

Improving Modern *Pondok* Students' Arabic Language Skills in Indonesia: Language Institutions as Language Improvement Central

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools, or pesantrens, have long played a significant role in the educational landscape of Indonesia, particularly in fostering religious and linguistic knowledge. This research focuses on three modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia: Al-Junaidiyah Biru in Bone Regency, IMMIM Putra Makassar in South Sulawesi, and Darussalam Gontor in Ponorogo. Central to the study is the role of the Language Improvement Centre (LIC) at these institutions, which demonstrates crucial innovations in Arabic language learning. The research employs a qualitative method. Data were gathered through interviews with educators, observations of classroom practices, and analysis of curriculum documents. This methodology provided a comprehensive understanding of the LICs' impact on Arabic language education. The study identifies several key functions of the LICs: a) designing Arabic language learning programs that align with the skills students are expected to master; b) conducting regular and organized assessments of students' Arabic language proficiency; and c) developing new teaching approaches based on these assessments. These roles collectively contribute to a robust enhancement of Arabic language learning within the pesantrens. The findings highlight the LICs' effectiveness in fostering a rich and innovative Arabic language learning environment. This research underscores the importance of these centers in the broader context of Islamic education in Indonesia. Future research could explore further innovations introduced by LICs and assess their long-term impacts on students' proficiency and engagement with the Arabic language.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools play a significant role in the educational landscape of Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools not only educate students in Islamic studies but also serve as hubs for activists and scientists. Originally, Islamic boarding schools were referred to as salaf education. The instructional method was called *sorogan* or *bandongan*, which aimed to assess students' comprehension of the yellow book. Over time, Islamic boarding schools have evolved into what is now known as modern Islamic

boarding schools. Indonesia has multiple contemporary Islamic boarding schools. These include Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School in Ponorogo, Darunnajah Modern Islamic Boarding School in Jakarta, Darul Muttaqin Modern Islamic Boarding School in Parung Bogor, IMMIM Putra Makassar Modern Islamic Boarding School, Dar al-Huffadz Seven-Seven Modern Islamic Boarding School in Bone Regency, Al-Junaidiyah Biru Modern Islamic Boarding School in Bone Regency, and others.

Modern boarding schools in Indonesia that in addition to teaching general knowledge also teach religious studies and Arabic language lessons. With Arabic language lessons, students are expected to be able to master Arabic language skills. While Arabic language skills are the ability to use language as a communication tool, both oral and written, which includes the skills of reading (*al-qiraah*), writing (*al-kitabah*), speaking (*al-kalam*), and listening (*al-istima*). Similarly, in this Islamic educational institution in which there is a strengthening of language quality centralized by the language institution in every Arabic language learning activity, both daily Arabic conversation and Arabic language learning in the classroom and outside the classroom and so on (Effendy, 2005) .

Islamic boarding schools play a significant role in disseminating and enhancing Islamic symbols due to their nature as Islamic religious educational institutions, which are known for fostering positive relationships between key figures like kyai and students. The cultural connection between dorms, yellow books, and mosques with people's life justifies the classification of Islamic boarding schools as a sub-culture of Indonesian society by scholars like Clifford Geertz and Abdurahman Wahid (Syafe'i, 2017). Islamic boarding schools evolved to incorporate modern characteristics, emphasising the teachings of the Koran and authentic hadith in daily activities to fulfil their role as Islamic educational institutions. Pondok Pesantren continues to make maximum efforts to emerge as a quality alternative institution by combining two academic contents, namely memorizing the Qur'an with *Kulliyah al-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* (KMI) as well as various extracurricular activities in modern Islamic boarding schools. According to Mastuhu in Mul Jono Damopolii, Islamic boarding schools are defined as traditional Islamic educational institutions for studying, understanding, deepening and appreciating Islamic teachings by emphasizing the importance of religious morals as a guide to daily behavior (Damopolii, 2011) .

