

The Psychological Factors in Arabic Language Acquisition of Modern Islamic Boarding School Students

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Abstract

This study aimed to describe an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia that taught Arabic with both divine and active competence. Specifically, this study examined: (1) the Arabic language learning process, (2) the Arabic language acquisition process, and (3) the relevance of acquisition theory from a psycholinguistic perspective to the Arabic language learning process. The research was conducted at Madina Islamic Boarding School, located in Karya Tani, Labuhan Meringgai, East Lampung, Indonesia. Various aspects supported the success of this institution in implementing and developing Arabic language learning. Hence, it was intriguing to investigate the language acquisition process of the students at this school. This research was field-based, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation methods. The data were analyzed qualitatively. The findings revealed that Arabic language learning took place inside and outside the classroom. Students' Arabic language acquisition occurred in both settings and was influenced by several aspects, including psychological factors.

Keywords: Psychological factors, Arabic language acquisition, Modern Islamic boarding school.

Introduction

Arabic is one of the foreign languages taught in Indonesia. It is characterized by a rich phonetic system and a wide variety of morphological derivations.¹ The majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, and they are familiar with the language used in the Holy Qur'an. Their lives are closely connected to the Qur'an, as it serves as a guide for life and as the main reference in religious and scientific studies.² However, only a small portion of the Muslim population can use Arabic as a means of communication, typically teachers or students who study the language. Moreover, it can be justified that most Arabic language learning in Indonesia is oriented toward comprehension competence within a passive linguistic perspective. This is mainly because religious motives are the fundamental reason for studying Arabic.³ Most Muslims only use Arabic during worship,⁴ as not all of them study the language intensively to achieve speaking proficiency.

At present, Arabic is a foreign language that is widely taught and studied in both formal and non-formal educational settings.⁵ The teaching of Arabic appears to be growing rapidly in Indonesia. Arabic is now introduced early, beginning at the kindergarten level. Previously, it was taught only in schools with Islamic characteristics, such as Islamic elementary schools up to Islamic universities.⁶ Today, however, Arabic has generally spread into almost all types of educational institutions, including elementary, junior high, and senior high schools. This situation represents a growing phenomenon of Arabic language learning in Indonesia.

In addition to formal education, Indonesia has thousands of Islamic boarding schools that naturally teach Arabic. Islamic boarding schools hold an important position as Islamic educational institutions that play a significant role in the spread of Arabic in Indonesia.⁷ Nevertheless, the majority of these schools still focus on teaching passive Arabic, as the main goal of studying in Islamic

¹ Kasmantoni Kasmantoni, Noza Aflisia, and Isma Muhammad 'Atiyah, "Arabic Practice in the Language Environment I Mumrasah Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyah Fi Bi'Ah Lughawiyah," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 14, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 470–85, <https://doi.org/10.24042/albayan.v14i2.12514>.

² Dewi Chamidah, Abdullah Sarif, and Syafiyatul Ma'udah, 'Language Differences in the Quran and Their Implications for Arabic Teaching in Indonesia', *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 7.2 November (2023), p. 505, doi:10.29240/jba.v7i2.8376.

³ Muhammad Zainuri, 'اللغة العربية في إندونيسيا' Perkembangan Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia', *Jurnal Tanling : Perkembangan Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia*, II.2 (2019), 238.

⁴ Noza Aflisia, "Urgensi Bahasa Arab Bagi Hafizh Al-Qur'an," *FOKUS Jurnal Kajian Keislaman Dan Kemasyarakatan*, vol. 1, December 16, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.29240/JF.V1I1.64>.

⁵ Nelly Husni Laely, 'Analisis Fungsi Bahasa Arab Berdasarkan Fungsi Utama Bahasa Menurut Halliday', *El-Ibtikar*, 12.1 (2023), 68.

⁶ Ahmad Muradi, 'Tujuan Pembelajaran Bahasa Asing (Arab) Di Indonesia', *Al-Maqoyis*, 1.1 (2013), 129.

⁷ Nelly Mujahidah and Baidhillah Riyadhi, 'Model Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Pondok Pesantren', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Al-Ilmi*, 6.1 (2023), 22.

boarding schools is to understand Islamic religious knowledge. Nonetheless, in line with current developments, many Islamic boarding schools have begun shifting from passive to active Arabic language learning. Modern Islamic boarding schools now emphasize mastery of the four language competencies: *istima'* (listening), *kalam* (speaking), *qira'ah* (reading), and *kitabab* (writing).⁸

In Lampung, Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools also receive strong support from the community. Almost every Islamic boarding school is highly favored by families who entrust their children to be educated there, whether the school is traditional (*salaf*), semi-modern, or modern.⁹ In all types of Islamic boarding schools, Arabic is evidently taught as part of the curriculum.

In response to the current demand for Arabic proficiency, passive competence alone is no longer sufficient. To work in the Middle East or to pursue higher education in Arab countries, active mastery of Arabic has become increasingly essential. This paradigm shift in Arabic language learning within Islamic boarding schools likely reflects the evolving character of these institutions. Today, Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia that maintain traditional approaches, where Arabic is treated as a passive language, are known as *Salaf Islamic Boarding Schools*, while those that emphasize active language use are referred to as *Modern Islamic Boarding Schools*. Naturally, each type of school has its own distinctive focus in the learning process.¹⁰

One of the Islamic boarding schools that teaches Arabic with the aim of developing passive and active competencies is Madina Islamic Boarding School, located in Karya Tani, Labuhan Meringgai, East Lampung, Indonesia. This Islamic boarding school can be considered successful in developing Arabic language learning. This success can be observed from its graduates who continued their studies at universities, particularly in Arabic Language Education study programs. The majority of these graduates demonstrated strong Arabic competence, both passive and active. This was evident in their performance during lectures, comprehensive examinations, and undergraduate thesis defenses, where passive and active Arabic skills appeared to be well-balanced.

