

Impact of Linguistic Environment on Speaking Skills of Female Students at the Arabic Language Center Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The research emphasizes the effectiveness of Arabic language learning when supported by a social environment where Arabic is used daily. It aims to assess the linguistic environment and speaking skills at an Arabic Language Center within an Islamic Boarding School, as well as determine the impact of the environment on speaking skills. Using a quantitative approach with SPSS 22, the study employed a case study method for sampling, gathering data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Analysis involved processing questionnaires and drawing conclusions. Results showed a strong Arabic-speaking environment at the Islamic Boarding School, with 68.8% of students proficient in speaking skills. Speaking skills at the Arabic Language Center were very strong, especially among students from Arabic-speaking households, with 91.8% proficiency. A moderate correlation between environment and speaking skills was observed, indicating a relationship between the two variables among students at the center.

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Introduction

Arabic language education for non-Arabs has been a focus since the 17th century, when the University of Cambridge in England began teaching Arabic (Aboelezz, 2016; ElHawari, 2020; Facchin, 2017; Lian, 2020). The United States also joined this effort in 1947 with the teaching of Arabic in U.S. Army schools (Badawi, 2023). Meanwhile, in Egypt, centers for Arabic language learning began offering comprehensive programs with planned Arabic

language development projects (Langsten et al., 2022). This illustrates the importance of Arabic in a global context, both for Muslims and non-Muslims, as reflected in the numerous institutions offering Arabic language instruction in various countries.

Motivations for non-Arabs to learn Arabic are varied, including religious motivation, especially for Muslims seeking to understand the scientific studies in the Qur'an and Islamic literature (Husseinali, 2006; Letmiros, 2019). Additionally, non-Muslims feel the need to learn Arabic when interacting in the Arabian Peninsula or accessing scholarly works in Arabic known for their high academic quality (Zahirovic, 2021).

Arabic is considered a key to knowledge because many sources of knowledge use this language. In Indonesia, Arabic is not only taught as a religious language but also as a language of knowledge (Anggraini et al., 2021; Mubarak et al., 2021). However, learning Arabic presents its own challenges due to its complexity, such as the different alphabet with 28 consonants, and the continuous changes in verb forms.

Arabic language learning can be approached through two main methods: focusing on language mastery as a direct communication tool or based on grammar (Marlius et al., 2021; Qomariah et al., 2018; Zakiya et al., 2023). However, to successfully master Arabic, a conducive social environment is crucial. An effective Arabic language environment can significantly influence students' speaking skills .

At the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia, Arabic is the official language, and students are expected to speak Arabic every day. However, reports indicate that students' scores in Arabic language subjects are very low, and surveys show that most students use Arabic less due to the lack of an effective Arabic language environment. Therefore, research on the Arabic language environment and its impact on students' speaking skills is essential to be conducted at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the success of the Arabic language environment in positively impacting Arabic speaking skills. Mubarak et al., in their study, showed that an environment supporting active daily use of Arabic can enhance students' Arabic speaking skills (Mubarak et al., 2020, 2023). Factors such as Arabic language use in class, social interactions in Arabic outside class, and the use of Arabic-based teaching materials can significantly boost students' speaking abilities.

Rahman, in his research, highlights the crucial role of teachers in creating a learning environment that facilitates active Arabic language usage. Teachers who consistently use Arabic in interactions with students, provide opportunities for regular Arabic speaking practice, and encourage Arabic language use in daily activities outside the classroom can help enhance students' Arabic speaking skills (Rahman, 2021).

Albantani's study has shown that the use of Arabic language social media can significantly impact students' Arabic speaking skills. Interactions with peers and learning materials in Arabic on social media platforms provide valuable opportunities for students to improve their oral communication skills in Arabic (Albantani, 2019).

Despite the importance of a conducive Arabic language environment, Wahdah et al.'s research also highlights several challenges in creating an effective learning environment. These challenges may include inadequate resources, lack of support from schools or educational institutions, and resistance from students who prefer to use other languages in daily interactions (Wahdah et al., 2022).

Lastly, Marlius et al., in their study, identified several strategies to enhance the Arabic language environment and students' Arabic speaking skills. These strategies include teacher training in Arabic language instruction, development of engaging and relevant teaching materials in Arabic, and the establishment of extracurricular activities or Arabic language clubs to promote active Arabic language use outside regular class hours (Marlius et al., 2021).