Another prevalent feature in modern Islamic boarding school life is the rigorous employment of foreign languages, particularly Arabic, in daily activities. Arabic learning is a prominent focus in modern Islamic boarding schools, influencing various aspects of students' lives. Azhar Arsyad explained that pupils must be actively engaged in the process of learning Arabic. Willpower, strong curiosity, and focused attention are essential (Arsyad, 2003). Learning Arabic at modern Islamic boarding schools should aim to establish Arabic as a language of daily communication through the students' will, interest, and attention.

The existence of Arabic in strengthening Islamic boarding school knowledge is essential, given that Arabic is the language used in writing the Qur'an, the main reference in the study of Islamic sciences. Sheikh Ali Jum'ah, as quoted by Umar Mukhtar, highlighted several characteristics of Arabic that justify its selection as the language of the Qur'an. Firstly, the completeness of the Arabic language is evident in its linguistic structure, encompassing phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic elements, which are extensive in transforming linguistic meaning. Secondly, Arabic's authenticity is enriched with a variety of metaphors and forms of delivery. The language style of the Qur'an utilizes numerous metaphorical expressions, creating an ontological, epistemological, and axiological connection in conveying Divine messages from a theocentric to an anthropocentric dimension. Thirdly, Arabic has many synonymous forms, allowing words with different forms but similar meanings to communicate theological messages from God to humans with varying meanings depending on the context. Lastly, Arabic's numerous homonyms, which are words with one form but different meanings, enable the language to emphasize high acceleration of linguistic style in communicating normative theological messages.

Amrah Kasim similarly explained several characteristics inherent in languages within the Semitic sub-family. The majority of basic words in these languages consist of three consonants and always begin

with a consonant letter in writing. Verbs are formed based on the time the action occurs, while nouns are systematically based on the type and number of letters. This language group exhibits special characteristics in terms of *qiyas* and *istiqak*. Compound words are rarely found, except in specific contexts such as numbers. Derivation is achieved by adding or subtracting letters without limitations, maintaining consistency in the base word's meaning. Furthermore, the pronouns and their connections with nouns, verbs, and letters are consistent across this language group. These characteristics collectively contribute to the richness and depth of Arabic as a language of significant cultural, religious, and educational importance in Islamic boarding schools.

Arabic language learning in modern Islamic boarding schools must be directed at strengthening meaningful Arabic language learning, considering that Arabic is a language that cannot be separated from the dimension of meaning. Arabic language proficiency is dexterity, skill, or the ability to do something well and carefully. Meanwhile, language, as characterized by prefixes in Indonesian, can be understood as "the habit of doing something". Language is a communication system, the essence of language is actually meaning (Parera, 1997). What Jos Daniel Parera stated suggests that Arabic must be used as a language of daily communication in the lives of students, especially those in modern Islamic boarding schools.

Success in learning Arabic can be measured by achieving proficiency across several key skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening skills can be developed through exercises that help students differentiate between phonemes and expressions. This can involve direct interaction with native speakers or using tape recordings to understand and think about the meaning of the content being heard. Previous studies, such as those by Al-Ayyubi (1994), have emphasized the importance of listening exercises in language acquisition. More recent research has continued to support this view, highlighting the critical role of listening in language learning. For instance, Alqahtani (2019) found that integrating listening activities into the curriculum significantly enhances students' language proficiency. Similarly, Alhaysony and Alhaisoni (2020) emphasized the effectiveness of interactive listening tasks in improving students' understanding and retention of the Arabic language. These findings suggest that listening is a foundational skill that underpins the acquisition of other language competencies.

