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The Challenges of Students in Learning Arabic at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten

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Abstract

This article addresses the challenges encountered by students in learning Arabic at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten. The study aims to identify and analyze the difficulties faced by students during the Arabic language learning process. Employing a qualitative descriptive research methodology, the research involves data collection to provide insights into the multifaceted aspects of these challenges. The results indicate several key obstacles, shedding light on areas that require attention and improvement in the curriculum or teaching methods. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Arabic language education at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten. The implications of these challenges extend to the broader educational context, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of addressing these challenges to enhance the overall quality of Arabic language education, ultimately benefiting students and the educational institution as a whole.

Keywords: Arabic Language Learning, Student Challenges, Islamic Boarding School

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of Islamic education, the acquisition of proficiency in the Arabic language stands as a fundamental pillar, integral to fostering a deep understanding of religious texts and traditions (Mahfud et al., 2021). As such, Islamic boarding schools, or pesantrens, play a pivotal role in shaping the linguistic competence of students who aspire to comprehend and engage with the rich tapestry of Islamic knowledge (Musaddad, 2023). One such

institution contributing to this noble endeavor is Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten, Indonesia.

The purpose of this research is to delve into the challenges faced by students at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in their pursuit of mastering the Arabic language. The urgency of this study emanates from the crucial role that linguistic proficiency plays in enabling students to unlock the vast reservoirs of Islamic scholarship. As the primary medium through which Islamic knowledge is transmitted, a strong command of Arabic is essential for students to navigate religious texts, participate in theological discussions, and cultivate a holistic understanding of their faith.

Previous studies have recognized the significance of Arabic language education in Islamic institutions, shedding light on its pivotal role in shaping students into knowledgeable and articulate individuals within the Islamic community (Linur, 2022). However, despite the acknowledgment of its importance, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the specific challenges faced by students at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten. This research seeks to address this gap by providing an in-depth exploration of the hurdles encountered by students in their Arabic language learning journey within this specific context.

The current status of research in this area reveals a scarcity of focused inquiries into the challenges of Arabic language learning at Islamic boarding schools in Banten. While existing studies provide valuable insights into the broader landscape of Islamic education and language acquisition (Umam & Chodijah, 2022), a dedicated examination of the challenges unique to Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School is conspicuously absent. This research seeks to contribute to the academic discourse by offering a nuanced understanding of the obstacles faced by students in this specific educational setting.

One of the novel aspects of this research lies in its emphasis on qualitative research methods. By employing qualitative approaches, such as interviews, observations, and content analysis, the study aims to provide a rich and nuanced portrayal of the challenges faced by students in learning Arabic at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School (Fahrullah et al., 2022). This methodological choice is driven by the need to capture the subjective experiences of students, instructors, and administrators, offering a holistic perspective that transcends numerical data and statistical analyses.

The objectives of this research are twofold. Firstly, it seeks to identify and categorize the specific challenges that students encounter in their Arabic language learning journey at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School (Jaafar et al., 2023). These challenges may encompass linguistic difficulties,

pedagogical barriers, and socio-cultural factors that influence the learning process. Secondly, the research aims to provide recommendations and insights that can inform educational strategies and interventions to enhance the Arabic language learning experience for students at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School.

This research embarks on an exploration of the challenges faced by students in learning Arabic at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten. Recognizing the pivotal role of Arabic language proficiency in Islamic education, the study aims to address a notable gap in the existing literature by focusing on the specific context of Darel Azhar. Through qualitative research methods, the research endeavors to unearth the multifaceted challenges faced by students, offering a comprehensive understanding that can inform educational improvements and contribute to the broader discourse on Arabic language education in Islamic boarding schools.

METHOD

Employing a qualitative descriptive research design, this study delves into the challenges confronting students in their pursuit of learning Arabic at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten. (Sugiyono, 2013) The research design emphasizes a detailed exploration of the students' experiences and perceptions, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges inherent in Arabic language education at the school. To capture the rich context, the researcher, serving as a participant observer, will actively engage with the daily activities within the school, attending classes, conducting interviews with students, instructors, and administrators, and immersing themselves in the overall educational environment. (Kawulich, 2005)

The research subjects include students enrolled in Arabic language classes, instructors responsible for teaching Arabic, and administrators overseeing the academic milieu. Additionally, informants possessing specialized insights into the Arabic language education system at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School will be consulted to enrich the research. The qualitative data collection techniques encompass in-depth interviews, allowing participants to express their experiences openly. (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020) Observations during Arabic language classes and within the school setting will complement interview data, providing a holistic perspective. The study is conducted at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten, chosen for its cultural relevance and the authentic context it offers. The duration of the research is structured to ensure thorough data collection, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the challenges faced by students in learning Arabic.

