategies, has 18 citations. Other contributions include Wahba et al., (2017) Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21st century (9 cites) and Nadwah & Nadhilah, (2014) Speaking problems in Arabic as a second language (8 cites). All of these works indicate that teaching methodology, translation, and speaking skills related to debate are central to the discourse on Arabic language learning modules for debate.

Table 3: List of top ten highly cited publications

No	Authors	Year	Title	Citation Count	Document Type
1	Bacha, (2010)	2010	Teaching the academic argument in a university EFL environment	73	Article
2	Rajab, (2013)	2013	Developing speaking and writing skills of L1 Arabic EFL learners through teaching of IPA phonetic codes	21	Article
3	Husni & Newman, (2015)	2015	Arabic-english-Arabic-English translation: Issues and strategies	18	Book

4	Wahba et al., (2017)	2017	Handbook for Arabic language teaching professionals in the 21st century	9	Book
5	Nadwah & Nadhilah, (2014)	2014	Speaking problems in Arabic as a second language; [Permasalahan pertuturan dalam bahasa Arab sebagai bahasa kedua]	8	Article
6	Houghton & Al-Asswad, (2014)	2014	An exploration of the communication strategies used when culture-laden words are translated from Japanese to Arabic in ELF interaction	6	Article
7	Tayyara, (2022)	2022	The practicability of proverbs in teaching Arabic language and culture	5	Article
8	Samah et al., (2013)	2013	The activities of teaching Arabic speaking skills among debate coaches; [Aktiviti pengajaran kemahiran bertutur bahasa Arab dalam kalangan jurulatih debat]	3	Article
9	Daif-Allah & Al-Sultan, (2023)	2023	The Effect of Role-Play on the Development of Dialogue Skills among Learners of Arabic as a Second Language	2	Article
10	Sakirah et al., (2020)	2020	Development of Arabic learning models through content and language integrated learning approaches	1	Article

Source: Scopus and WoS databases

Productive Institutions

Institutional research articles are academic writings released by institutions of higher education or research institutions which endeavor to promote their productivity and their contribution to furthering Arabic language learning modules to support debate. As noted in Figure 4, the top ten institutions which published the most research include Georgetown University Qatar, Northwestern University Qatar, QatarDebate Center, Sultan Qaboos University, and Vrije Universiteit Brussel recorded the highest recency of activity, several

institutions had all of their observed publications in 2024–2025; because their total output was small, this percentage should be interpreted as recency rather than dominance. In contrast, Autonomous University of Barcelona, British Library, Department of Philosophy, Hiroshima University, and University of Birmingham published earlier but recorded 0% published articles in the last two years. These institutions were the most frequently represented affiliations in the dataset; the analysis does not establish their institutional priorities or commitment to debate pedagogy.

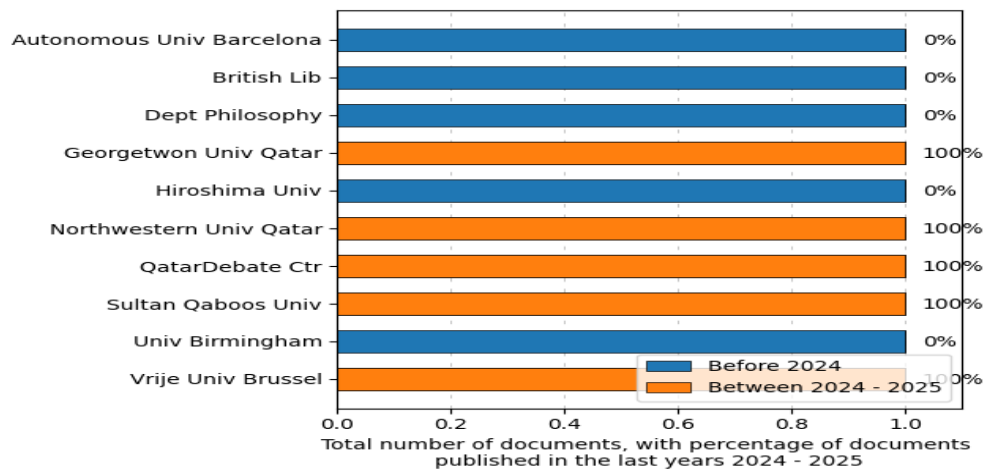


Figure 4: The top ten productive institutions

Source: Scopus and WoS databases

Major Themes and Research Gaps

Figure 5 summarizes the ten most frequent author keywords in the validated dataset. As a result, the top five in total frequency for the author keywords were "United Arab Emirates" at 12, "Refugees" at 8, "Education" at 6, "United Arab Emirates" at 6, and "Adolescents" at 5. The keywords illustrate the focused research on Arabic language learning modules for debate in education, sociocultural contexts, and regional focus. Other keywords of interest used by writers are "Arabic," "Nurses," "Culture," and