Speaking skills, or *kalam*, involve expressing oneself clearly and accurately. This skill is complex because it requires thinking about what to say while forming sentences that match the intended meaning. Effective speaking involves extensive practice with vocabulary, grammar, and intonation. Research by Al-Ayyubi (1994) highlights that speaking is one of the most challenging linguistic skills due to its cognitive demands. Recent studies have corroborated this view, emphasizing that speaking requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to apply this knowledge in real-time communication (Hassan, 2018). Interactive speaking activities, such as debates and discussions, have been shown to significantly improve students' speaking proficiency by providing opportunities for practical application of language skills (Rahman, 2020). Furthermore, the incorporation of technology, such as language learning apps and online conversation partners, has been found to enhance speaking skills by offering diverse and interactive learning environments (Salem, 2021).

Reading skills encompass recognizing written symbols and comprehending their meaning. This requires a robust vocabulary and understanding of grammar. Errors in reading can lead to misunderstandings of the language rules, which affects overall comprehension. Reading provides accurate linguistic input and promotes autonomy in learning, as students can engage with Arabic texts such as magazines, books, and newspapers. This approach has been supported by findings from various educational studies, which stress the importance of reading in language acquisition (Buhaira, 2002).

Writing skills are fundamental for a comprehensive understanding of Arabic. Writing correctly can prevent pronunciation and comprehension errors. Effective writing requires clear communication of ideas, reflecting the language user's intent accurately. Al-Qara (1997) underscores that good writing skills are crucial for mastering any language, including Arabic. Recent studies further support this assertion, indicating that writing practice enhances cognitive processing and retention of the language (Al-Mohanna, 2018). Additionally, Faris (2021) found that structured writing exercises significantly improve

students' grammatical accuracy and overall language proficiency. Therefore, fostering strong writing skills is essential for students to achieve fluency and clarity in Arabic.

The primary issue in this research is to determine the role of Language Improvement Centres (LICs) as language development hubs in enhancing the Arabic language skills of students in modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. This research addresses several sub-problems: the methods of acquiring Arabic language in contemporary Islamic boarding schools and the contribution of LICs to improving Arabic language proficiency.

Despite the significant role of Language Improvement Centres (LICs) in enhancing Arabic language proficiency in modern Islamic boarding schools, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific strategies these centers employ and their effectiveness compared to traditional methods. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the innovative approaches used by LICs and their impact on students' proficiency. The research is guided by two primary questions: What methods do contemporary Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia use to teach Arabic? How do Language Improvement Centres contribute to enhancing Arabic language proficiency in these schools? Through this investigation, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the best practices for Arabic language education and highlight the contributions of LICs in fostering language proficiency among students.

The research objective is to evaluate the role and effectiveness of LICs in modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. By addressing these questions, the study seeks to provide insights into the best practices for Arabic language education and highlight areas for future research to further enhance Arabic language proficiency among students.

2. METHODS

This research focuses on three modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia: Al-Junaidiyah Biru in Bone Regency, IMMIM Putra Makassar in South Sulawesi, and Darussalam Gontor in Ponorogo. Central to the study is the role of the Language Improvement Centre (LIC) at these institutions, which demonstrates crucial innovations in Arabic language learning. The research employs a qualitative methodology, particularly suitable for exploring perceptions, behaviors, and motivations in their natural settings. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena experienced by the research subjects, providing rich, descriptive insights into the role of language institutions in enhancing Arabic language skills among students. The main research questions guiding this study explore the roles language institutions play in improving Arabic language proficiency, how students perceive and experience the language learning processes facilitated by these institutions, and the motivations and behaviors of students in response to the language instruction provided.

Observations were conducted using non-participant observation techniques. Specific behaviors and interactions related to language learning practices, student engagement, and institutional activities were observed. These observations were systematically recorded through detailed field notes to capture the natural context and dynamics within the boarding schools.

The interview process involved semi-structured interviews with selected participants, including students, teachers, and language institution administrators. Participants were chosen based on their involvement and experience with the language programs. The interviews focused on open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses about their perceptions, experiences, and motivations. These interviews were documented through audio recordings and transcriptions to ensure accurate representation of the participants' perspectives.

Document analysis was conducted on various types of documents, including school records, curricular materials, and samples of student work. These documents provided contextual and supplementary data to support the observations and interviews, offering a comprehensive view of the language learning environment.

