

An Analysis of Arabic Language Learning Problems in Madrasah Aliyah and Their Solutions

Syifa Nazhifah Maysarah¹, Isop Syafe'i²

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

Email: syifanazhifah1112@gmail.com

Article Info

Article history:

Accepted 12/27, 2025

Keywords:

Arabic Language
Madrasah Aliyah
Learning Problems

ABSTRACT

Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah plays a strategic role in developing students' linguistic competence and Islamic understanding. However, in practice, Arabic language instruction still faces various problems that hinder the optimal achievement of learning objectives. This study aims to examine the problems of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah, their impacts, and the efforts that can be undertaken to improve the quality of instruction. This research employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. Data were obtained from accredited journal articles, books, theses, and other relevant scholarly sources, and were analyzed using content analysis techniques. The findings indicate that the problems in Arabic language learning include low student motivation and literacy, limited pedagogical competence of teachers, an overloaded curriculum, insufficient learning facilities and media, and the lack of authentic assessment. These problems have an impact on students' low communicative language proficiency and the ineffectiveness of the learning process. Efforts to address these problems include reorienting learning approaches toward communicative and contextual methods, enhancing teachers' competencies, strengthening Arabic literacy, optimizing learning media, creating a conducive language environment, and implementing an authentic assessment system. This study is expected to serve as a reference for teachers, madrasahs, and policymakers in improving Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah.

Pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah Aliyah memiliki peran strategis dalam mengembangkan kompetensi kebahasaan dan pemahaman keislaman peserta didik. Namun, dalam praktiknya, pembelajaran bahasa Arab masih menghadapi berbagai permasalahan yang menghambat tercapainya tujuan pembelajaran secara optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji permasalahan pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah Aliyah, dampaknya, serta upaya-upaya yang dapat dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi pustaka. Data diperoleh dari artikel jurnal terakreditasi, buku, tesis, dan sumber ilmiah relevan lainnya, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis isi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa permasalahan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab meliputi rendahnya motivasi dan literasi peserta didik, keterbatasan kompetensi pedagogik guru, kurikulum yang terlalu padat, keterbatasan sarana dan media pembelajaran, serta belum optimalnya penerapan penilaian autentik. Permasalahan tersebut berdampak pada rendahnya kemampuan komunikatif bahasa Arab peserta didik dan tidak efektifnya proses pembelajaran. Upaya yang dapat dilakukan untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut antara lain dengan mengorientasikan kembali pendekatan pembelajaran ke arah metode komunikatif dan kontekstual, meningkatkan kompetensi guru, memperkuat literasi bahasa Arab, mengoptimalkan penggunaan media pembelajaran, menciptakan lingkungan bahasa yang kondusif, serta menerapkan sistem penilaian autentik. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi rujukan bagi guru, madrasah, dan pengambil kebijakan

dalam upaya meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah Aliyah.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah occupies a crucial position, as it not only supports students' linguistic competence but also strengthens their Islamic understanding through both classical and modern literature. However, in practice, Arabic language instruction faces numerous challenges encountered by both teachers and students. These challenges include teachers' limited competence in applying communicative teaching methods, students' low learning motivation, the lack of engaging instructional media, and insufficient time allocation to develop comprehensive language skills. As a result, Arabic language learning is often perceived as difficult, rigid, and less relevant to students' needs, causing the expected learning objectives to remain inadequately achieved.

A number of previous studies have attempted to highlight issues related to Arabic language learning from various perspectives. For instance, Muliatno (2023) identified that problems in Arabic language learning encompass linguistic aspects such as phonetics and grammatical structure, as well as non-linguistic aspects including learning motivation, teaching methods, and the learning environment. This finding indicates that the challenges of Arabic language learning are multifaceted and require greater attention in the design of effective instructional strategies (Muliatno, 2023). Similarly, Yasin and Fadhlullah (2025) found that limited instructional materials, a lack of language interaction during the learning process, and the mismatch between teaching methods and students' needs constitute major problems in Arabic language learning, ultimately affecting the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process (Yasin & Fadhlullah, 2025).

Furthermore, a study conducted at Abu Bakar Ash-Syiddiq Integrated Islamic Junior High School by Wahyudi et al. (2023) revealed that challenges in Arabic language learning arise from linguistic barriers, such as difficulties related to the Arabic sound system, as well as constraints in time allocation and learning facilities. Consequently, teachers were compelled to implement various solutions to address these issues (Wahyudi et al., 2023). Another study in Islamic school settings by Jaafar et al. (2023) identified eight major themes of problems in Arabic language learning, rooted in student-related, teacher-related, and school-related factors. This finding emphasizes that learning problems are not merely individual in nature but also structural (Jaafar et al., 2023).

