



Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills in Pesantren Khairul Ummah Riau Through Direct Instruction: Implications for Educational Management

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ABSTRACT

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The role of educators in teaching a foreign language requires careful consideration, particularly in selecting effective teaching methods. This study aims to describe the implementation of the direct method in teaching Arabic speaking skills (maharah al-kalam) and its effect on improving the Arabic language program at Pesantren Khairul Ummah Putri Riau. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with female students of the pesantren as informants. Data were collected using triangulated techniques, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate that applying the direct method in teaching speaking skills significantly enhances students' oral proficiency and contributes to the overall improvement of the Arabic language program. The study highlights the necessity for educators' creativity and pedagogical skills in designing effective speaking activities, as well as the importance of collaboration between teachers and students. These results imply that integrating management practices in educational planning and classroom organization can optimize language learning outcomes. By combining effective teaching methods with sound educational management, pesantren programs can achieve higher levels of learner engagement, skill acquisition, and program efficiency.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching foreign languages has become increasingly important in a globalized world, including the teaching of Arabic in Islamic educational institutions (Nuriyah et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2024). Effective language education not only enhances students' communication skills but also strengthens cultural understanding, critical thinking, and cognitive development (Hadi & Masuwd,

2025; Haris, 2024). Pesantrens, as traditional Islamic boarding schools, play a crucial role in instilling language proficiency alongside religious and moral education. The ability to speak Arabic fluently (*maharah al-kalam*) is particularly essential, as it facilitates comprehension of religious texts, daily communication in Arabic, and academic advancement (Hasani, 2025). However, achieving this skill requires careful selection of pedagogical methods, structured learning environments, and integration of management principles to ensure program effectiveness. Research has shown that teaching methods directly influence students' language acquisition and motivation (Yanti et al., 2018). Therefore, it is vital to examine how specific instructional approaches can enhance Arabic speaking skills while aligning with broader educational management goals, ensuring that pesantren programs meet both learning and organizational objectives. This study addresses these issues by exploring practical strategies for optimizing language learning in pesantren contexts (Jamil & Sanusi, 2024).

Despite the importance of Arabic proficiency, many Islamic educational institutions struggle to provide effective speaking instruction (Rahmatillah & Andayani, 2025; Rusdiah, 2024). Traditional methods often focus on rote memorization or passive learning, which limit students' opportunities to practice real communication. As a result, students may acquire knowledge of vocabulary and grammar without achieving fluency or spontaneous oral expression (Sain et al., 2024). This gap in teaching approaches reflects broader challenges in educational management, including curriculum design, teacher training, and classroom organization. In Pesantren Khairul Ummah Putri Riau, educators face the challenge of balancing religious instruction, general education, and language programs, often without systematic planning or monitoring of teaching effectiveness. The lack of structured methods and performance evaluation can hinder students' skill development, reduce motivation, and limit program outcomes. Addressing these challenges requires integrating effective pedagogical methods with strong educational management, ensuring that learning goals are systematically achieved while maintaining the pesantren's holistic educational mission (Mustaghfiroh & Mubaroq, 2025). This study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance teaching strategies and institutional management practices.

In the daily learning environment at Pesantren Khairul Ummah Putri Riau, Arabic is taught through a combination of vocabulary drills, oral exercises, and contextualized activities related to students' daily routines (Setiawan & Rizal, 2024; Windiasari et al., 2025). Teachers and language coordinators adapt lessons to meet students' needs, linking new vocabulary to real-life contexts. Despite these efforts, many students still face difficulties in achieving spontaneous speaking proficiency. Observations indicate that while students can

memorize and repeat Arabic phrases, they often struggle to use them flexibly in conversation. This phenomenon reflects the need for more intensive, interactive, and systematic teaching methods that promote continuous language exposure, immediate feedback, and active student participation. Furthermore, the effective management of learning activities—including scheduling, monitoring, and instructional coordination—is essential to sustain the language environment. The field data underscore the importance of aligning pedagogical methods with management strategies to create an organized, engaging, and communicative learning atmosphere that optimizes maharah al-kalam development among students.

Previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of the direct method (*metode langsung*) in teaching Arabic speaking skills. According to Yanti et al. (2018), intensive communication using the direct method enhances students' oral proficiency and promotes natural language acquisition. Qudrotulloh et al. (2021) also demonstrate that employing the direct method in Arabic instruction effectively develops maharah al-kalam among learners. Arif (2019) emphasizes that the method accelerates the acquisition of speaking competence by creating an immersive Arabic language environment. These studies collectively show that direct and repeated language exposure is essential for building communicative competence. However, previous research often focuses primarily on classroom instruction, with limited attention to institutional management, teacher coordination, and the alignment of language programs with overall educational objectives. This creates a gap in understanding how pedagogical methods interact with educational management dimensions to optimize learning outcomes in pesantren contexts.