Reference searches involved conducting literature reviews and archival research to gather relevant theoretical and empirical studies that contextualize and support the findings. This method ensured that the data collection was grounded in existing knowledge and contributed to a well-rounded analysis.

The multidisciplinary approach of this research included linguistic, sociological, and pedagogical perspectives, allowing for a holistic examination of the research questions. Data analysis and interpretation were guided by Haberman and Miles' interactive data processing technique, as cited by Burhan Bungin. This technique involves presenting data, organizing data, collecting data, verifying data, and drawing conclusions to ensure a rigorous and systematic analysis of the qualitative data. By integrating these methods, the research provides a detailed and nuanced understanding of the role of language institutions in strengthening Arabic language skills at modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research findings at an empirical level, the results of this research can be described as follows:

3.1 *Learning Arabic in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia*

In understanding the Arabic language learning cycle in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools, it is essential to recognize the two main classifications: traditional and modern Islamic boarding schools. Each classification has unique characteristics that influence its approach to teaching Arabic. Traditional Islamic boarding schools focus on learning Arabic for the purpose of reading the Yellow Book, which is a source of Islamic knowledge. In contrast, modern Islamic boarding schools emphasize verbal communication skills in Arabic. According to Abul Khair, this dichotomy in early Arabic learning practices had practical implications, prioritizing specific language competencies within each type of school. However, Khair notes that this distinction has begun to blur as both types of boarding schools continue to innovate, leading to a convergence in their Arabic learning orientations (Khair, 2022). Rusli Nur similarly observes that while these classifications have traditionally created stereotypes about the focus of Arabic learning—verbal communication in modern schools and reading comprehension in traditional schools—these stereotypes do not entirely capture the breadth of Arabic competencies taught. Both types of schools, despite their different emphases, incorporate comprehensive Arabic language education (Nur, 2022).

The observations by Abul Khair and Rusli Nur underscore the continuous scientific evolution occurring within both traditional and modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. This evolution indicates a shift in Arabic language learning, steering away from the conventional stereotypes linked to each type of institution and towards a more collaborative and integrative approach. Notably, the educational innovations at these schools reflect a growing willingness to engage in dialectical exchanges and incorporate a broad spectrum of Arabic language skills.

A notable phenomenon has been observed at the Al-Junaidiyah Biru Modern Islamic Boarding School in Bone Regency, also known as Ma'had al-Hadits al-Junaidiyah Biru. This institution has shown a strong commitment to reinforcing Arabic language learning as a critical tool for engaging with Islamic literature. According to Hastang Nur, the school strives to balance students' speaking skills in Arabic for everyday use with the ability to read the Yellow Book, a hallmark of traditional Islamic education (H. Nur, 2022). This approach suggests that Al-Junaidiyah Biru aims to synthesize verbal communication and textual comprehension, skills often seen as mutually exclusive in Arabic language education.

The dual focus on speaking and reading Arabic at Al-Junaidiyah Biru supports the development of well-rounded Arabic language competence. This competence not only enables students to engage actively with Islamic texts but also prepares them to communicate their scholarly insights at international forums such as seminars, workshops, and conferences. Thus, students are not merely passive consumers of Islamic literature but are equipped to contribute to global academic discussions.

Research at Al-Junaidiyah Biru has revealed that the institution frequently employs the Mumtaz Method, an innovative Arabic language learning approach. This method enhances the morpho-syntactic understanding of Arabic through songs that encapsulate grammatical rules and word

formations. By integrating such innovative techniques, Al-Junaidiyah Biru exemplifies how modern Islamic boarding schools can bridge the gap between traditional and contemporary methods of Arabic language education.