Over time, the school's graduates have shown remarkable achievement, especially in Arabic Language Education programs. They could participate in lectures without encountering significant difficulties and were often able to graduate with satisfactory results. Moreover, many of them continued their studies while working as teachers in various schools. This phenomenon is certainly interesting and important to examine, as the findings of such research can serve as a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge, particularly in the

⁸ Muhammad Zaenuri, 'Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Pondok Pesantren Mahasiswa', *Konferensi Nasional Bahasa Arab IV*, 10, 2018, 372.

⁹ Imam Syafe'i, 'PONDOK PESANTREN: Lembaga Pendidikan Pembentukan Karakter', *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 8.1 (2017), 61.

¹⁰ Syindi Oktaviani R Tolinggi, 'Model Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Pesantren Salafi Dan Khalafi', *Al-Lisan*, 6.1 (2020), pp. 64–95, doi:10.30603/al.v6i1.966.

development of Arabic language learning systems and, more broadly, in foreign language education in today's modern era.

Various factors undoubtedly contribute to the success of an institution that implements and develops effective Arabic language learning. This study employed a psycholinguistic perspective, focusing on language acquisition (*Iktisab al-Lughah*). This approach was chosen because graduates of Madina Islamic Boarding School exhibited active Arabic competence. Therefore, it was relevant and intriguing to conduct a study to explore the process of language acquisition among the students of this Islamic boarding school.

According to Wibowo in Sumanto, language is defined as a set of arbitrary symbols agreed upon by a human community to communicate within social activities.¹¹ The term arbitrary is well known in linguistic and philosophical studies, meaning that the appearance of linguistic symbols generally emerges naturally, without deliberate formulation. There is no inherent relationship between words and the meanings they represent; rather, their connection is established through social convention among language users.¹² As a means of communication, language possesses characteristic features such as its communicative function, symbolic nature, and its capacity to express and share human consciousness.¹³

In the study of the philosophy of language, language is understood as a system of sounds used by human groups to convey intentions or goals.¹⁴ Viewed from its communicative function, language primarily serves to convey messages or meanings from one person to another.¹⁵ Thus, language constitutes a crucial phenomenon of human life, especially in interpersonal interaction. It is difficult to imagine human existence without language as a medium for expressing thoughts, emotions, and desires.

When viewed from this functional perspective, language is a communicative tool that humans use to interact with others.¹⁶ Meanwhile, from the standpoint of linguistic development, language represents one of the most complex and unique human abilities.¹⁷ Therefore, language may be interpreted as

¹¹ Edi Sumanto, 'Hubungan Filsafat Dengan Bahasa', *El-Afkar*, 6.1 (2017), 20.

¹² Muh. Sabilar Rosyad and others, 'Bahasa Arab Dalam Tinjauan Filsafat Pengetahuan (Studi Korelasi Filsafat Sebagai Sentrum Kajian Bahasa Arab)', *AL-AF'IDAH: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Pengajarannya*, 7.1 (2023), 171.

¹³ Franco Fabbro, Alice Fabbro, and Cristiano Crescentini, 'The Nature and Function of Languages', *Languages*, 7.4 (2022), pp. 1–10.

¹⁴ Zaidan Jurji, *Al Falsafah Al Lughawiyah*, 1st edn (Daarul Hadaatsah, 1987). 21

¹⁵ Okarisma Mailani and others, 'Bahasa Sebagai Alat Komunikasi Dalam Kehidupan Manusia', *Kampret Journal*, 1.1 (2022), 5.

¹⁶ A Hidayat, 'Bi'ah Lughawiyah (Lingkungan Berbahasa) Dan Pemerolehan Bahasa', *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 37.1 (2012), 3.

¹⁷ Cristy Yanuari, 'Perkembangan Bahasa Pada Anak', *PENTAS: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 3.2 (2017), 60.

a system of symbols used by humans to communicate and express ideas and thoughts to others.¹⁸

Arabic is a language that possesses unique characteristics related to its sounds, lexicons, eloquence, morphemes, and syntax, among other linguistic aspects. It is the language used for communication in Arab countries in particular and among Muslims around the world in general. From the perspective of its development, Arabic can be regarded as one of the most rapidly evolving languages in the world. Its complexity is widely acknowledged, covering the areas of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. For Indonesian people, the majority of whom are Muslims, religious motivation has become the fundamental reason for learning Arabic.¹⁹

The term Arabic language acquisition in Arabic is *iktisāb al-lughah*, referring to the process that takes place in the human brain during language acquisition. Initially, this term was used to describe the process of acquiring a first language (mother tongue). However, as the field evolved, many scholars began using the term language acquisition to refer to the process of acquiring a second or foreign language as well.²⁰ In terms of form, there are two types of language acquisition: first language acquisition (*lughat al-umm*) and second language acquisition (*al-lughah al-ajnabiyyah*). In this study, language acquisition refers to the process of acquiring a second language, specifically, the acquisition of Arabic within a modern Islamic boarding school context.