"Qualitative Research." At the same time, a significant portion of the recent papers (over the last two years) focused on "Nurses" (80%), and "Adolescents" (60%), showcasing emerging interdisciplinary relationships between Arabic debate modules and health, youth, and social development studies. The author keywords representing "United Arab Emirates" also reflect the important position of the United Arab Emirates itself and its pivotal role in directing research, as it appeared in 8% of published papers in the last two years.

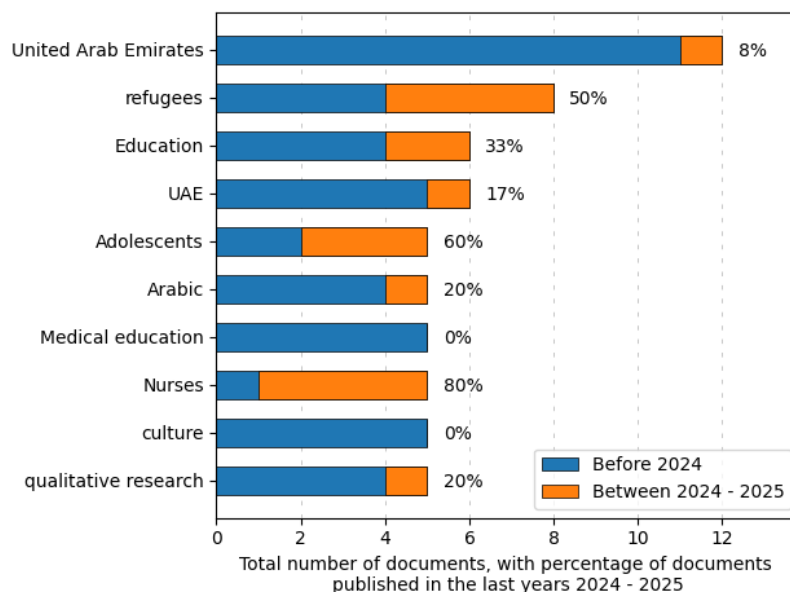


Figure 5 : The top ten authors' keywords

Source: Scopus and WoS databases

4. Author keyword co-occurrence analysis

Figure 6 presents a visualization map showing author keywords that have appeared five times or more. There are 24 keywords in total on the map. The node size corresponds to the number of occurrences of the keyword, and the keywords are displayed in decreasing order by occurrence. The most common keyword was “United Arab Emirates” with 12 occurrences; “Education” followed with 8 occurrences, along with “Refugees” with 8 occurrences; “Cultural Competence” was noted 9 times; and “Communicative Competence” and “Internationalization” were noted 7 times each. A

link indicates that two keywords appeared in the same document; stronger links represent more frequent co-occurrence across documents. The co-occurrence map in this study reveals important findings regarding the most frequent and prominent Arabic related themes within the bibliographic dataset, particularly education, communication, and cultural integration. Note that these each of these clusters of keywords could greatly influence what future research will look like in connection between Arabic debate modules with the incorporation of knowledge and findings related to global education, intercultural communication, and studies and research connected to refugees.

