



# Building a Bilingual Environment: The Role of Hostel Environment Management in Creating an Immersive Arabic Language Ecosystem

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## ABSTRACT

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This study examines the pivotal role of dormitory environment management in shaping and sustaining an immersive Arabic language environment at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. Adopting a case study design with a qualitative approach, the study collected data through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. The data was analyzed using the Miles & Huberman technique, supported by triangulation to ensure the credibility of the findings. The results of the study show that the planning and implementation of structured Arabic language programs, including the teaching of *mufradat*, *barnamij*, *muhadarah*, and *muhadatsah*, is the primary foundation in stimulating active and sustainable use of Arabic. Dormitory management plays a vital role in aligning these programs with the daily routine of students, transforming the dormitory into a dynamic natural laboratory for language practice. The application of a comprehensive immersion model, which integrates Arabic into all aspects of religious and cultural life, significantly improves the language competence of students and forms strong language habits. The main conclusion confirms that the success of mastering the Arabic language is highly dependent on the creation of a holistic and integrated immersive ecosystem, with the management of the dormitory environment as a fundamental pillar. This research makes a theoretical contribution to second language acquisition and offers a practical model for similar educational institutions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Arabic proficiency in Indonesia is of crucial significance, not only as a key to understanding the treasures of classical Islamic texts, but also as an important prerequisite for active participation in intercultural dialogue and the exploration of growing regional economic opportunities (Ajani et al., 2024; Frederick, 2025; Uyuni et al., 2024). Building on this, the immersion approach has proven to be an effective method for achieving a high level of fluency (Hossain, 2024; Yang & Chano, 2025; Yudintseva, 2023). The immersion model is defined as a language learning strategy in which learners are fully immersed in and encouraged to use the target language in various daily life contexts, mimicking the natural process of native language acquisition (Esteban, 2024; Sumon et al., 2024; Zou et al., 2024). Boarding educational institutions in Indonesia, especially Islamic boarding schools, inherently have a communal structure and a disciplined daily routine. This characteristic provides significant comparative advantages, making the environmental pesantren an ideal environment for implementing language immersion programs (Asrori et al., 2025; Huda et al., 2024; Ismail et al., 2022). The design of this distinctive environment, in which Arabic is a vital means of communication, has significant potential to create a cohesive linguistic ecosystem (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Oralbekova et al., 2023; Tabe-Ojong et al., 2024). This type of ecosystem effectively supports natural language acquisition, thereby facilitating the holistic and sustainable internalization of Arabic among learners.

Numerous studies have consistently emphasized the crucial role of immersive environments in facilitating language acquisition. For example, a systematic review by Weng et al. (2024) demonstrates the effectiveness of immersive learning technologies, particularly Virtual Reality (VR), in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) at the K-12 level. This technology not only enhances students' positive attitudes towards learning but also significantly develops their cross-curricular skills. Furthermore, a study by Read (2025) and Lou (2025) reinforces these findings by showing that interactive VR environments, when combined with *Machine Learning* and *Deep Learning*, are able to substantially improve language acquisition and communication skills. This happens through a personalized and highly engaging learning experience. In different contexts, Samin et al. (2023) explore the concept of an informal Arabic environment in higher education institutions. They emphasized the importance of socio-cultural interactions, virtual learning, instructor support, and supportive institutional policies.

Although the benefits of an immersive environment have been widely recognized and previous studies have addressed various aspects of language learning in communal contexts, there is a significant gap in our understanding of the systematic role of dorm environment management in shaping and sustaining an immersive Arabic ecosystem. The existing literature often ignores how administrative policies, rule enforcement, and the integration of language into daily routines are deliberately engineered by management. Without a comprehensive understanding of these managerial mechanisms, efforts to replicate or improve the success of immersion programs at other institutions may not be optimal. Therefore, the problem of this study is the lack of an in-depth exploration of the nexus between strategic hostel management and the creation of a consistently immersive Arabic language environment.

This research offers a new contribution by explicitly focusing on the proactive and strategic role of dormitory environmental management as the principal architect and enforcer of the Arabic language immersive ecosystem at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. In contrast to previous studies that tended to discuss immersion in general or informal aspects, this study uniquely examines how structured daily routines, disciplinary policies, and the integration of Arabic into every aspect of students' lives are carefully planned and implemented by management. By highlighting explicit managerial strategies, ranging from the use of compulsory language to the integration of religious and cultural contexts, this study provides a granular understanding of the operational mechanisms behind successful immersion, offering a new lens through which to examine in-depth language acquisition.