Second language acquisition is inherently interdisciplinary, highlighting its complexity and dependence on cognitive, psychological, and contextual factors.^{21,22} Language acquisition research also seeks to explain phenomena observed throughout the process of acquiring a non-native sound system.²³ The acquisition of a second or foreign language, particularly when studied within formal educational institutions, is naturally influenced by multiple factors. This is due to the involvement of various components within an educational environment, both internal and external factors affecting the learners. Among the factors that influence the process of second language acquisition are: 1) Age; 2)

¹⁸ Sitti Rabiah, 'Language As A Tool For Communication And Cultural Reality Discloser', in *International Conference on Media, Communication and Culture*, 2012, 10.

¹⁹ Nginayatul Khasanah, 'Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Sebagai Bahasa Kedua (Uregensi Bahasa Arab Dan Pembelajarannya Di Indonesia)', *An-Nidzam: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*, 3.2 (2016), pp. 39–54.

²⁰ Abdul Aziz, *Ilmu Lughah AnNafsiy*, 1st edn (Jami'ah al Imam Ibnu Su'ud al Arabiyah, 2006).

²¹ Fabbro, Fabbro, and Crescentini. *Second Language Acquisition: A Scientometric Review*, *Psycholinguistics* (2025), 37 (1), pp. 8

²² Ahmed Alduais, Ahmed Yahya Almakrob, and Silvia Allegretta, *Second Language Acquisition: A Scientometric Review*, *Psycholinguistics*, 2025, XXXVII, doi:10.31470/2309-1797-2025-37-1-6-57.

²³ Chao Zhou and Silke Hamann, 'Modelling the Acquisition of the Portuguese Tap by L1-Mandarin Learners: A BiPhon-HG Account for Individual Differences, Syllable-Position Effects and Orthographic Influences in L2 Speech', *Glossa*, 9.1 (2024), pp. 1–39, doi:10.16995/glossa.9692.

Environment; 3) First language influence; and 4) Motivation (see Figure 1). The explanation of these factors is as follows:²⁴

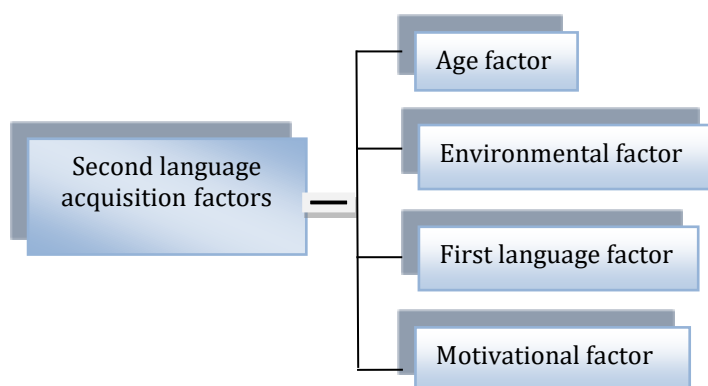


Figure 1. The factors influencing second language acquisition.

In terms of age, many theories suggest that children acquire a second language more easily than adults. Language acquisition occurs most effectively during early childhood, particularly in the toddler stage, and continues to develop gradually with age and experience. Children tend to acquire language more quickly and effortlessly because they are biologically predisposed to learn languages.²⁵

The language environment refers to what learners see and hear around them, everything related to their learning activities.²⁶ If learners live in an environment where they can regularly see or hear Arabic being used, their language acquisition will be positively influenced. Both physical and psychological environments play a significant role in shaping learners' linguistic development. The physical environment includes tangible aspects such as classroom facilities and learning media, while the psychological environment encompasses attitudes, motivation, and social interaction.²⁷ A natural language environment significantly broadens learners' exposure to various communicative situations.²⁸

²⁴ Anggelia Dwi Agustin and others, 'Pemerolehan Bahasa Kedua Kenji TikToker Jepang', 2024. 82-83

²⁵ Norliani Dkk., 'Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Pemerolehan Bahasa Ke Dua', in *Seminar Nasional Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, Dan Pendidikan Dasar 3*, 2023, p. 119.

²⁶ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, Zein Ridha, and Bakri Mohammed Bkheet Ahmed, 'Language Environment on Speaking Skills Training in Islamic Middle School', *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 8.2 (2024), pp. 617–40, doi:10.29240/jba.v8i2.10962.

²⁷ Xiaolan Ye, 'A Review of Classroom Environment on Student Engagement in English as a Foreign Language Learning', *Frontiers in Education*, 9.July (2024), pp. 1–7, doi:10.3389/educ.2024.1415829.

²⁸ Ron J. Pat-El and others, 'Exploring the Impact of Student Perceptions of Assessment for Learning on Intrinsic Motivation', *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 83.June (2024), p. 101420, doi:10.1016/j.stueduc.2024.101420.

The influence of a learner's first language is also a crucial component in second language acquisition. Arabic, for instance, shares many lexical similarities with other languages in terms of sound and meaning. When structural or syntactic similarities exist between the learner's first and second languages, the acquisition of the second language tends to occur more easily. Thus, similarities in vocabulary, structure, and usage patterns between the two languages can greatly facilitate the learning process.