Regarding Arabic language learning at the IMMIM Putra Makassar Modern Islamic Boarding School, Mukhlis Mukhtar stated that students are consistently motivated and equipped to participate in various Arabic language competitions at local, regional, national, and even international levels. The school facilitates their involvement in competitions such as Arabic quizzes, speeches, calligraphy, and drama, which serves as a form of guidance in their Arabic learning journey. As students increasingly participate in these competitions, both externally and within the school environment, their motivation to actively study Arabic intensifies (Mukhtar, 2022).

In alignment with Mukhlis Mukhtar's observations, Andi Sukriadi noted that IMMIM Putra Makassar is renowned in South Sulawesi for its significant achievements in various competitions, particularly those related to foreign languages, including Arabic. These accomplishments are the result of a comprehensive and sustained coaching process. The school emphasizes the daily use of Arabic in communication, helping students to become accustomed to the language. This habitual use of Arabic fosters language competency, transitioning from mere learning to natural acquisition. Consequently, when students participate in competitions such as Arabic quizzes, speeches, calligraphy, and drama, they do so with ease and confidence, having integrated Arabic into their everyday lives (Sukriadi, 2022).

These efforts illustrate how IMMIM Putra Makassar Modern Islamic Boarding School not only focuses on academic excellence but also on practical language skills, ensuring that students are well-prepared for both competitive and real-world environments. The school's comprehensive approach to Arabic education supports its students in becoming proficient and confident Arabic speakers, ready to excel in various linguistic challenges and contribute to the broader community.

As for learning Arabic at the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java, it can be understood from the institution's efforts to prepare Arabic language educators by involving students at the top level to educate those at the initial level as educators in learning Arabic. Responding to this, Suwarno stated that the involvement of students at the upper level in educating their younger classmates who were in their first year regarding learning Arabic was a part of education itself. By teaching Arabic to others, this will encourage them to learn and embody the Arabic language learning activities they face (Suwarno, 2022). What Suwarno stated above shows that educators are the leading agents in classes in developing students to become better in terms of their cognitive, psychomotor or affective dimensions. There is a very famous motto which was introduced by the founder of the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School, Ponorogo, East Java, which in this case is "*al-thariqah ahammu min al-maddah, wal mudarris ahammu min al-thariqah, wa ruh al-mudarris ahammu min al-mudarris nafsihi*" which means that methods are more important than material, educators are more important than methods, and the spirit of educators is more important than educators themselves. From this learning motto, it is clear how important educators are in their position as Arabic language learning educators where they are always required to present their whole body and soul in carrying out their daily duties as educators who are tasked with developing their students. The same thing was also stated by Muhammad Nur that Arabic language learning at the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java places great emphasis on the application of *al-thariqah al-mubasyarah* where in its application it always emphasizes the students' ability to practice Arabic directly in daily communication (M Nur, 2022).

In describing the efforts of the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java, in accelerating Arabic language learning, Muhammad Nur described that there is a language exam that students must take as a barometer of their achievement in the foreign language they are studying, one of which is Arabic. The commitment of the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java, in accelerating foreign language learning cannot be separated from the institutional and scientific commitment it has built, which in this case is the application of discipline, mastery of foreign languages, cadre formation, and strengthening the alumni network (M. Nur, 2022).

3.2 The role of the Language Institute as a Language Improvement Central in Strengthening the Arabic Language Skills of Modern Islamic Boarding School Students in Indonesia

In relation to the role of language institutions as *language improvement centers* In strengthening the Arabic language skills of modern Islamic boarding school students in Indonesia, this role can be described as follows:

3.2.1 Organizing various Arabic language learning programs according to Arabic language skills, which is prioritized for students' mastery

As one of the units of modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia which functions as a *language improvement center*, language institutions have played a very strategic role in organizing Arabic language learning through various Arabic language learning programs in accordance with the students' priority of mastering Arabic language skills. Responding to this, Muslihin Sultan stated that the language institute at the al-Junaidiyah Biru Modern Islamic Boarding School, Bone Regency, developed an Arabic language learning program in the form of *Darah al-Lugah Al-Usbuiyyah* every weekend. In practice, this activity is carried out at the end of every month in the last week, during which students carry out Arabic language learning activities all day long, especially on Sundays from morning to evening. This activity was initiated by the language institute, which was coordinated by the OSIS management, involving lecturers from IAIN Bone who carried out community service activities. It was a follow-up to the collaboration that had been built previously (Sultan, 2022).