This study aims to comprehensively investigate and elaborate on the crucial role of dormitory environment management in shaping and maintaining an immersive Arabic language ecosystem at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. Specifically, this study will explore how the planning and implementation of structured Arabic language programs, the role of dormitories as dynamic Arabic language learning laboratories, and the implemented Arabic immersion model are facilitated by dorm management. Through a qualitative approach of case studies, this research aims to generate rich contextual insights and robust conceptual models that can serve as practical guides for other educational institutions in creating effective and sustainable language immersion environments, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of second language acquisition in communal settings.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a case study design with a qualitative approach, situated at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. The selection of this case study design is crucial because it enables an in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon: the role of dormitory environmental management in shaping an immersive Arabic ecosystem at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. A qualitative approach is chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon, explore its meaning, and examine the processes that occur within the unique, deep context of Islamic boarding schools. This aligns with the view that qualitative research can provide deeper insights into the topic being researched, particularly in the context of an organization or institution (Alam, 2021; Maxwell, 2020; Renjith et al., 2021). This case study is particularly relevant because it provides a first-hand overview of how the management practices of the dormitory and Arabic language programs are integrated into the daily lives of students, as well as offers broad insights into the advantages and challenges of creating an immersive Arabic-speaking environment. Thus, this research is expected to provide a rich and contextual understanding of the effectiveness of dormitory environment management in supporting Arabic language mastery in Islamic boarding schools.

The data collection methods in this study included in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were used to gain first-hand perspectives from various parties involved in the management of Arabic language dormitories and programs, such as dorm managers, Arabic teachers, and students, in order to understand program planning and implementation, as well as their perceptions of the Arabic language ecosystem (Gill, 2020; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Loose et al., 2023). Participatory observation enabled researchers to directly observe students' interactions and Arabic language practices in their daily routines within the dormitory environment, including both in-class and out-of-class activities. Meanwhile, the document analysis will provide insight into the policies and structure of the Arabic language program implemented. The researcher will act as an active observer, interacting directly with the informant to dig up relevant data. This research will be conducted at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School for six months. To maintain the credibility of the findings, the data triangulation technique will be applied, namely by verifying information from various sources (interviews, observations, and documents) to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the data collected.

The data analysis in this study will use the Miles & Huberman analysis technique, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification (Dunwoodie et al., 2023; Janis, 2022; Leko et al., 2021). At the data reduction stage, the data collected from interviews, observations, and document analysis will be filtered and selected to focus on information relevant to the role of dorm environment management in creating an immersive Arabic ecosystem. The reduced data will then be presented in the form of descriptive narratives, thematic tables, or diagrams to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships between phenomena.

The presentation of this data will help in describing how the various elements of hostel management contribute to Arabic language immersion. The final stage involves drawing conclusions, where the patterns emerging from the data will be further analyzed, and the results will be verified by involving informants to ensure the suitability and credibility of the findings. This process will ensure that the interpretation of the data is based on strong and relevant evidence, thereby enhancing the credibility of the research results and providing in-depth insights into how the management of the dormitory environment can effectively create and sustain an immersive Arabic ecosystem in the boarding school.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Planning and Implementation of Arabic Language Programs**

The planning and implementation of Arabic language programs in the Islamic boarding school environment is the primary foundation in creating an immersive ecosystem. This includes a series of structured activities such as teaching *mufradat* (vocabulary), *barnamij* (daily program), *muhadarah* (speech/presentation), and *muhadasah* (conversation), which are systematically designed to stimulate the active use of the Arabic language. This process is not only oriented towards the cognitive aspect, but also to the affective and psychomotor aspects of the students, so that they become accustomed to communicating in Arabic in various contexts. Clear setting of program objectives, such as improving oral fluency and grammatical comprehension, is crucial to ensuring that each initiative contributes to the establishment of a consistent and sustainable Arabic-speaking environment. Innovation in teaching methods and the availability of supporting resources have also strengthened the implementation of this program.