Likewise, research examining students' problems in Madrasah Aliyah revealed that low learning motivation and unsupportive environmental backgrounds significantly affect students' achievement and engagement in Arabic language learning (Kholiq & Khabibullah, 2021). Despite the valuable contributions of these studies in revealing various problems in Arabic language learning across different educational contexts and levels, most of the existing research tends to focus on problem description or the identification of causal factors without offering comprehensive and applicable solution models, particularly within the context of Madrasah Aliyah. For example, Muliatno (2023) and Yasin and Fadhlullah (2025) primarily emphasize the identification of learning challenges without systematically discussing problem-solving strategies. Similarly, the studies by Wahyudi et al. (2023) and Jaafar et al. (2023) describe existing obstacles but do not provide integrated practical recommendations for classroom teachers or policymakers.

This research gap forms the foundation of the present study. There remains a lack of studies that comprehensively examine efforts to address the problems of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah from multiple dimensions, including teachers, students, curriculum, and learning facilities and media. Most existing studies stop at identifying problems without further exploring applicable solution strategies within the madrasah context. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating not only the

problems encountered in Arabic language learning but also the various problem-solving efforts that have been implemented or have the potential to be further developed..

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. This approach was selected because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the problems in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah and to examine the problem-solving efforts proposed through the analysis of relevant scholarly works. Qualitative research focuses on comprehensively understanding phenomena rather than merely measuring them quantitatively; therefore, it is highly appropriate for exploring complex and multifaceted educational issues.

The data sources in this study are divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of accredited journal articles, theses, and dissertations that directly address the problems of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah or equivalent Islamic educational institutions. Meanwhile, secondary sources include books on Arabic language teaching theories, research reports, conference proceedings, and popular articles discussing curriculum policies and Arabic language learning practices in Indonesia. The distinction between primary and secondary sources is intended to maintain analytical depth while enriching the research perspective.

Data collection was conducted through documentation and systematic note-taking. The researcher collected relevant literature from various databases, such as Google Scholar, Garuda, SINTA, and university digital libraries. The collected data include findings from previous studies, learning theories, and educational policy reports relevant to the focus of the study. All documents were then organized based on major themes, such as student-related problems, teacher-related constraints, curriculum factors, limitations of facilities, and previously proposed problem-solving strategies.

Data analysis was carried out using the content analysis method, which involved three stages. First, data reduction, which involved selecting and filtering literature that was truly relevant to the research focus. Second, data display, in which findings from various sources were systematically organized into categories such as learning problems, causal factors, and problem-solving efforts. Third, conclusion drawing, which involved linking the findings from the literature to the research questions in order to produce comprehensive answers. Through this analytical technique, the researcher was able to identify patterns across previous studies and practical needs in the field, while also formulating new contributions in the form of problem mapping and applicable solutions. Thus, this research methodology is expected to provide a clearer picture of the problems of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah and to offer alternative problem-solving strategies that are relevant and can be implemented by educators and policymakers

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Problems in Arabic Language Learning

Based on the literature analysis, the problems of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah can be classified into two main categories, namely internal factors and external factors. This classification is essential for systematically mapping the sources of the problems and for providing a solid foundation in formulating targeted and sustainable problem-solving strategies.

1) Internal Factors

Internal factors refer to problems originating from students and teachers as the primary actors in the learning process. From the students' perspective, the dominant issues are related to low learning motivation and negative affective attitudes toward Arabic. Arabic is often perceived as a difficult subject due to differences between the Arabic linguistic system and Indonesian, particularly in terms of complex morphological and syntactic structures (nahwu and sharaf). This perception of difficulty contributes to increased language anxiety and decreased intrinsic motivation. In second language acquisition studies, motivation and affective factors are widely regarded as key determinants of successful language learning (Mengel, 1994).

In addition to motivation, students' internal factors are also associated with low levels of Arabic literacy, especially in reading unvowelled texts and classical Arabic texts. Limited decoding ability and insufficient syntactic awareness cause students to struggle to comprehend texts holistically. Research on language literacy indicates that weak reading skills have a direct impact on poor comprehension and hinder the development of other language skills (Pekrun et

al., 2014). The lack of reading habituation and the absence of graded reading strategies further weaken students' literacy foundations in Arabic.

From the teachers' perspective, internal factors are closely related to limitations in pedagogical and professional competence. Several studies indicate that foreign language instruction which remains oriented toward conventional, teacher-centered methods tends to restrict communicative interaction in the classroom. In fact, communicative competence can only develop through meaningful language use in authentic contexts (Preston, 1982). Teachers' limited ability to implement communicative approaches, utilize educational technology, and design authentic assessments results in learning practices that are less adaptive to the characteristics of digitally oriented learners.

Theoretically, these findings align with second language acquisition theories that emphasize the role of affective factors, linguistic readiness, interaction quality, and teacher competence as fundamental prerequisites for successful language learning.