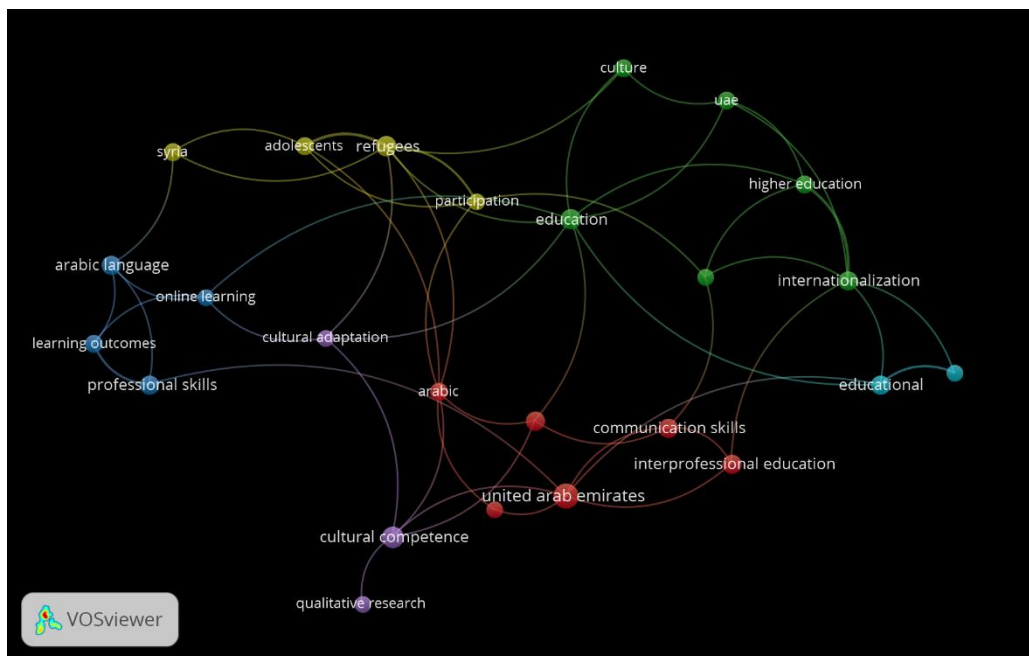


Figure 6: A Keyword co-occurrence map

Source: Scopus and WoS databases and VOSviewer

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Assessment of the bibliometric data on Arabic language learning modules for research into debate indicates that there has been an increase in publications over the last 30 years and specifically over the last 20 years. The data provided by Scopus and WoS shows an overall growth in research production that began in 1990 (see Figure 2). Moreover, there are several sources contributing to this growth, including a growing significance placed on debate-oriented modules for Arabic language learning in response to

changing professional needs, technological changes, and regulatory changes Kholison et al., (2023).

Significant evolutions have occurred in research focus and methodology. Accordingly, researchers have broadened arabic learning modules for debate through research into different aspects including technology incorporate, soft skill development, and inclusion of sustainability, and ethics in the arabic curriculum Salam et al., (2022). These evolutions demonstrate the adaptability of the field to the shifting needs of

the arabic profession, as well as the importance of preparing future teachers and students with the skills needed to address the complexities of the 21st century.

Upon conducting the analysis on the ten highest contributing scientific publications to exploring Arabic language learning modules used in debate studies in Figure 3, a clear importance of specialist journals can be seen. One factor being BMC Medical Education and Journal of Language Teaching and Research were the first two pages referenced in the analysis, followed by PLOS ONE. All of these publications specifically focus on the Arabic language learning modules in debate focused studies and are respected and recognized in the field. They also play a role in literature, knowledge sharing and scholarly development. The number of other journals, such as GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies, Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences and Frontiers in Education, brings attention to the relative increase and prominence of research in Arabic language learning designed for discourse purposes in language education and discipline research in general. The distribution of research around the focus specialist publications, indicates the progression of the discipline, and the recognition of the Arabic language learning acquired through debate as a separate and well-established area of research.

Figure 4 highlights the ten centres that have contributed most substantially to Arabic language learning modules for research into debate. The findings point to a contribution from centres in Qatar, the United States, Europe and the Middle East. In the Qatari context, Georgetown University Qatar, Northwestern University Qatar, and QatarDebate Centre emerged as the three centres that contributed the most, followed by Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, and Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium. The affiliation analysis identifies where authors in the dataset were based; it does not demonstrate that the institutions themselves maintain programmes dedicated to Arabic debate pedagogy. There are several factors, including a focus on pedagogy related to debate, their research activities, and their respective institutions' ongoing engagement

in global networks that explain the high prominence of these centres as top contributors. The observation of universities coming from a range of contexts is also worthwhile in reflecting the worldwide nature of contribution to research in Arabic language learning modules for debate, as well as the role cross-national collaboration plays in developing knowledge and practice.

Figure 5 portrays an important cluster of keywords made up of "United Arab Emirates", "Refugees", "Education", "United Arab Emirates", and "Adolescents". This indicates the importance of Arabic language learning modules in debate as well the emphasis on developing research skills in higher education and in wider sociocultural contexts. Additionally, key themes of inquiry in Arabic language learning modules designed for debate include integration of communicative competence, cultural adaptation, intercultural communication, and student agency, which are all indicative of interdisciplinary and growing scope of inquiry in the domain.