Learning a foreign language requires persistence, genuine interest, and strong motivation from learners, as mastery cannot be achieved through classroom learning alone.²⁹ Among the factors influencing second language acquisition, motivation is considered one of the most decisive. According to Harlen et al. (2003), student motivation is integral to achieving positive educational outcomes, as it influences academic success, engagement, and retention.³⁰ Motivation can be classified into two types: 1) intrinsic motivation, which arises from internal factors; and 2) extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external rewards. Learners with strong motivation are more likely to make consistent efforts to acquire a second language successfully.³¹

Among the factors discussed above, age and motivation are classified as psychological factors. Age influences the effectiveness of second language acquisition, as noted by Patkowsky (in Irwansyah, 2009:153), who states that the earlier a person learns a language, the better and more accurate their pronunciation will be.³² Motivation, on the other hand, is a psychological factor that significantly affects language learning because it represents one of the essential internal conditions that drive human behavior.³³

Accordingly, the purpose of this research was to identify the psychological factors that supported Arabic language acquisition among students at Madina Islamic Boarding School. Previous studies related to this research include the following: 1) *"Learning Arabic as a Second Language: Literature Review"* by Handriawan. The results of his study indicate that learning a foreign language, particularly Arabic as a second language, inevitably presents many challenges and obstacles. However, considering Indonesia's context as a predominantly Muslim country, this condition should be "manipulated" as supporting capital in learning and teaching Arabic. One of the main orientations of Arabic language education, according to Handriawan, should be directed toward the development of

²⁹ Diana S. Rahman and Wening Sahayu, 'How Do Foreign Language Teachers Motivate Students in Language Learning?', *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7.1 (2020), pp. 181–93, doi:10.24815/siele.v7i1.15586.

³⁰ Pat-El and others.

³¹ Agustin and others.

³² Irwan Syah Irwansyah, 'Pengaruh Usia Terhadap Kemampuan Memahami Bahasa Kedua', *S.ASTRANESLA: Jurnal Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 8.2 (2020), 153.

³³ Idi Warsah and Mirzon Daheri, *Psikologi Suatu Pengantar*, Tunas Gemilang Press, 2021. 136

scientific knowledge;³⁴ 2) *“Bi’ah Lughawiyah and Language Acquisition: Literature Review”* by Hidayat. The study concludes that improving Arabic language learning is essential, particularly in aspects of management, curriculum, learning processes, and evaluation. Without reconstructing Arabic language learning, students’ mastery of Arabic, which is crucial to understanding Islamic knowledge, would become increasingly limited. One of the recommended strategies to enhance Arabic learning is the creation of a supportive language environment (*bi’ah lughawiyah*);³⁵ 3) *“Arabic as a Second Language (Theoretical Study of Arabic Language Acquisition in Non-Native Students): Literature Review”* by Syahid. This study explains that the process of language acquisition occurs naturally in the human brain during first language acquisition. Meanwhile, second language acquisition may occur similarly to first language acquisition but can also develop through structured learning processes;³⁶ and 4) *“Language Learning Psychology: Literature Review”* by Hamdun. The study states that all humans are capable of mastering, or more precisely, acquiring, language as long as they grow and live within a society. However, this process of acquisition remains a matter of debate among linguists due to differing perspectives on how language is actually acquired.³⁷

The present research specifically aimed to explore the psychological factors that influenced students’ Arabic language acquisition at Madina Islamic Boarding School. This study employed a psycholinguistic perspective, focusing on the process of language acquisition, as graduates of Madina Islamic Boarding School have demonstrated active competence in Arabic. The research adopted a qualitative method to describe phenomena related to Arabic language acquisition within modern Islamic boarding schools. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation: 1) Observation was conducted to examine Arabic language acquisition activities, including students’ practices inside and outside the classroom, during their stay in the dormitory and within its surrounding environment; 2) Interviews with teachers and students were carried out to obtain in-depth information regarding the psychological factors that supported Arabic language acquisition at the school; and 3) Documentation was used to gather background information related to students’ personal and academic profiles.

³⁴ Doni Handriawan, *‘Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Sebagai Bahasa Ke Dua’*, *Al Ittijah*, 4.2 (2012), 156.

³⁵ Hidayat. 43

³⁶ Ahmad Habibi Syahid, *‘Bahasa Arab Sebagai Bahasa Kedua (Kajian Teoretis Pemerolehan Bahasa Arab Pada Siswa Non-Native) Abstrak Pendahuluan Kajian Tentang Pemerolehan Bahasa’*, 2.1 (2015), 96.

³⁷ Dudung Hamdun, *‘Psikologi Belajar Bahasa’*, *Al-Arabiyah*, 2.2 (2006), 89.

Findings and Discussion

Arabic Learning Process

The learning process is the main activity in any educational institution.³⁸ The existence of learning is very important because it is expected to bring about positive behavioral changes in students. Through the teaching and learning process, students are expected to experience improvements in their behavior. In the learning process, students develop their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains by interacting with teachers and other students. The cognitive domain in Arabic language learning is developed through the mastery of Arabic linguistic materials. In this context, learning Arabic from a linguistic perspective involves the development of insight into Arabic linguistics. The affective domain encompasses students' attitudes, values, emotions, and interests toward the learning process and its materials. This domain is crucial because a positive attitude toward Arabic can increase learning motivation, student engagement, and success in language acquisition. The psychomotor domain relates to physical abilities or motor skills applied in practice. This includes concrete actions or activities involving the coordination of thought and movement, such as writing Arabic letters, pronouncing words, and engaging in oral communication.