2) External Factors

External factors refer to problems that originate outside students and teachers but significantly influence the effectiveness of Arabic language learning. One major external factor is the complexity of the curriculum and limited instructional time allocation. The Arabic language curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah is relatively dense, while instructional time is limited to only a few hours per week. As a result, teachers tend to focus on completing curricular content rather than facilitating deep, communicative, and sustained language skill development. This condition potentially leads to superficial and less meaningful learning experiences.

Another prominent external factor is the limited availability of learning facilities and instructional media. The lack of audio-visual media, digital learning resources, and language laboratories restricts the variety of instructional strategies, particularly for developing *istimā'* (listening) and *kalām* (speaking) skills. Previous studies have shown that contextual and media-supported instruction can significantly enhance learner engagement and language learning outcomes (Amrina et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the absence of a conducive language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*) exacerbates learning problems. When Arabic is not used in daily communication within the madrasah environment, students have minimal opportunities to practice the language naturally. Consequently, Arabic is perceived merely as an academic subject rather than a living and functional means of communication (Lutfiani et al., 2025).

Institutional policy also plays a significant role in shaping the quality of Arabic language learning. Limited institutional support for teachers' professional development and instructional innovation contributes to stagnant teaching practices and constrains efforts to improve learning quality.

B. Impacts of Problems in Arabic Language Learning

The internal and external problems in Arabic language learning have a direct impact on the low level of students' communicative competence. Students generally possess theoretical grammatical knowledge but are unable to apply it effectively in spoken and written communication. This imbalance between linguistic competence and communicative competence indicates that instruction remains overly focused on structural aspects while providing insufficient opportunities for meaningful language use (Asbarin & Amalia, 2022).

Beyond cognitive outcomes, these learning problems also affect students' affective and literacy dimensions. Monotonous instructional practices and limited media variation reduce students' motivation and interest in reading Arabic texts. As a result, students experience difficulties in understanding Arabic Islamic texts, which should be a distinctive feature of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah (Nasrulloh et al., 2020).

At the pedagogical and institutional levels, these problems lead to overall low instructional effectiveness. The lack of authentic assessment practices makes it difficult for madrasahs to obtain an objective picture of students' actual language abilities, thereby limiting data-driven and needs-based instructional improvement (Prindyatno & Alwi, 2024).

C. Efforts to Address Problems in Arabic Language Learning

Considering the identified problems and their impacts, comprehensive, systematic, and sustainable solutions are required. Efforts to improve Arabic language learning should not be implemented partially, but must encompass pedagogical, professional, and institutional dimensions.

First, Arabic language instruction needs to be reoriented toward communicative and contextual approaches, positioning Arabic as both a tool for communication and a medium for Islamic understanding. Second, students' active engagement should be enhanced through dialogic activities, simulations, language games, and task-based learning that encourage authentic language use (Rahmawati, 2021).

Third, Arabic literacy development should be strengthened through gradual and continuous reading practices. Fourth, teacher competence enhancement must be supported through ongoing professional development, mastery of contemporary teaching methodologies, and effective integration of educational technology. Fifth, the optimization of learning facilities and media, both conventional and digital, is a prerequisite for interactive and meaningful instruction (Toolan, 2019).

Sixth, instructional management should prioritize mastery of core language skills rather than mere completion of curricular content. Seventh, the development of a supportive language environment (bi'ah lughawiyah) within the madrasah can expand opportunities for natural and sustained language practice. Eighth, improvements in assessment systems through the implementation of authentic assessment, including performance-based, project-based, and portfolio-based assessments, are essential for measuring students' language abilities comprehensively and meaningfully (Gulikers et al., 2004).

4. CONCLUSION

Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah continues to face various challenges that negatively affect the quality of both the learning process and learning outcomes. These challenges include the complexity of instructional materials, the dominance of theoretically oriented teaching methods, limited instructional time and learning facilities, low student motivation and Arabic literacy, insufficient teacher competence, and the absence of authentic assessment systems. These interrelated issues collectively contribute to students' low mastery of active language skills, particularly their ability to use Arabic communicatively.

The impact of these challenges is evident not only in the cognitive domain but also in affective, pedagogical, and institutional aspects. Students tend to acquire grammatical knowledge at a theoretical level without being balanced by practical language use, demonstrate low learning motivation, and experience difficulties in Arabic text literacy. Meanwhile, teachers encounter constraints in implementing instructional innovations, and madrasah institutions have not fully established evaluation systems capable of objectively and comprehensively portraying students' Arabic language proficiency.

Therefore, improving the quality of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah requires comprehensive and sustainable efforts. Instruction should be oriented toward communicative and contextual approaches, supported by the enhancement of teacher competence, optimization of learning media and facilities, effective instructional management, the creation of a supportive language environment, and the implementation of authentic assessment. Through these measures, Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah is expected to produce students who not only understand Arabic theoretically but are also able to use it functionally and sustainably in accordance with the demands of modern education.

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