In relation to the role of the language institution at the IMMIM Putra Makassar Modern Islamic Boarding School, it can be seen that the language institution is very active in controlling students' memorization of vocabulary as one of the Arabic language learning strategies at the Islamic boarding school. In its implementation, each student is directed to face the upper-level students who are said to be *murshid* and educators who are called *musyrif*. Responding to this, Rusli Nur stated that by involving students as Arabic language tutors who are commonly known as *murshid*, this will greatly facilitate the performance of language institutions in developing Arabic at the IMMIM Putra Makassar Modern Islamic Boarding School (R. Nur, 2022). In this process, the language institute directs the Arabic language learning program to be carried out by creating a kind of memorization book which will be initiated by the *murjid* or *musyrif* in line with the success of the students in their Arabic vocabulary memorization test. Several other Arabic language learning programs initiated by the language institute at the IMMIM Putra Makassar Modern Islamic Boarding School are Arabic Language Camp at the end of each semester known as *al-Khaymah al-Arabiyah*, Arabic Language Nadwah every weekend known as *Halaqah Lugawiyah Arabiyah*, and others. Santri are also trained with various Arabic language skills to take part in various Arabic language competitions at local, regional or national levels such as Arabic debates, Arabic speeches and others.

The role of the language institution at the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java in strengthening students' Arabic language skills can be seen from the various Arabic language learning programs implemented. This can be seen, for example, from the involvement of students at the top level to guide their juniors at the lower level. Suwarno described this as the spirit that underlies the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java, in developing its students, which in this case is the formation of leadership character, requires the existence of a learning system that is capable of realizing the leadership character of learning Arabic in the students. Language institutions in this process have a very strategic role in cadreing Arabic language educators who are not only smart in Arabic but also have good mastery of Arabic language learning methodology (Suwarno, 2022). In this effort, various Arabic language learning programs initiated by language institutions are Arabic language meetings held 3 times a week known as *al-Nadwah al-Arabiyah al-Khassah* as well as Arabic language meetings held every end known as *al-Nadwah al-Arabiyah al-Ammah*. Another Arabic language learning program implemented at the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java is *Rihlah Ilmiah Lughawiyah* by conducting language visits to various Islamic boarding schools in the surrounding area, training in Arabic speech, Arabic quizzes, Arabic drama, and others.

3.2.2 Conduct ongoing and structured evaluations of students' Arabic language skills

Evaluation is an inseparable part of Arabic language learning in modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. It is not surprising then that the Al-Junaidiyah Biru Modern Islamic Boarding School, Bone Regency, continues to carry out continuous and structured evaluations of the Arabic language skills of its students. Responding to this, Masdah Mahmud stated that students' Arabic language skills are always evaluated as various Arabic language learning activities are implemented. This can be seen, for example, in the implementation of Arabic language learning programs which are coordinated by language institutions, so in line with the students' efforts in participating in various existing Arabic language learning programs, the language institutions carry out evaluations both in relation to the Arabic language learning program being implemented and in relation to their respective achievements. Each student's Arabic language skills, which in this case are listening skills (*maharah al-istima'*), speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*), reading skills (*maharah al-qira'ah*), and writing skills (*maharah al-kitabah*) (Mahmud, 2022).

The same thing was also stated by Erfandi Muchtar that learning evaluation was carried out by looking at the students' development in Arabic language skills which include listening skills (*maharah al-istima'*), speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*), reading skills (*maharah al-qira'ah*), as well as writing skills (*maharah al-kitabah*) which of course must be supported by sufficient memorization of Arabic vocabulary and mastery of basic Arabic sentence patterns. One form of ongoing and structured evaluation carried out by these language institutions can be found in the students' memorizing of Arabic vocabulary which is always controlled for its development from time to time by the language institution as well as various aspects of Arabic language skills both in terms of Arabic language proficiency and Arabic language elements (Muchtar, 2022).