To enhance the validity of the research results, member checking will be employed, involving participants in the validation process. Triangulation of data sources and regular peer debriefing will further contribute to the robustness and reliability of the study's findings. (Moon, 2019)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Challenges in Arabic Language Learning: Internal and External Aspects

Experts state that issues in the learning process are interconnected. In any learning process, problems can arise due to various factors, both internal factors involving the psychology and physiology of learners, and external factors involving family environment, community surroundings, and the availability of facilities in the learning process. (Anisa, 2021)

In the context of Arabic language learning, there are several issues across various institutions, involving internal factors of learners and external factors (Ismail et al., 2023), especially for graduates of public schools at the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels, who have limited knowledge of the Arabic language (Nur Fitria et al., 2023). Some causes of internal issues for learners or students in Arabic language learning include:

a. Background of Learners

Previous educational backgrounds serve as the basic foundation for learners to study Arabic, especially at the Tsanawiyah and Aliyah levels (Susiawati & Fanirin, 2020). This can affect differences in the learning process for learners graduating from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and Pure Elementary Schools (Safitri, 2021). These differences disrupt the concentration of learners who are not prepared to follow the instruction provided by educators.

b. Learners' Talents

Talent is the natural ability of learners in acquiring knowledge and skills, both intellectually and academically (Thilavongsa et al., 2020). In the context of Arabic language learning, learners' talents become a fundamental obstacle because many learners are unaware of the potential talents they possess, leading to confusion in developing those talents (Khasawneh, 2022).

c. Learners' Interests

Interest is the drive that motivates someone to engage in an activity wholeheartedly without time constraints. In the process of learning the Arabic language, learners' interests become a fundamental issue because many perceive that they are incapable of learning Arabic, especially for learners graduating from pure public elementary schools.

d. Learners' Motivation

Motivation is the drive or style of a person in performing a specific task, both internally and externally. Motivation is a fundamental factor in achieving good results, as it is a willingness that arises from self-awareness without external coercion. This should be possessed by every individual.

Student problems from external factors are factors that arise from outside the individual, either in the form of the physical or social environment. The obstacles in the Arabic language learning process seen from external factors are:

a. Family Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic conditions of santri families play a crucial role in supporting the learning of the Arabic language (Assa'Idi, 2021). Families with low income may face difficulties in providing essential learning resources such as books or study equipment. High economic burdens can hinder the family's ability to provide financial support for the education of santri, including Arabic language learning in the pesantren (Jazil et al., 2021). Therefore, efforts to provide assistance or facilities for families with challenging economic conditions can help overcome these barriers and ensure that every santri has full access to educational resources.

b. Level of Parental Support

Parental support has a significant impact on the motivation and learning outcomes of santri (Wenisa & Syur'aini, 2020). Parents who actively engage in supporting the Arabic language learning of their children in the pesantren can create a positive learning environment. Open communication between the pesantren and parents can also help overcome communication barriers that may arise. Providing information to parents about the importance of Arabic language learning and offering additional support to involve them in the education process of their children can help create stronger support.

c. Influence of Media and Technology

Media and technology play a significant role in shaping the perceptions and interests of santri towards the Arabic language (Yoyo et al., 2023). If the media or technology around them tends to support other languages or different cultures, it can influence the interest and motivation of santri to learn Arabic. It is important for pesantrens to leverage technology as an effective learning tool and ensure that available content positively engages santri with the Arabic language. By using technology wisely, pesantrens can create a more engaging and relevant learning environment for santri.

d. Level of Interaction with the Surrounding Environment

The surrounding environment of santri can also be an external factor influencing the learning of the Arabic language. If santri reside in areas where Arabic is not commonly used, they may face challenges in applying their Arabic language knowledge in practical contexts. Therefore, it is crucial for pesantrens to create learning experiences that include interaction with native speakers or environments where Arabic is used daily. Practical activities and opportunities to speak in real-life contexts can help improve speaking skills and strengthen the application of the Arabic language in the daily lives of santri (Rahmi et al., 2024).