The novelty analysis of the proposed research on the Arabic language environment and its impact on Arabic speaking skills at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia lies in the specific context of the research location and its comprehensive approach to the Arabic language environment in the institution. Unlike previous studies that generally focus on the Arabic language environment in higher education or general settings, this research focuses on the Arabic language environment in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. This provides deeper insights into the unique challenges and needs that students in these institutions may face in developing their Arabic speaking skills.

Furthermore, this study takes into account unique factors in the boarding school environment, such as the role of teachers, daily Arabic language interactions, and the influence of social media on Arabic language learning. By considering these factors, this research has the potential to provide more accurate and relevant recommendations for enhancing the Arabic language environment and Arabic speaking skills of students at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School.

Additionally, this study can also contribute to understanding how the Arabic language environment in boarding schools differs from that in other educational institutions and how these factors affect students' Arabic speaking skills. Thus, this research can make a significant contribution to the literature on Arabic language teaching and learning, particularly in the context of boarding schools in Indonesia.

Method

Research Design

The research focused on the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia. Conducted during the academic year 2022/2023, the research targeted individual and paired classroom settings. Site selection was guided by factors including ease of access for social situation monitoring, the institute's unique linguistic environment, and the absence of prior studies on the impact of this environment on female Arabic language students' speaking skills. Notably, observations highlighted the limited Arabic fluency among some female students, prompting an investigation into the linguistic environment's influence on their speaking proficiency. Employing a quantitative approach using SPSS 22 (Winarni, 2021), the study identified the language environment (X) as the independent variable and speaking skill (Y) as the dependent variable. Data collection involved experimental techniques, with a total sampling method applied to 22 female students from Arabic language classrooms. Questionnaires, featuring Likert scale-based indicators, assessed linguistic and environmental speaking skills. Analysis was conducted using descriptive and simple regression analyses with IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software. The population comprised all 420 female students at the institute, with sampling focused on those residing in the Arabic language dormitory.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Data collection tools included questionnaires and documentation of geographical, temporal, and participant status information. Data analysis techniques encompassed descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing, with interpretation following general guidelines for correlation strength.

Result

Arabic Language Center Activities in Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School

Center activities at the Arabic Language Center include four courses. The first course, called "Mufrodat Deposit," takes place from 05:30 to 06:00 after the Fajr prayer. During this time, female students deposit memorized vocabularies from at least one page of the vocabulary booklet in the Arabic language dormitory. The second course, known as "Muhaddatha," occurs from 17:30 to 18:00 before sunset. In this session, discussions, storytelling, or explanations are conducted in Arabic based on the instructor's chosen theme. The third course, "Qawaid," is scheduled from 18:30 to 19:00 after sunset, focusing on providing materials and assistance to form perfect sentences according to Arabic syntax and morphology. Lastly, the fourth course, "Sutoor Al-I'barat," takes place from 21:30 to 22:00 before bedtime, where the center deposits daily expressions from at least one page of the expression book from the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic

Boarding School Arabic student booklet. Additionally, there are extra hospital activities, including Arabic poetry, engagement announcements, recitations or modern choir performances, Arabic singing, and offering Kashwa, held on Friday nights from 20:30 onwards. There is also a repeat session called "Takrar Al-Mufroshat" on Monday nights from 20:30 to 21:00, and "Yasyanan," which takes place on Friday nights after Isha until finished.

Language Level at the Arabic Language Center

In the first year (second grade), members are taught discipline in activities, Arabic speaking skills, and mastering the presented materials. In the second year (third grade), members are required to be able to practice teaching (as a requirement for the exam) for 3 months, followed by mastering the exam material held by the language institute as the final requirement for the third grade. Relevant materials include Quran reading based on letters pronunciation and tajweed, understanding syntax, and practicing Arabic speaking. Members are directed to master these materials.

The process of selecting analysis criteria involves assessing the questionnaire percentage. To ascertain the frequency percentage of each element within the questionnaire, the formula $P = (f/N) \times 100\%$ is utilized, where 'f' represents the frequency of each element, and 'N' signifies the total number of respondents. This formula helps in determining the proportion of usage for every item in the questionnaire. Regarding environmental data, this information was gathered through a questionnaire administered to 22 female students. The data is presented as follows:

Table 1

The Arabic language environment motivated me to speak Arabic

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	72.7%
Agree	5	22.7%
Neutral	1	4.5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data from the table above, it appears that the majority of female students residing in the Arabic language dormitory at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School are inclined towards speaking Arabic. This is evident from the responses of the participants who chose the answers "Strongly Agree" (72.7%), "Agree" (22.5%), and "Neutral" (4.5%).