At Madina Islamic Boarding School, the learning process was conducted in classrooms for formal learning activities. In class, students learned Arabic grammar (*sharf*), structure (*nahwu*), and Arabic language skills, which included four aspects: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Additional learning activities were conducted outside the classroom. The language environment that encouraged speaking Arabic at all times strengthened language acquisition within the boarding school. Students were required to speak Arabic in the dormitory environment under the supervision of their instructors. As an educational institution that facilitated Arabic language learning, this school implemented both formal and non-formal learning.

Formal learning activities were carried out as part of the formal education system, as the institution itself was a formal educational entity. Formal education is structured, sequential, and time-bound, from the elementary level to the university level.³⁹ It follows a well-organized curriculum and a planned learning process, including learning plans, teaching materials, methods, media, and evaluation tools. The curriculum of Madina Islamic Boarding School, particularly for Arabic language learning, included subjects such as *Muthala'ah* (reading Arabic texts) and *Nahwu* (Arabic structure), which used the textbook *al-Nahwu al-Wadhih*.

Learning activities outside the classroom served as supplementary learning to deepen and broaden students' understanding of the subject matter. In addition to Arabic-related lessons, students also studied English and religious subjects.

³⁸ Junaedi Ifan, 'Proses Pembelajaran Yang Efektif.', *Jisamar*, VOL. 3 NO. 2.2 (2019), 20.

³⁹ Raudatus Syaadah and others, 'Pendidikan Formal, Pendidikan Non Formal Dan Pendidikan Informal', *Pema (Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat)*, 2.2 (2023), 27.

Through these extracurricular activities, students received reinforcement, particularly in vocabulary building, guided speaking practice, and delivering Arabic speeches.

A language environment that supported students in practicing Arabic consisted of several components, namely the administrators of the Islamic boarding school, the educators (*ustadz*), senior students who served, and the management of daily needs such as meals and accommodation. The description of the learning process is illustrated in Figure 2.

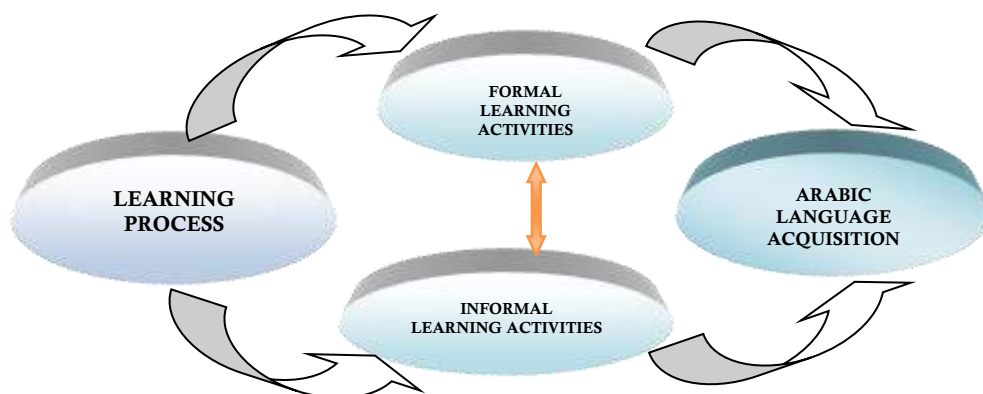


Figure 2. Arabic language acquisition process in Madina Islamic Boarding School.

Based on the figure above, the process of acquiring Arabic as a second language was supported by two main learning processes: classroom learning and Arabic language practice outside the classroom. These two learning contexts complemented and influenced each other. Arabic lessons taught in class could be applied through practice outside the classroom, and conversely, practicing Arabic in daily life could strengthen mastery of lessons learned in class.

As a formal educational institution, Madina Islamic Boarding School in Labuhan Maringgai, East Lampung, Indonesia, generally possessed similar components to other formal schools. The institution had a structured curriculum, qualified educators, appropriate learning methods and media, as well as evaluation tools. In this study, data related to these components were considered secondary data, while the primary data concerned analytical variables such as student motivation, age, Arabic learning performance, first language background, and learning environment.

The primary and most important element in curriculum development and management is planning.⁴⁰ The philosophical foundation of curriculum

⁴⁰ Muhammad Afthon Ulin Nuha and Nurul Musyafa'ah, 'Implementation of Quality Management Curriculum in Arabic Learning', *Arabiyyatuna : Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 6.2 (2022), p. 417, doi:10.29240/jba.v6i2.5137.

development requires that educational objectives be aligned with the philosophical values and worldview of the community in which the educational institution operates.⁴¹ Therefore, Arabic language learning cannot be separated from its curriculum function as a fundamental element for continuous, gradual, and systematic development to achieve educational goals.⁴² The curriculum of Madina Islamic Boarding School, particularly for Arabic learning, included subjects such as *Muthala'ah* (reading Arabic texts) and *Nahwu* (Arabic grammar), which used the textbook *al-Nahwu al-Wadhib*. The function of this curriculum was to serve as a structured plan and guide that outlined the objectives, content, materials, and teaching methods necessary for delivering Arabic language instruction in a systematic and focused manner.

The educators (*ustadz*) were categorized into two groups: permanent teachers and devotional teachers. The devotional teachers were senior students who had completed six years of education, from junior high school (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*) to senior high school (*Madrasah Aliyah*), and were required to serve for one year as teachers at Madina Islamic Boarding School to apply and share their knowledge.