Marlina (2016) explains that the direct method relies on the principle that foreign language learning resembles first language acquisition, emphasizing continuous oral practice, listening, and immediate oral repetition. While these findings highlight the method's pedagogical effectiveness, they do not address how organizational aspects—such as teacher collaboration, curriculum scheduling, and program evaluation—support or hinder skill development. Addressing this gap is essential because effective language programs depend not only on instructional strategies but also on the management of learning activities, resources, and human capital. By integrating pedagogical methods with educational management, pesantren can ensure systematic, high-quality learning experiences that foster both language proficiency and program sustainability. This study contributes to this discourse by examining how the direct method can enhance Arabic speaking skills within a well-managed pesantren environment.

This research offers a novel contribution by combining pedagogical effectiveness with educational management principles. While prior studies have

demonstrated the efficacy of the direct method in improving maharah al-kalam, few have explored how management practices—such as instructional planning, teacher coordination, and program monitoring—interact with teaching methods to produce optimal outcomes. This integration is particularly critical in pesantren settings, where teachers must balance language, religious, and general education programs. By investigating both instructional and managerial dimensions, this study provides actionable insights for improving Arabic language programs, fostering student engagement, and enhancing overall program efficiency. The findings aim to guide educators and administrators in developing more effective, sustainable, and contextually relevant language teaching strategies.

Based on the literature and field observations, this study addresses three key questions: (1) How is Arabic learning conducted at Pesantren Khairul Ummah Putri Riau? (2) How is students' maharah al-kalam developed? (3) How can applying the direct method enhance the Arabic language program? This research argues that combining the direct method with effective educational management can significantly improve students' speaking skills while strengthening program outcomes. By linking instructional techniques with organizational practices, educators can foster active learning, monitor progress effectively, and ensure sustainable skill development. Consequently, this study contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical guidance in optimizing Arabic language teaching in pesantren environments, emphasizing the dual importance of pedagogy and management for educational success.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study approach, chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of Arabic speaking skill development (maharah al-kalam) through the direct method at Pesantren Khairul Ummah Riau. The case study design allows the researcher to explore complex interactions between teaching methods, student participation, and program management within a real-life educational setting. By focusing on a specific pesantren, the study aims to generate detailed insights into how instructional strategies are implemented and how they influence language proficiency, while also considering the organizational aspects that support effective program execution.

The research was conducted at Pesantren Khairul Ummah Putri Riau, selected due to its active Arabic language program and unique integration of religious and academic curricula. Participants were selected using random sampling among female students, along with key stakeholders including the vice principal in charge of language programs, Arabic teachers, and language coordinators. Data were collected through triangulated techniques: unstructured interviews, direct classroom and activity observations, and documentation

review. Interviews aimed to gather deep insights into teaching practices and program management, while observations allowed validation of instructional methods in real classroom contexts. Documentation included lesson plans, organizational structures, and learning materials supporting speaking skill development.

Data analysis followed a systematic triangulation process, involving data condensation, display, and verification. Collected information was reduced by focusing on relevant themes related to language teaching methods and management practices, then organized and displayed through matrices and narrative summaries to facilitate interpretation. Finally, findings were verified through cross-checking between interviews, observations, and documents, ensuring reliability and credibility. Integrating educational management dimensions—such as coordination among teachers, scheduling of activities, and resource allocation—provided additional insight into how management practices support effective language learning and program sustainability in the pesantren context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Arabic Language Learning

The findings indicate that Arabic language learning at Pesantren Khairul Ummah Putri Riau is implemented intensively using the Direct Method (*metode langsung*), which emphasizes oral practice and continuous use of the language in real contexts (Bakri, 2017; Effendy, 2017). Vocabulary is taught gradually, starting with individual words and progressing to sentence structures, supplemented by visual aids and gestures (Siregar & Nurhakim, 2018; Baroroh & Rahmawati, 2020). Teachers actively engage students in communication, restricting the use of other languages to strengthen immersion. This method is consistently applied not only during regular classroom sessions but also in additional programs such as *muhadharah* activities every Saturday and nightly practice sessions, which facilitate spontaneous speaking skills. Intensive teacher-student interaction, coupled with collaboration among subject teachers, helps integrate Arabic usage across the curriculum, reinforcing both linguistic and conceptual understanding.