Table 2

I am comfortable in a linguistic environment

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	10	45.5%
Agree	11	50.5%
Neutral	1	4.5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data from the tables above, it appears that most female students residing in the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School are comfortable speaking Arabic, as the environment of respondents who chose the responses "Strongly Agree" (45.5%), "Agree" (50.5%), and "Neutral" (4.5%) remains conducive to speaking Arabic.

Table 3

The linguistic environment has an impact on my proficiency in communicating in the Arabic language

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	77.3%
Agree	3	13.6%
Neutral	1	4.5%
Disagree	1	4.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data from the table above, it appears that the majority of female students residing in the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School speak Arabic. The environment of respondents who chose "Strongly Agree" responses (%77.3), "Agree" (%13.6), "Neutral" (%4.5), and "Disagree" (%4.5) indicates their inclination towards speaking Arabic.

Table 4

During my Arabic language residency, I mastered many new Arabic vocabulary words

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	45.5%
Agree	7	31.8%
Neutral	3	13.6%

Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data from the tables above, it appears that the majority of female students residing in the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School speak Arabic, with the environment of respondents who chose strongly agree responses (%54.5), agree (%31.8), and neutral (%13.6) regarding speaking in Arabic.

Table 5

Friends and the instructor in the Arabic language dormitory always speak Arabic

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	36.4%
Agree	11	50%
Neutral	2	9.1%
Disagree	1	4.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data in the table above, it appears that the majority of female students residing in the Arabic language dormitory at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School continue to speak Arabic. The environment of respondents who chose the answers "Strongly Agree" remained with a percentage of 36.4%, "Agree" with 50.0%, "Neutral" with 9.1%, and "Disagree" with 4.5%.

Table 6

I feel uncomfortable if I don't speak Arabic

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	68.2%
Agree	6	27.3%
Neutral	1	4.5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data from the table above, it appears that the majority of female students in the Arabic language dormitory at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School continue to speak

Arabic. The environment of the respondents who selected the answers remained strongly agree (68.2%), agree (27.3%), and neutral (4.5%) regarding speaking Arabic.

Table 7

When speaking or discussing with friends in the dormitory, I always use the Arabic language

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	31.8%
Agree	13	59.1%
Neutral	1	4.5%
Disagree	1	4.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data in the table above, it is evident that most female students residing in the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School dormitory continue to speak Arabic. The environment indicates that respondents who chose the answers strongly agree (31.8%), agree (59.1%), neutral (4.5%), and disagree (4.5%) regarding speaking Arabic.

Table 8

I feel happy when I speak Arabic

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	45.5%
Agree	9	40.9%
Neutral	1	4.5%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data in the table above, it appears that most of the female students residing in the Arabic language dormitory at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School still prefer to speak Arabic. The environment of the respondents who chose the answers strongly agree (54.5%), agree (40.9%), and neutral (4.5%) indicates this preference.

Table 9

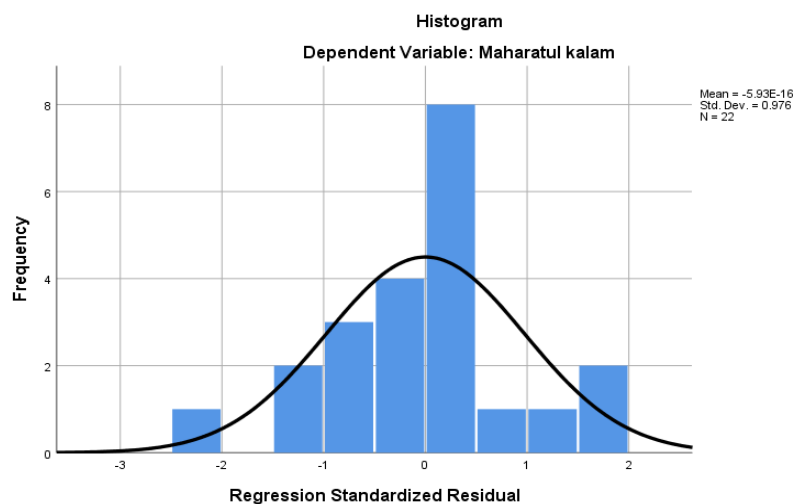
I am capable of narrating stories using the Arabic language according to the theme chosen by the instructor

Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	36.4%
Agree	11	50%
Neutral	1	4.5%
Disagree	2	9.1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	22	100.0%

Based on the data from the table above, it appears that the majority of female students in the Arabic language dormitory at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School prefer to communicate in Arabic, as indicated by the respondents who chose the following answers: Strongly Agree (36.4%), Agree (50.5%), Neutral (4.5%), an Disagree (9.1%).

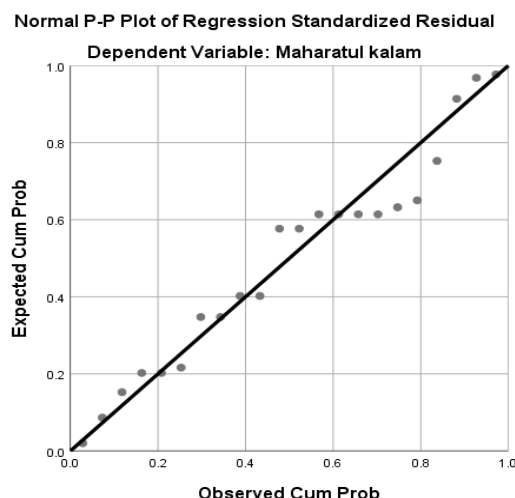
The classical hypothesis test used in this study is the one-sample test, while the one-sample test in this study is as follows:

Picture 1



Based on the presentation of the above graph, it can be seen graphically that the data distribution follows a normal curve without any skewness, with extreme values, indicating that the frequency histogram yields a uniformly normal distribution.

Picture 2



Based on the graph, it can be observed that the points are scattered around the diagonal line, and their distribution follows the direction of the diagonal line. If the data is scattered around the diagonal line, then the regression model meets the assumption of normality. By examining both the frequency histogram and the probability plot, it can be inferred that the frequency histogram graph provides a pattern of distribution consistent with the normality assumption. At the same time, the probability plot illustrates data distributed normally, indicating that the regression model meets the assumption of normality and can be used for further testing.

This study aims to determine the impact of the environment on Arabic language skills among female students at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School through simple regression analysis. The results were obtained using SPSS version 22 software and calculated as follows:

Table 10

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.828 ^a	.686	.670	1.70731

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lingkungan

Based on the model summary table above, the correlation coefficient (R) obtained between the environmental variable (X) and Arabic language skills (Y) is 0.827 or 82.8%. This indicates the level of relationship between the environmental variables (X) and Arabic language skills (Y) among female students at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School. The coefficient of determination (R-squared) found in the model summary table is 0.686. This suggests that

68.6% of the variance in Arabic language skill is influenced by environmental variables, while the remaining variance is affected by other variables not examined in this study.

Table 11
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.396	3.072		.454	.655
	Lingkungan	.918	.139	.828	6.605	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Maharatul Kalam

Based on the coefficients table, it is evident that the simple linear regression equation model is as follows:

$$Y = 1.396 + 0.918X$$

This equation implies the following interpretations:

The constant value (intercept) of 1.396 indicates that when the independent variable, which is the environment (X), is constant or has a value of 0 (zero), the dependent variable, which is the resulting Arabic language skills (Y), equals 1.396. The coefficient value of the regression parameter 0.918 signifies that for every additional 68.6% in the environmental factor (X), the Arabic language skills (Y) will increase by 0.918, considering other variables remain constant.

Therefore, the obtained simple linear regression equation, $Y = 1.396 + 0.918X$, suggests that if the environment remains constant or has a value of 0 (zero), Arabic language skills will be 1.396. Additionally, the coefficient value of the regression parameter 0.918 indicates that the environmental impact on Arabic language skills has a positive effect. For every additional 68.6%, Arabic language skills will increase by 9.18%. However, the remaining variance is influenced by other factors. This underscores the significant impact of the environment on Arabic language skills, particularly speaking skills, in the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School.