The teacher's choice of appropriate teaching methods greatly influences students' success in learning.⁴³ The methods applied in teaching Arabic at Madina Islamic Boarding School included the following: 1) *Al-Muhadatsah al-Yaumiyah* (Daily Arabic Conversation). This activity was held twice a week after the morning prayer or before exercise. Each student paired up with a conversation partner to practice speaking in Arabic under the supervision of student administrators. All students were required to carry a *kutaib* (pocket book) containing *mufradat* (Arabic vocabulary). This activity served as an opportunity for the teachers to correct students' grammar and vocabulary usage during conversations; 2) *Al-Ilqā' al-Mufradāt* (Vocabulary Delivery). This activity was conducted in the morning after Qur'an recitation. Each group of students gathered in their respective rooms, where the student administrators presented new Arabic vocabulary (*mufradat*). These vocabularies were then used in simple sentences or short conversations whenever possible. During this session, students were also required to memorize the newly introduced words.

Over time, the management regularly checked students' understanding. If students could not answer the questions, they were given a light punishment. In this case, it appears that the foundation of vocabulary learning was based on the direct method (*thariqah mubāsyrāh*), in which the teachers consistently used Arabic in delivering lessons; 3) *Al-Khiṭābah al-Minbariyyah* (Arabic Speech Practice).

⁴¹ Erlina Erlina, Idham Khalid, and Ahmad Bukhari Muslim, 'Integration of Prismatic Science and Development of Arabic Education Master Curriculum', *Arabiyatuna : Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 6.2 (2022), p. 591, doi:10.29240/jba.v6i2.5024.

⁴² Muhammad Ilfan Fauzi, 'Pemanfaatan Neurosains Dalam Desain Pengembangan Kurikulum Bahasa Arab', *Arabiyatuna : Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 4.1 (2020), p. 1, doi:10.29240/jba.v4i1.1095.

⁴³ Maulana, Ridha, and Ahmed.

Speech training at Madina Islamic Boarding School was conducted in three languages: Arabic, English, and Indonesian. Each student was scheduled to deliver a speech once every two weeks. Every student was required to prepare a speech script that must be signed by the supervisor and the head of the teaching division one day before presentation. This activity was not only aimed to enhance students' ability to speak Arabic but also to develop their confidence and public-speaking skills; 4) *Al-Inshā' al-Yaumī* (Arabic Essay Writing). This activity was carried out once every two weeks. Sixth-level students were required to write an essay (*inshā'*) and submit it on a predetermined day to their class leader, who then forwarded it to the administrators. The ability to compose essays was developed at higher levels, as this skill represents the most advanced stage in Arabic language mastery; and 5) Use of Arabic in Teaching. In Madina Islamic Boarding School, lessons were generally delivered in Arabic, except for general subjects. This policy aimed to support the enhancement of students' language proficiency, particularly in Arabic. Teachers in Islamic boarding schools play not only the role of instructors but also that of mentors, role models, and character builders, especially in guiding students toward effective Arabic learning.

The teaching media used in the classrooms were generally conventional, such as blackboards and visual aids. However, for developing Arabic language skills, the institution also provided a language laboratory, which was utilized to train listening and speaking skills. Media play a crucial role in the Arabic language learning process; they are not merely instructional tools but also serve as a bridge of communication between teachers and students, making learning materials more comprehensible, engaging, and contextual.

Evaluation in formal education was carried out systematically, similar to other formal schools. Meanwhile, evaluation outside the classroom occurred continuously through activities such as vocabulary tests (*mufradāt*), speech practices (*khitābah*), and essay writing (*inshā'*). The evaluation of Arabic language learning is a structured process aimed at measuring, assessing, and improving the learning process and outcomes, encompassing cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills) aspects.

The study schedule for formal learning activities was the same as in other formal schools, starting from 07:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Extracurricular learning took place in the morning after the dawn (*subḥ*) prayer and in the afternoon after the midday (*ẓuhr*) prayer, following rest and lunch. In the evening, learning continued after the sunset (*maghrib*) and evening (*'ishā'*) prayers. The duration of Arabic language learning depended on several factors, including learning objectives, teaching methods, intensity, and students' individual conditions and abilities. Proper time management ensured that learning time was used effectively and efficiently.

Based on the data obtained by the researchers, the students' motivation tended to be extrinsic in nature. The majority of students were motivated by external factors, such as the enforcement of language discipline within the

boarding school. Many students reported having been punished for not using Arabic in daily communication. Every day, several students received disciplinary action, including light physical punishment such as running around the school field.

Formal education at Madina Islamic Boarding School began at the junior high school level, meaning that the students' age range typically started from 12–13 years and continued until approximately 18–19 years old upon completion of their studies.

The presentation of Arabic lessons began after the dawn prayer (*ṣubḥ*) and continued until the evening prayer (*ʿiṣāʾ*). The implementation of Arabic learning occurred inside and outside the classroom. Outside the classroom, Arabic was taught through various activities such as vocabulary enrichment (*mufraḍāt*), speech practice (*khiṭābah*), and the daily obligation to communicate in Arabic. Meanwhile, classroom-based Arabic learning followed the structured curriculum prescribed by the Islamic boarding school.

Before students were required to use Arabic in their daily communication, they underwent a one-year transitional period during which they must use Indonesian. During this stage, the use of local or regional languages was strictly prohibited.