From a management perspective, the pesantren demonstrates strategic planning by scheduling structured language programs, assigning responsibilities to the vice principal in charge of language development, teachers, and language coordinators, and organizing competitions and workshops. These structured management activities ensure accountability, monitor progress, and optimize student engagement, illustrating how effective organizational support enhances pedagogical outcomes (Pane & Dasopang, 2017; Noor Amirudin, 2017).

Development of Speaking Skills (Maharah al-Kalam)

Observation and interviews revealed that the direct method significantly enhances students' maharah al-kalam. Daily vocabulary assignments, oral exercises, and performance in speeches, poetry, and drama contribute to students' ability to express ideas fluently and correctly (Meishanti et al., 2020; Fajrin et al., 2021). Members of the language organization provide immediate feedback, correcting errors and guiding proper usage during daily interactions. The enforcement of language discipline, including mandatory participation in organizational and extracurricular activities, encourages students to internalize Arabic as a medium of communication. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of immersion and consistent practice for foreign language acquisition (Afifuddin, 2021; Wulandari, 2020; Muhammad Ridwan Fauzi, 2019).

Management plays a critical role in sustaining these activities. The pesantren's leadership coordinates program schedules, allocates resources for intensive language instruction, organizes workshops for teachers, and evaluates student performance through competitions and regular assessments. This structured approach ensures that both teaching methods and institutional support align to maximize learning outcomes. The integration of management and pedagogy demonstrates that organizational planning is as essential as instructional strategies for developing language proficiency.

Integration of Pedagogical and Management Practices

The study shows that pedagogical strategies and management practices work synergistically to optimize Arabic learning. Teachers employ direct interaction, structured exercises, and continuous feedback, while management ensures proper scheduling, monitoring, and resource allocation. The pesantren's approach illustrates a comprehensive educational management system, where leadership involvement, teacher collaboration, and student engagement are coordinated to enhance learning outcomes (Jafar & Fatmawati, 2019; Wekke, 2015). For example, programs like the three-month intensive language course and regular workshops for teachers reflect strategic decisions to improve teaching quality, which aligns with principles of educational management emphasizing planning, implementation, and evaluation (Pane & Dasopang, 2017).

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of environmental factors. Creating a language-rich environment encourages active participation, increases motivation, and enables students to practice Arabic in authentic contexts. By combining structured teaching methods with systematic management practices, the pesantren effectively bridges the gap between

classroom instruction and real-world language use. This integration not only improves speaking skills but also strengthens overall program efficiency, demonstrating that effective educational management is indispensable for sustaining high-quality language programs.

Implications for Arabic Language Program Development

The findings indicate that combining the direct method with well-structured management significantly improves students' speaking proficiency and program sustainability. Pesantrens aiming to enhance foreign language skills should focus not only on instructional strategies but also on designing management frameworks that support systematic teaching, monitoring, and evaluation. Leadership involvement, teacher coordination, and resource allocation are key to ensuring that language programs are implemented consistently and effectively. This study reinforces the argument that pedagogical effectiveness and educational management are mutually reinforcing components, essential for fostering both student competence and institutional excellence (Noor Amirudin, 2017; Afifuddin, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The main finding of this study highlights that the inquiry method significantly aligns with Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory in Maharah Qiro'ah learning at the mubtadi' level. The research demonstrates that active student engagement in discovering concepts, reading patterns, and correct pronunciation through observation, questioning, and reflection enhances not only technical reading skills but also logical, analytical, and critical thinking abilities. This illustrates how students integrate new experiences into existing cognitive structures and adapt their understanding when encountering novel information. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of educational management practices, such as structured lesson planning, monitoring, and feedback, in supporting the effective implementation and sustainability of inquiry-based learning. The key lesson learned is that combining pedagogical strategies with managerial frameworks can optimize learning outcomes and make Maharah Qiro'ah instruction more meaningful, interactive, and creative.

The strength of this study lies in its dual contribution to pedagogical and cognitive research, showing that inquiry-based learning can effectively enhance student skills while integrating educational management dimensions in nonformal settings. However, the research is limited by its focus on a single program and beginner-level students, which may constrain generalizability to other courses or higher proficiency levels. Future research should explore diverse institutions, multiple learner levels, and longitudinal designs to examine the

sustained impact of inquiry-based methods. Investigating systematic management strategies to scale and sustain such instruction can further improve educational effectiveness and institutional performance.

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