Dormitory management plays a crucial role in harmonizing the Arabic language program with the daily lives of students. The following informant's statement evidences this. "As part of the management, we ensure that the Arabic program is not only a subject matter in the classroom, but also an integral part of the students' routine. Every morning there is a mufradat session, followed by muhadasah in free time. The Arabic language rules are strictly applied to familiarize them (W1). In line with this, other informants also emphasized the importance of consistency in implementation. This is evidenced by the following informant's statement, "Programs such as weekly muhadarah and daily barnamij are designed so that students have the opportunity to speak in public and interact actively. There is a language driving team that monitors and motivates this program to run effectively (W2).

From the results of the interviews with the two informants, it is clear how the planning of the Arabic language program is integrated with its implementation in the field. These programs are not only theoretical on paper, but are implemented through real activities that require the active participation of students. The emphasis on daily routines and strict supervision demonstrates the hostel management's commitment to creating an environment that encourages students to continue using the Arabic language, allowing their abilities to develop naturally and sustainably. The implementation of the Arabic language program at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Implementation of Arabic Language Program**

Practice in the field also revealed that bulletin boards, directions, and even the names of rooms in the Islamic boarding school environment are predominantly written in Arabic. Additionally, muhadarah and muhadasah activities are conducted daily in the public areas of the dormitory, including halls and courtyards. Interaction between students, especially during free hours, tends to be in Arabic, although it is sometimes interspersed with Indonesian, indicating consistent efforts in using the target language. The students looked enthusiastic when participating in the morning mufradat session and often discussed daily lessons or activities in Arabic.

### **The Role of Dormitories/Islamic Boarding Schools as Arabic Language Nature Laboratories**

The dormitory/boarding school environment serves as a dynamic natural laboratory for the development of the Arabic language, where students are consistently encouraged to use the target language in every daily interaction. This natural laboratory concept emphasizes learning through hands-on experience and continuous application, extending beyond the classroom boundaries. Through social interactions, a culture of communication has formed, and learning methods have been integrated into boarding life, providing students with unlimited opportunities to practice their Arabic language skills. This significantly contributes to the improvement of speaking, listening, reading, and writing competencies, as language is no longer just an academic subject, but an essential communication tool in the life of their communities.

The following informant's statement evidences this: "We always emphasize that this dormitory is an environment where Arabic should live. Students not only learn in class, but also interact with teachers and friends using Arabic outside of class hours. It creates a habit (W3). From the results of the interviews, it appears that the hostel management is actively creating an environment that supports the constant use of the Arabic language. The emphasis on daily interactions and specialized programs such as "yaum al-lughah" demonstrates a systematic effort to transform the dormitory into an adequate language practice space, where students feel encouraged and not afraid to use Arabic in a variety of social contexts. In addition, the statement affirms that using Arabic outside the classroom is essential to develop language habits. In addition, the research carried out revealed several findings related to the role of dormitory/Islamic boarding schools as natural laboratories for the Arabic language, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Role of Dormitories/Islamic Boarding Schools as Arabic Language Nature Laboratories**

No	Theme/Category	Sub-finding
1.	Immersive Learning Environment	Dormitories/Islamic boarding schools function as natural laboratories for the development of the Arabic language.
2.	Practice-Based Learning Methods	Arabic learning in the dorm emphasizes hands-on experience and continuous application outside of the classroom.
3.	Influence of the Social Environment	Social interaction and communication culture in the dormitory improve the Arabic language competence of students.
4.	Functional Relevance of Language	Arabic in the dormitories is not just an academic subject, but an essential communication tool.
5.	Institutional Support & Habituation	Active dorm management fosters an environment that encourages the consistent use of the Arabic language.
6.	Structured Initiatives	There are systematic programs such as "yaum al-lughah" (language day) for language practice.
7.	Increased Motivation & Self-Confidence	Students feel encouraged and are not afraid to use Arabic in various social contexts.
8.	Formation of Language Habits	The use of Arabic outside the classroom is essential to develop language habits.

Departing from the explanation in Table 1, it can be seen that dormitories or Islamic boarding schools fundamentally function as a highly effective 'natural laboratory' for the development of the Arabic language. Immersive learning environments, which emphasize practice-based methods and continuous application, are at the heart of this effectiveness. Not only is it limited to classroom teaching, but social interaction and communication culture in the dormitory also significantly improve the Arabic language competence of students, making it an essential communication tool rather than just an academic subject.