The components of the student environment consisted of the boarding school administrators, teachers, senior students serving in leadership or mentoring roles, and the management responsible for daily needs such as food and accommodation.

Arabic Language Acquisition

Based on the results of surveys on learning activities and interviews with teachers, administrators, and students, the acquisition of Arabic among students could be classified into several sources as follows: 1) Classroom Learning. Similar to other formal schools, Arabic was taught as one of the compulsory subjects in addition to other subjects required in the national curriculum; 2) Extracurricular Activities. Outside the classroom, students received reinforcement through vocabulary enrichment, guided speaking practice, and Arabic speech training; 3) Peer Interaction. In their daily interactions, students were required to speak Arabic with one another. This continuous use of Arabic in social communication helped strengthen their linguistic competence and fluency; 4) Interaction with administrators and teachers. In addition to peer communication, the administrators and teachers also consistently used Arabic when interacting with fellow administrators, teachers, and students. This condition created a supportive linguistic environment that naturally fostered Arabic language acquisition.

The Relevance of Psycholinguistic Acquisition Theory to Arabic Language Acquisition

Among the various factors influencing second language acquisition in modern Islamic boarding schools, particularly the acquisition of Arabic, two key psychological factors stand out: motivation and age. The explanations of these factors in the context of Madina Islamic Boarding School are as follows.

First, Motivation Factor

Motivation plays a vital role in all human activities, as it serves to stimulate, direct, and sustain behavior toward achieving desired goals.⁴⁴ In the context of language learning, motivation is a key determinant of success in acquiring a second language.⁴⁵ According to Howard et al. in Yaghoubi et al. (2025), motivation drives persistence in learning.⁴⁶ Therefore, it functions as a driving force that sustains the process of second language acquisition.⁴⁷ Student motivation is an essential element in the happiness-centered approach to learning.⁴⁸ With sufficient motivation, students tend to be more enthusiastic and actively participate in learning activities. When students are engaged and motivated, learning objectives are more likely to be achieved, which are part of the educational goals set by the institution. Furthermore, Ishida et al. (2024) suggest that there is a significant correlation among learning motivation, academic achievement, and lifelong learning.⁴⁹

The primary goal of modern Islamic boarding schools is to provide education in religious studies. In addition, these institutions emphasize the mastery of foreign languages, particularly Arabic and English. Besides religious and language subjects, students also study general subjects listed in the national curriculum, such as mathematics and natural sciences. In learning foreign languages, students require institutionally supported motivation to ensure the success of language acquisition. Learners are often instrumentally motivated, meaning their motivation is primarily driven by the attainment of external rewards.⁵⁰ Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in fostering positive motivation

⁴⁴ Dkk. Elvira, Neni Z, 'Studi Literatur: Motivasi Belajar Siswa Dalam Pembelajaran', *Jurnal Literasi Pendidikan*, 1.2 (2022), pp. 353.

⁴⁵ Ali Sorayyai Azar and Darshini Tanggaraju, 'Motivation in Second Language Acquisition among Learners in Malaysia', *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7.2 (2020), pp. 323–33, doi:10.24815/siele.v7i2.16506.

⁴⁶ Mahan Yaghoubi, Abbas Pourhosein Gilakjani, and Gholam Reza Abbasian, 'The Effect of Performance - Based Assessment on Academic Resilience , Motivation , and Teacher Support in Virtual versus Non - Virtual Classes', 2025.

⁴⁷ Xue Wu, 'Motivation in Second Language Acquisition: A Bibliometric Analysis between 2000 and 2021', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.November (2022), pp. 1–17, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1032316.

⁴⁸ Chamidah, Sarif, and Ma'udah.

⁴⁹ Ayame Ishida and Takashi Sekiyama, 'Variables Influencing Students' Learning Motivation: Critical Literature Review', *Frontiers in Education*, 9 (2024), doi:10.3389/feduc.2024.1445011.

⁵⁰ Azar and Tanggaraju.

among students by providing encouragement, recognition, and meaningful rewards that enhance students' enthusiasm.⁵¹

Motivation strongly influences the process of Arabic language acquisition among students in modern Islamic boarding schools. Based on the results of surveys and interviews, it could be concluded that students' motivation to speak Arabic was largely influenced by extrinsic factors. Although this motivation originated from outside the students, the disciplinary measures applied appeared to be effective in encouraging them to use Arabic consistently. These punishments, though corrective in nature, served as a form of behavioral reinforcement that motivated students to comply with the school's language policies. From the results of interviews and observations, several obstacles in the process of Arabic language acquisition at Madina Islamic Boarding School were identified. One of the most significant challenges was that much of the students' motivation still came from external rather than internal sources. Many students were disciplined daily for "violations," such as failing to use Arabic in everyday conversations.

In general, there are two types of motivation: (1) intrinsic motivation and (2) extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual. Djamarah (as cited in Elvira) explains that internal motivation is a motive that activates or drives action without the need for external stimulation, because the individual already possesses the internal impulse to act.⁵² Thus, intrinsic motives function independently of external influence, as the individual's internal drive already encourages action.⁵³ On the other hand, extrinsic motivation originates from external factors that encourage an individual to act toward achieving specific outcomes. For modern Islamic boarding school students, studying Arabic is considered a necessity because mastering the language enables them to understand the Holy Qur'an, which is written in Arabic. Additionally, students often admire teachers who are proficient and fluent in Arabic, and this admiration fosters their desire to study the language more seriously.