Anova test (F-test) is conducted to test the hypothesis regarding the effect of the environment on Arabic language skills. The F-test was performed using SPSS version 25, and the obtained results are as follows:

Table 12

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	127.156	1	127.156	43.623	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.298	20	2.915		
	Total	185.455	21			

a. Dependent Variable: Maharatul Kalam

b. Predictors: (Constant), Lingkungan

The testing process followed several steps. First, hypotheses were formulated: H_0 stated that there is no significant impact between the environment and Arabic language skills among female students at the Arabic Language Center in the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School, while H_a suggested there is a significant impact. Next, test rules were established: H_0 would be accepted if $F_{count} \leq F_{table}$, and rejected if $F_{count} > F_{table}$. Subsequently, the comparison between F_{count} and F_{table} was conducted, revealing that $F_{count} = 43.623$ exceeded $F_{table} = 2.085$, leading to the rejection of H_0 . Consequently, the decision was made to reject H_0 and accept H_a , indicating a significant effect of the environment on the language skills of female students at the Arabic Language Center in the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School. Overall, it was concluded that the environment (X) does indeed influence Arabic language skills (Y) at the institute, with 82.8% indicating its current inclusion in the level of influence. Additionally, the contribution of environmental variables to the Arabic language skills of female students at the center was found to be 68.6%.

Discussion

The study conducted at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School aimed to assess the impact of the Arabic language environment on female students' Arabic language skills. The research involved evaluating the linguistic environment and its effect on various aspects of language proficiency, particularly speaking skills. The findings revealed that the majority of female students in the Arabic language dormitory at the boarding school showed a strong inclination towards speaking Arabic. This inclination was evident from their responses indicating comfort, proficiency, and happiness in using the Arabic language. Moreover, the study indicated that the linguistic environment significantly influenced students' proficiency in communicating in Arabic, as demonstrated by the high percentage of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

The findings of the study conducted at the Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School align with and contribute to existing research on the impact of linguistic environments on language skills, particularly in Arabic language education. Several previous studies have investigated similar themes and provided insights into the significance of linguistic environments in language learning. For instance, Mubarak et al demonstrated that a supportive Arabic language environment positively influences students' Arabic language speaking skills (Mubarak et al., 2023). The current study further reinforces this notion by highlighting the strong inclination of female students at the boarding school towards speaking Arabic, indicating the effectiveness of the linguistic environment in fostering language proficiency.

Rahman emphasized the crucial role of teachers in creating conducive learning environments that facilitate active Arabic language usage. The findings of the present study complement Rahman's findings by suggesting that the Arabic language environment at the boarding school significantly impacts students' proficiency in communicating in Arabic, as indicated by the regression and ANOVA analyses (Rahman, 2021).

Moreover, Wahdah et al discussed the challenges associated with creating effective learning environments, including resource limitations and student resistance. Although not directly addressed in the current study, these challenges are relevant to the broader context of fostering a conducive Arabic language environment in educational settings (Wahdah et al., 2022). Future research could explore strategies to overcome such challenges and enhance the effectiveness of language learning environments.

Overall, the findings of the study contribute to the existing body of literature by providing empirical evidence of the significant impact of the Arabic language environment on students' language proficiency, particularly speaking skills. The study underscores the importance of creating and maintaining supportive linguistic environments to optimize language learning outcomes in educational settings, such as Islamic boarding schools.

Conclusion

The research on the linguistic environment's impact on speaking skills among female students at the Arabic Language Center in the Islamic Convention Institute in Indralaya reveals significant findings. Firstly, the study indicates a moderate Arabic-speaking environment within the institute, with 68.8% of respondents reporting Arabic as the predominant language. Despite Arabic being the official language, some students occasionally refrain from using it due to vocabulary unfamiliarity. Secondly, the research underscores the exceptional Arabic speaking proficiency among female students, reaching 91.8%, particularly in spoken communication. This proficiency is attributed to the immersive Arabic-speaking environment within dormitories, enhancing language acquisition and skills. Moreover, the analysis unveils a moderate correlation ($R = 0.827$) between the linguistic environment and Arabic language skills, indicating a discernible relationship.

Based on these findings, recommendations are provided to enhance Arabic language acquisition motivation and diversify teaching methods. Furthermore, researchs advocate for prioritizing the production of competent graduates adept in applying acquired knowledge practically. Researchers are encouraged to delve deeper into factors influencing speaking skills and utilize comprehensive data sources for future research.

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