Institutional support through proactive management and structured initiatives such as "yaum al-lughah" (language day) further strengthens the habituation of the use of the Arabic language. This encourages an increase in the motivation and confidence of students, so that they do not hesitate to use Arabic in various social contexts. Ultimately, this condition fosters a strong language habit, where the use of Arabic outside the classroom becomes essential. Thus, this table underscores that the key to mastering the Arabic language lies in creating an ecosystem that supports sustainable practices and habit formation.

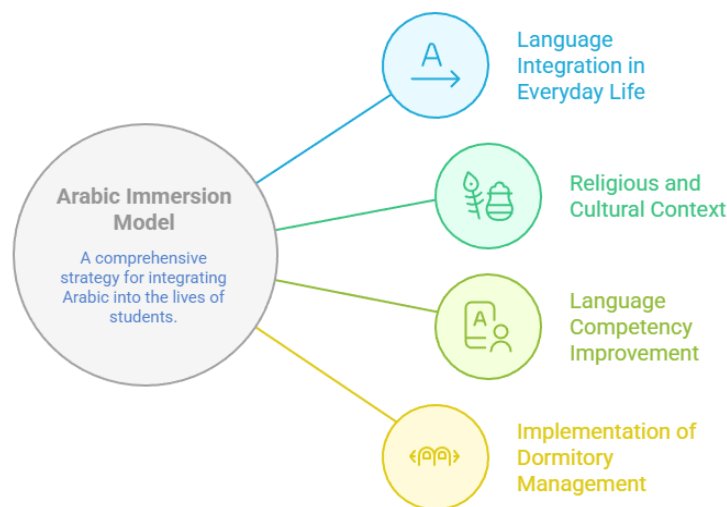
## **Arabic Language Immersion Model and Implementation for Competency Enhancement**

The immersion approach, in the context of learning Arabic, is a comprehensive strategy in which the target language is integrated into all aspects of students' lives, both inside and outside the classroom. This immersion goes beyond formal learning, creating an environment that naturally encourages students to think, speak, and interact in Arabic. The goal is to overcome the lack of Arabic language competence, which is often caused by a lack of exposure and practice. Through immersion, language becomes the primary medium of communication and instruction, exposing students to diverse contexts of language use. The effectiveness of this approach lies in its ability to build language intuition, improve fluency, and accelerate language acquisition by mimicking the process of learning a native language, where learners truly "live" in the language.

Dormitory management actively implements an immersion model to improve the Arabic language competence of students. The following informant's statement evidences this: "We believe that the best way to learn a language is to use it constantly. There is a rule that requires speaking Arabic in all areas of the dormitory, from morning to night. If someone violates, there are sanctions, but the goal is not to punish, but to discipline (W5). Additionally, other informants provided important insights into the elements of context-oriented immersion programs. The following informant's statement evidences this: "Our immersion is not only about talking, but also connecting it to religious and cultural contexts. Islamic material is delivered in Arabic, and arts and sports activities often use Arabic instruction as well. This makes the language relevant and easily absorbable (W6).

From the results of the interviews conducted with the two informants above, it is known that the immersion model applied goes beyond just focusing on daily dialogue. This strategy actively integrates Arabic into the overall religious and cultural context of students. Through the delivery of Islamic materials and instruction in various activities, including arts and sports, using Arabic, students directly feel the relevance and practical functionality of the language in their lives. This deep integration significantly simplifies the absorption process and encourages the natural use of Arabic in various situations.

The implementation model of Arabic immersion for students at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is as follows by Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Implementation Model of Student Arabic Language Immersion**

This image illustrates the four primary pillars that underpin the implementation of the immersion model. First, "Language Integration in Everyday Life" emphasizes that Arabic should be an integral part of daily routines. Second, "Religious and Cultural Context" highlights the importance of associating the Arabic language with relevant religious and cultural aspects, which are particularly important for students. Third, the "Language Competency Improvement" model directly states its ultimate goal, which is to enhance language skills. Finally, "Implementation of Dormitory Management" shows the central role of dormitory management in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of immersion implementation. Overall, this image illustrates a systematic and integrated approach to achieving holistic Arabic language proficiency through an immersive environment fully supported by management.