Extrinsic motivation functions primarily when there are external stimuli.⁵⁴ Learning motivation is categorized as extrinsic when students' learning goals are oriented toward outcomes beyond the immediate learning process itself.⁵⁵ In the context of modern Islamic boarding schools, numerous rules govern students' daily conduct, including the mandatory use of Arabic in all daily conversations. These institutional regulations thus play a significant role in shaping students' extrinsic motivation to communicate in Arabic.

Second, Age Factor

⁵¹ Azar and Tanggaraju.

⁵² Elvira, Neni Z.

⁵³ Syarifan Nurjan, *Psikologi Belajar*, ed. by Wahyudi Setiawan, Cetakan Ke (Wade Group, 2016).

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⁵⁴ Syarifan Nurjan.

⁵⁵ Afi Parnawi, *Psikologi Belajar*, Kedua (CV. Budi Utama, 2020). 67

Age significantly influenced the process of Arabic language acquisition among students at Madina Islamic Boarding School. The students' ages ranged from 12 to 15 years for those studying at the junior high school level and 15 to 18 years for those at the senior high school level. These students can therefore be categorized as adolescents. This developmental stage is particularly effective for second language acquisition, as adolescents tend to learn a new language more easily than adults. Learners in their teenage years (approximately 12–15 years old) are generally able to acquire language more rapidly than older learners.⁵⁶ Children and adolescents acquire language more quickly and naturally because they are biologically programmed to learn languages, whereas adults must rely on conscious learning strategies.⁵⁷ The psychological factors discussed above are illustrated in Figure 3.

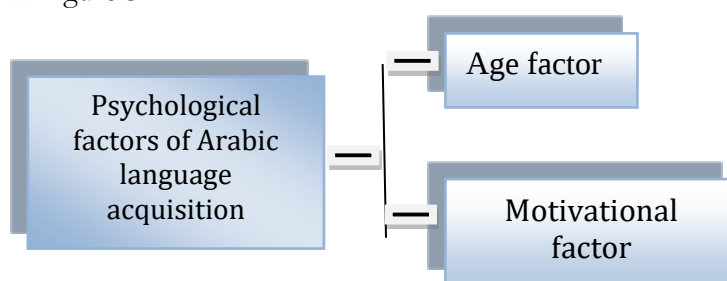


Figure 3. Psychological factors influencing Arabic language acquisition.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Arabic Language Acquisition Process among Students at Madina Islamic Boarding School

The process of Arabic language acquisition at Madina Islamic Boarding School had several strengths. One of the main advantages was that students acquired Arabic not only through formal classroom instruction, as is the case in most educational institutions, but also naturally through immersion in a language-rich environment. Within the boarding school, students are constantly exposed to Arabic in both hearing and speaking contexts, which significantly accelerates their acquisition process. Another strength lies in the confidence students developed in speaking Arabic. The emphasis on practice-based learning enabled students to communicate more spontaneously without overthinking grammatical structures or word formation. As a result, the students learned Arabic more intuitively by listening to and mimicking how others around them used the language in real-life interactions within the school environment.

⁵⁶ Kholid A Harras and Andika Dutha Bachari, *Psikolinguistik Dasar-Dasar Diterbitkan Atas Kerja Sama Antara Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia FPBS Dan UPI PRESS, Dasar - Dasar Psikolinguistik*. 75

⁵⁷ Norliani Dkk., 'Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Pemerolehan Bahasa Ke Dua', in *Seminar Nasional Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, Dan Pendidikan Dasar 3*, 2023, p. 119.

However, this acquisition model also presented certain weaknesses. While students became proficient in spoken Arabic, their linguistic understanding tended to be less developed. Their experience and mastery of reading advanced Arabic texts related to grammar and word formation were relatively limited compared to students at traditional Islamic boarding schools emphasizing classical textual study.

Conclusion

The modern Islamic boarding school has its own curriculum, system, and methods. The distinction of this type of school lies in its emphasis on communication skills in foreign languages, namely Arabic and English. The students are supported and encouraged to practice speaking Arabic and English in their daily conversations. The acquisition of foreign languages, especially Arabic, among students in modern Islamic boarding schools is carried out through both formal and naturalistic approaches. However, there are certain constraints, particularly in students' motivation, which also affect the Arabic language environment, making it less conducive.

Motivation significantly influences the Arabic language acquisition process among students in modern boarding schools. Based on the results of surveys and interviews, it can be concluded that students' motivation to speak Arabic is largely influenced by external factors. Regarding the age factor, the learning process and students' first language have been conditioned in accordance with the ideal foreign language acquisition process from a psycholinguistic perspective. The age range from childhood to adolescence is considered ideal for acquiring a foreign language through both formal and naturalistic learning, while also conditioning the first language environment with Arabic during the students' first year of study at the Islamic boarding school. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the main psychological factors supporting Arabic language acquisition in modern Islamic boarding schools are motivation and age.

Previous studies have not specifically discussed psychological factors in foreign language acquisition, especially Arabic, in the context of Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, the findings of this study contribute to the body of knowledge on foreign language acquisition. It can be concluded that foreign language acquisition activities in Islamic boarding schools are highly effective when supported by strong motivation and an appropriate age for learning. Apart from psychological aspects, there are still many other factors that influence students' acquisition of Arabic in Islamic boarding schools, which future researchers may continue to explore.

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