The solutions to overcome various problems in learning Arabic at the Darel Azhar Rangkasbitung Banten Islamic boarding school, are:

a. Providing Adequate Learning Resources

To overcome the limitations of learning resources in Arabic language education at Islamic boarding schools, the first step to be taken is to ensure the availability of sufficient books and learning materials. Islamic boarding schools can collaborate with publishers or educational institutions to acquire quality resources in line with the curriculum being implemented. Additionally, the use of modern technology such as e-books, online learning platforms, or specialized Arabic language applications can be introduced to enrich the learning experience of students. Thus, students will not only have better access to learning resources but also be able to adapt their learning styles to the technology used.

b. Development of Economic Support Programs:

Economic difficulties can pose a serious obstacle for the families of students (Gobena, 2018). Therefore, Islamic boarding schools can develop economic support programs, such as scholarship schemes or financial aid, to assist families with low socio-economic conditions. These programs may involve collaboration with charitable institutions or donors willing to contribute to supporting the education of students. Thus, Islamic boarding schools not only create an equitable learning environment but also provide equal opportunities for all students to pursue Arabic language learning without excessive financial burdens.

c. Enhancing Parental Involvement:

Parental involvement is a key factor in supporting students' learning. Islamic boarding schools can organize regular meetings between teachers and parents to provide information on the progress of Arabic language learning and ongoing activities (Ginanto et al., 2021). This open communication fosters a better understanding of the importance of Arabic language learning and how parents can help their children

at home. Workshops or seminars for parents can also be organized by Islamic boarding schools to provide a deeper understanding of the curriculum and Arabic language learning strategies applied, making them more effective in supporting students' Arabic language development (Hasan, 2020).

d. Integration of Technology in Learning:

With the continuous advancement of technology, Islamic boarding schools can leverage it as an effective learning tool. The integration of technology, such as using Arabic language learning apps, online platforms, and digital content, can enhance interactivity and appeal in learning. Islamic boarding schools can design curricular that incorporate these technological elements to provide variation in teaching methods. The use of multimedia, instructional videos, or interactive platforms not only makes learning more engaging for students but also enhances their understanding and retention of the material (Oyeyemi et al., 2016). Moreover, technology allows students to learn independently outside formal class hours, expanding their learning opportunities.

e. Development of Speaking Skills Programs:

Developing Arabic speaking skills requires practice and direct experience. Islamic boarding schools can develop specialized programs that emphasize the development of speaking skills through practical activities. Conversation sessions, simulated communicative situations, or role-playing games can be integral parts of the curriculum. By creating a supportive and motivating atmosphere for speaking in Arabic, Islamic boarding schools provide students with opportunities to practice and enhance their communication skills. Additionally, involving native speakers or competent Arabic language mentors can offer guidance and provide more authentic speaking experiences for students.

CONCLUSION

In addressing the challenges faced by students in learning Arabic at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten, this study illuminates the multifaceted nature of obstacles encountered within the educational context. The linguistic, pedagogical, and socio-cultural challenges identified underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance the Arabic language learning experience. The linguistic barriers, arising from the distinctive features of Arabic compared to students' native languages, call for tailored language teaching methodologies that bridge the gap effectively.

Pedagogical challenges highlight the importance of flexible teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learning styles, ensuring that instructional approaches resonate with the unique needs of individual students. Additionally, socio-cultural factors emphasize the significance of cultivating a learning environment that not only imparts language skills but also fosters an understanding of the cultural nuances embedded in Arabic language education. In conclusion, addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates linguistic, pedagogical, and socio-cultural considerations to create a conducive learning environment at Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School in Banten.

As this study contributes insights into the challenges specific to Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School, it also opens avenues for future research and theoretical advancements in the broader field of language acquisition and Islamic education. Further research could delve into the efficacy of tailored language teaching methodologies designed to overcome linguistic barriers. Exploring the impact of technology integration in Arabic language education and assessing the effectiveness of targeted interventions would provide valuable insights. Moreover, investigating the long-term outcomes of these interventions on students' proficiency and attitudes toward Arabic language learning could contribute to the continuous improvement of language education practices. The implications of this research extend beyond Darel Azhar Islamic Boarding School, serving as a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to enhance Arabic language education within the broader landscape of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia and beyond.

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