## Discussion

This study investigates the impact of dormitory environmental management on fostering an immersive Arabic environment at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. Key findings indicate that the planning and implementation of structured Arabic language programs, such as the teaching of *mufradat*, *barnamij*, *muhadarah*, and *muhadatsah*, provide a crucial foundation for stimulating the active and sustainable use of Arabic among students. The dormitory management consistently aligns these programs with the daily routine of students, ensuring that Arabic is not only a subject matter but also an essential communication tool outside of the classroom. The dormitory environment is dominated by Arabic writing and daily communication practices in Arabic, reinforcing the role of Islamic boarding schools as natural laboratories of Arabic,

where students are encouraged to interact and apply the target language in various social contexts. The application of a comprehensive Arabic language immersion model, which integrates language into daily life as well as religious and cultural contexts, significantly improves students' language competence and fosters strong language habits.

The findings of this study make a significant contribution to the literature on language learning in the pesantren environment and language-based character education. This research is in line with previous studies that stated that the integration of local values or specific environments (in this case, an immersive pesantren environment) in education can strengthen identity and support the sustainability of the language learning process (Asrori et al., 2025; Esteban, 2024; Sumon et al., 2024). In contrast to conventional language learning approaches that often focus on cognitive aspects alone (Lim, 2023; Oralbekova et al., 2023; Weng et al., 2024), this research develops an understanding of how the social, cultural, and daily practice dimensions (through the role of dormitory management) become crucial in creating an effective language learning ecosystem. This aspect complements the literature that highlights the importance of the environment in second language acquisition. Although there has been research that addresses the importance of immersive environments in language learning, this study adds insight by emphasizing the central role of dormitory management as a facilitator and enforcer of language practices, which often receives less attention in contemporary educational leadership studies (Ali et al., 2021; McKay et al., 2023; Santos, 2025).

This research implicitly applies the frameworks of second language acquisition theory and learning ecology theory to understand how a managed dormitory environment effectively creates an immersive ecosystem for learning Arabic. The concept of the "Arabic natural laboratory" aligns with the theory of learning ecology, which views learning as a dynamic process that occurs through the interaction of individuals with their environment (Blažič, 2021; Li & Xue, 2023; Martín et al., 2021). Dormitory management plays a crucial role in shaping this environment, facilitating the integration of Arabic into every aspect of student life, so that the language becomes an essential medium of communication, not just an academic subject (Al-khresheh, 2024; Ritonga et al., 2022; Villabona & Cenoz, 2022). The finding that "students feel encouraged and not afraid to use Arabic" indicates that there is psychosocial support that supports language acquisition, in line with affective theory in language learning. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in expanding the understanding of second language acquisition theory by incorporating the dimension of active environmental management and the central role of dormitory management in creating optimal conditions for language immersion.

This research emphatically demonstrates that the role of dormitory environment management is a fundamental element in creating an immersive Arabic ecosystem at the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. With systematic program planning, consistent implementation in the routine of students, and management of the dormitory as a "natural laboratory", the environment became a natural catalyst for language acquisition. These findings confirm the importance of integrating target languages into every aspect of students' lives, extending beyond formal classroom learning, so that language becomes a functional and relevant means of communication. A significant contribution of this research is to enrich the theory of second language acquisition by highlighting the proactive role of environmental management and the ecological dimension in language learning. In addition, this research makes a practical contribution by presenting a replicable Arabic language immersion implementation model, offering concrete solutions for institutions seeking to enhance language competence through a holistic and sustainable approach.

## CONCLUSION

This study examines the effectiveness of Arabic language programs in Islamic boarding schools, highlighting how structured planning and implementation play a crucial role in creating an immersive ecosystem for students. The findings show that various structured activities, such as the teaching of *mufradat*, *barnamij*, *muhadarah*, and *muhadarah*, systematically stimulate the active use of Arabic, extending beyond the cognitive to the affective and psychomotor aspects of students. The role of dormitory management is vital in aligning this program with the daily routine, ensuring that Arabic becomes an integral part of student life, supported by strict supervision and environmental habituation. The dormitories serve as dynamic natural laboratories, where social interaction and communication culture foster sustainable practices, making Arabic an essential means of communication. The implementation of the immersion model, which integrates Arabic into all aspects of the students' religious and cultural life, significantly improves their competence and fluency in the language by creating an environment that encourages them to think, speak, and interact naturally in the target language. It confirms that the success of mastering the Arabic language is highly dependent on the creation of a holistic and integrated immersive ecosystem.

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