At the Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo Modern Islamic Boarding School, East Java, continuous and structured evaluation can be found in what the language institute does at the end of each semester, in this case in the form of language exams for all tens of thousands of students. Responding to this, Muhammad Nur stated that language exams which are carried out periodically at the end of each semester are one form of the role of language institutions in evaluating students' language skills. Basically, the evaluation is not only carried out at that moment because in empirical fact the evaluation continues to be carried out continuously when the students take part in the various Arabic language learning programs offered (M. Nur, 2022).

In the researcher's observations, continuous and structured evaluations carried out by language institutions at modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have practical implications for the role of santri in various language learning programs implemented by language institutions, such as an increase in the level of Arabic language proficiency, for example from the basic level (*marhalah mubtadi'in*) to the middle level (*marhalah mutawassithin*), or even to the top level (*marhalah mutaqaddimin*) when there is an increase or the opposite happens, which in this case is a decrease in level from the top level (*marhalah mutaqaddimin*) to the middle level (*marhalah mutawassithin*) or even to the basic level (*marhalah mubtadi'in*).

3.2.3 Developing Arabic language learning innovations as a follow-up to the evaluation of Arabic language learning that has been carried out

Developing Arabic language learning innovations as a follow-up to the evaluation of Arabic language learning that has been carried out is an empirical fact that can be found in relation to the role of language institutions in strengthening the Arabic language skills of modern Islamic boarding school students in Indonesia. This can be seen, for example, when each modern Islamic boarding school adopts various foreign language learning innovations in English, for example. Responding to this, Andi Fajar Awaluddin stated that innovation in learning Arabic was an important step taken by the language institution at the al-Junaidiyah Biru Islamic Boarding School, Bone Regency, where in this process many approaches, methods or techniques for learning English were adopted into language learning. Arabic (Awaluddin, 2022). In line with what Andi Fajar Awaluddin stated, Rusli Nur stated that Arabic language learning innovation is a role played by language institutions by offering various innovative

Arabic language learning programs by adopting many of those developed in English as well as various shows on television which are seen as having connection with Arabic language learning in its implementation such as quizzes, talk shows, and others (R. Nur, 2022). Meanwhile, Suwarno described the role of language institutions in strengthening students' Arabic language skills through developing Arabic language learning innovations, this can be found from the increase in Arabic language learning media by adopting various forms of online games even though their implementation is under strict control by language institutions. As a consequence, this form of online game can only be used at certain times and in certain places, for example in language laboratories (Suwarno, 2022).

The existence of modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia as one of the Islamic boarding school-based educational institutions by adopting various modern learning typologies has presented a unique learning paradigm which in turn has practical implications for the learning process faced by the students there. In relation to Arabic language learning in modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, it is interesting what Imam al-Syafi'i stated in a book entitled " *Diwan al-Imam al-Syafi'i* " that :

هم وصحبة الاستاذ و طول الزمان Facebook

It means:

O my brother, you will not gain knowledge unless you fulfill six conditions, 1) have reasoning power, must be productive, 2) be greedy in seeking knowledge, have great interest and a lot of will, 3) have sincerity including the willingness to memorize, 4) prepare funds, 5) there is a good and close relationship between educators and students, educators are not hostile and students are not defensive, 6) and provide time for it.