The broadest set of related keywords encompasses, "Education," "Communicative Competence," "Cultural Competence," and "Internationalization." This set highlights the dominant topic of inquiry in the Arabic Language Learning Modules for Debate in terms of demonstrating the connections between language learning and developing intercultural and professional skills. Less frequent terms may indicate emerging topics, peripheral topics, or retrieval noise. Qualitative content analysis is required before they can be classified as research gaps. Therefore, the implications of these subjects for modules developed to acquire Arabic language skills through debate require further investigation to maintain the relevance and pedagogical effectiveness of Arabic language courses in an increasingly globalized and fluid teaching and learning context.

The ten articles in Table 2 produced the most impact and contributed significantly to the field of Arabic Language Learning Modules for Debate. Specific contributions to field of teaching the academic argument within a university based EFL classroom, by (Bacha,

2010), are recognized by other researchers as an impactful module in Arabic language learning research within debate-oriented EFL contexts. In addition to the impact of learning to teach academic argumentative discourse, some of the articles were well-regarded for investigation of aspects of speaking and writing skill development, translation strategies, communication issues, or role play pedagogy that all improve academic context in Arabic debate pedagogy. These articles being cited by various scholars suggest they contain current, relevant, and useful information on the topics investigated and have provided a basis for the direction of modules Arabic language debate learning topic exploration, and for future investigation.

The data derived from these papers has informed future research, as they can continue to be of relevance in the space. The guidelines stress the importance of extending from existing research in order to support the continued development of Arabic Language Learning Modules for Debate. In addition to the implications of our findings for Arabic academics, teachers, practitioners and managers, in relation to the highlighted themes and weak points, discovering more about critical issues, materials and new ideas in the teaching and learning of Arabic, has a clear impact on what academics and researchers do.

Moreover, future studies will rely on the most widely used publications, which contain valuable information related to the main issues and concerns regarding the teaching and learning of Arabic. Therefore, critical publications help form a knowledge-base for researchers to build upon and be ready for the changes and improvement in Arabic language education. The conclusions of the research can be used by educators and researchers to change teaching practices and redesign courses so that Arabic education is contemporary and meets the needs of modern learners.

6. Final Considerations

The bibliometric analysis indicated that contemporary interest is at an all time high with respect to the development of Arabic Language

Learning Modules for Debate, as evidenced by the pattern of an increased number of publications. Scholars identified seminal research domains, identified leading journals, influential publications, and organizations which have an important role in the advancement of knowledge related to debate-oriented Arabic Language Learning Modules. Nonetheless, the frequency of publications does not necessarily speak to the significance or potency of the research. Thus, it becomes important to closely review and interrogate details and findings/implications from research publications for all domains of inquiry.

Ongoing analysis of studies related to Arabic Language Learning Modules for research has developed our understanding and processes in this area. Analytical methods for studying literature were used to investigate what topics, authors, and journals are primarily included in articles about arabic learning modules determined for use in debate. Additionally, it examines the impact and contributions of scholarship on this topic, and strongly reaffirms the need for scholarship on this topic. After all, pre-implications for further development in the field are forthcoming.

It has indicated critical scholarly articles as well as key research matters related to Arabic Language Learning Modules for Debate. Accordingly, all scholars and practitioners will benefit from being able to access the material, since it enables them to track progress and ultimately identify where additional research is needed. Furthermore, the paper has devised a comprehensive inventory of highly cited articles that had a significant impact on advancements in modules for developing Arabic language skills through debate.

The investigation assesses the scholarly outputs generated by these organizations which effectively identifies leaders in this field. The findings will assist decision makers in the academic and non-academic sectors determine how to most effectively allocate resources to amplify the overall impact.

Through utilization of a bibliometric analysis of Learning Modules for Arabic Language Learning,

we have acquired useful insight into research trends, leading academic journals, significant research themes, frequently referenced articles and institutional productivity. Therefore, the findings can help to inform future research, facilitate more informed policy and provide useful ideas to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic.

An important limitation to note is the dependence on the Scopus and WoS databases, which may fail to capture literature related to debate-oriented educational intervention in the Arabic language learning context. Given this, further studies in this field could choose to use additional databases and document analysis tools (e.g., SciMAT, BibExcel and CiteSpace) to expand the view of the research landscape.

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