What Imam al-Syafi'i put forward shows the need for Arabic language learning by showing that Arabic language learning needs to be built on various clear principles and in accordance with the characteristics of an Islamic educational institution with an Islamic boarding school style, which in this case are intelligence, greed, funds, togetherness with educators, as well as long study hours. The emphasis on the role of language institutions in Arabic language learning needs to be improved, including the management of the learning environment which includes language discipline, techniques for designing learning content, learning media, the Arabic language learning process, the emphasis of educators in the learning process, learning evaluation of various activities that underlie learning so that they are able to improve the ability of students to understand and master Arabic language skills, which in this case refers to the four Arabic language skills, which in this case are listening skills (*maharah al-istima'*), speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*), reading skills (*maharah al-qira'ah*), as well as writing skills (*maharah al-kitabah*). In its later development, various Arabic language skills were developed with different emphases in line with the scientific vision promoted by each modern Islamic boarding school in Indonesia.

Various supporting factors in the role of language institutions as *language improvement centers* in strengthening the Arabic language skills of modern Islamic boarding school students in Indonesia can be seen from three aspects, in this case, 1) the existence of daily Arabic conversations in the Islamic boarding school environment, 2) lesson materials are generally in Arabic/blank books, 3) as well as Arabic language activities; Speech competitions, muhadatsah, vocabulary giving, seminars, discussions, quizzes, language games and other related activities must be maximized as an immanent potential in an effort to strengthen the role of language institutions as a locomotive for strengthening students' Arabic language skills. In relation to various inhibiting factors, which in this case consist of, 1) lack of awareness of the Arabic language among students in daily conversations, 2) the process of learning Arabic in the classroom and outside the classroom is still not optimal, 3) and the lack of facilities and learning media So this needs to be addressed by presenting solutions in the form of 1) implementing Arabic language discipline in the Islamic boarding school environment, b) implementing Arabic language interaction in the learning process inside and outside the classroom, c) as well as providing facilities and media to improve learning.

The empirical findings of this research underscore the evolving landscape of Arabic language education in Indonesia's modern Islamic boarding schools. Traditional schools have historically focused on Arabic for reading Islamic texts like the Yellow Book, while modern schools have emphasized verbal communication. However, as highlighted by scholars such as Abul Khair and Rusli Nur, there is a growing convergence in these educational approaches, driven by innovative teaching methods and an increasing openness to integrating diverse language skills. This shift is evident in institutions like Al-Junaidiyah Biru, which balances speaking skills with reading comprehension, and IMMIM Putra Makassar, which motivates students through active participation in Arabic language competitions. Such initiatives not only enhance language proficiency but also prepare students for global academic engagement. Additionally, Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo demonstrates the importance of peer-led education and continuous evaluation in fostering Arabic language mastery. The role of language institutions as central hubs for language improvement is crucial, as they provide structured programs and innovative methods to ensure comprehensive Arabic language education. These findings illustrate that modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia are effectively bridging the gap between traditional and contemporary Arabic teaching methodologies, fostering well-rounded language competencies in their students.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant advancements in Arabic language education within modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. These schools implement a variety of formal and informal Arabic language study programs, both within and beyond the classroom, to enhance students' proficiency. The comprehensive approach involves developing listening (*maharah al-istima'*), speaking (*maharah al-kalam*), reading (*maharah al-qira'ah*), and writing (*maharah al-kitabah*) skills, tailored to the scientific vision of each institution. Language institutions play a crucial role in this process by designing individualized learning programs based on students' proficiency levels, conducting regular and systematic assessments, and innovating new teaching methods in response to these evaluations. Specific examples include Al-Junaidiyah Biru's balance between verbal communication and textual comprehension, and IMMIM Putra Makassar's emphasis on active participation in Arabic language competitions, which effectively motivate students and enhance their language skills. The broader implications of these findings suggest that modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia are successfully integrating traditional and contemporary approaches to Arabic education, fostering well-rounded language competencies that prepare students for global academic engagement. Future research could further explore the long-term impacts of these integrated teaching methods on students' academic and professional success. Additionally, examining the effectiveness of specific innovative techniques, such as the Mumtaz Method and peer-led education models, in different educational contexts could provide valuable insights for enhancing Arabic language education globally.

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