THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF STUDENTS TO SPEAK ARABIC AT IAI AL-KHAIRAT PAMEKASAN

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Abstract
This study aims to describe the phenomenon of the Arabic language environment on campus and analyze its influence on the improvement of speaking skills (maharah al-kalam) of students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a location in one of the Islamic universities in Java. The research subjects consisted of 25 fourth-semester students, two language coaches, and one coordinator of the language environment program. Data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions drawn. The validity of the data is strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques. The results of the study show that the Arabic language environment on campus has a significant impact on improving students' speaking skills. Activities such as Arabic Day, muhadatsah, and nadi al-lughah increase confidence, fluency in speaking, and the accuracy of students' language structure. However, several obstacles were found such as the lack of discipline in the use of Arabic and the lack of supporting facilities. Overall, this study confirms that a consistently designed language environment can create a communicative, interactive, and effective learning atmosphere in improving students' speaking skills.
Keywords: Arabic language environment, speaking ability, maharah al-kalam, language learning, higher education

Abstrak
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan fenomena lingkungan bahasa Arab di kampus serta menganalisis pengaruhnya terhadap peningkatan kemampuan berbicara (maharah al-kalam) mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan lokasi di salah satu universitas Islam di Jawa. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas 25 mahasiswa semester IV, dua dosen pembina bahasa, dan satu koordinator program lingkungan bahasa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan. Validitas data diperkuat melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lingkungan bahasa Arab di kampus memiliki dampak signifikan terhadap peningkatan kemampuan berbicara mahasiswa. Kegiatan seperti Arabic Day, muhadatsah, dan nadi al-lughah meningkatkan kepercayaan diri, kelancaran berbicara, serta ketepatan struktur bahasa mahasiswa. Meskipun demikian, ditemukan beberapa kendala seperti kurangnya disiplin penggunaan

bahasa Arab dan minimnya fasilitas pendukung. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa lingkungan bahasa yang dirancang secara konsisten dapat menciptakan atmosfer pembelajaran yang komunikatif, interaktif, dan efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci: *lingkungan bahasa Arab, kemampuan berbicara, maharah al-kalam, pembelajaran bahasa, pendidikan tinggi*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability (maharah al-kalam) is one of the main skills that must be mastered by students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program because this skill is an indicator of their ability to apply linguistic theory in the context of real communication. However, various findings show that most students still experience obstacles in expressing their ideas orally using Arabic. Various factors also contribute to this condition, including limited practice opportunities, lack of a conducive language environment, and learning methods that are still predominantly oriented towards theory and memorization. In foreign language education, the theory of second language acquisition emphasizes the importance of intensive exposure to the target language. Krashen (1982) explains that language acquisition takes place optimally when learners obtain comprehensible linguistic input in an environment that supports communicative practices. The language environment serves as a natural forum for students to practice speaking spontaneously without rigid academic pressure. This makes the language environment a strategic factor in the development of oral communication competencies.

In various Islamic campuses in Indonesia, the development of the Arabic language environment has become a flagship program to improve students' speaking skills. The implementation is diverse, such as the organization of Arabic Day, the establishment of language areas, daily muhadatsah activities, scientific munaqasyah, and extracurricular programs such as nasyid or Arabic speeches. However, the effectiveness of the program is highly dependent on the consistency of implementation, institutional support, and the involvement of the entire academic community. In addition to structural factors, psychological aspects such as shyness, fear of being wrong, and lack of confidence are also often obstacles for students. A good language environment must be able to overcome these barriers through the creation of a fun, supportive, and interactive learning atmosphere.

The language environment (al-bī'ah al-lughawiyyah) is understood as a social and academic situation that allows a person to use the target language in everyday interactions. Brown (2000) emphasized that the language environment is one of the most influential external factors in the acquisition of a second language. In the context of Arabic language learning, this environment includes formal and non-formal activities that provide opportunities for students to practice speaking, listening, and thinking in Arabic. The language environment is not limited to physical spaces such as dormitories or specific areas, but also encompasses policies, academic cultures, as well as social practices that encourage the use of Arabic as a primary means of communication.

The Input Hypothesis Theory put forward by Krashen (1982) asserts that learners require slightly higher input than their current abilities (i+1). The language environment provides such exposure through daily dialogue, academic discussions, and other informal activities. Meanwhile, Swain (1985) through the Output Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of active language production. Activities such as muhadatsah, khitabah, and munaqasyah provide space for students to produce language outputs that help improve accuracy and fluency.

Motivation also plays an important role in language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguish between instrumental and integrative motivation that can both be reinforced through a lively and interactive language environment. Lecturers, tutors, and peers have a great contribution to creating a supportive social ecosystem. Hidayat (2020) stated that positive social interaction can encourage students to speak more actively without fear. On the other hand, a rigid and passive environment actually hinders the development of speech skills.

Various forms of implementation of the language environment that are commonly found on campus include the establishment of Arabic Areas, the organization of Language Day, routine activities such as daily muhadatsah and nadi al-lughah, as well as extracurricular activities such as debates, dramas, discussion clubs, and Arabic language competitions. Rahmawati's research (2021) shows that these activities are effective in increasing the frequency of Arabic use, as long as the implementation is carried out consistently with the support of the institute's policies.

The language environment basically includes two main forms, namely formal and non-formal environments. The formal environment includes structured learning in the classroom, language labs, as well as other academic activities that have a clear pedagogical purpose (Hedge, 2000). Nonformal environments include activities that allow for the natural use of language outside of the classroom, such as everyday conversations, discussions, debates, or theater performances (Krashen, 1985). Tarigan (2008) emphasizes three components that must be present in an effective language environment, namely exposure, interaction, and motivation. These components are interrelated and are the main determinants of learners' success in mastering the language.

In the context of Arabic, the ability to speak requires not only fluency, but also accuracy in pronouncing Arabic phonemes, which is often a challenge for non-Arabic speakers (Hasyim, 2018). Brown (2001) emphasized that speaking involves linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects, such as intonation, facial expressions, and the social context that accompanies communication. Therefore, an environment that supports active language practice has a great influence on the development of students' speaking skills.

Vygotsky (1978) through the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) emphasized that language development takes place more effectively through interaction with more proficient individuals. This means that a communicative campus language environment, with the involvement of lecturers and tutors as language models, can

accelerate the development of students' speaking skills. Nurhayati's research (2017) supports this by showing that students who actively participate in Arabic language programs on campus have better speaking skills than those who only rely on classroom learning.

Campuses as academic communities have great potential to become an effective language environment. Chaer (2009) states that campuses that develop language culture can give birth to an active community of learners. Activities such as Arabic debates, speeches, dramas, and the use of Arabic in official information and communication boards can strengthen the linguistic atmosphere. Meanwhile, Rahman (2020) emphasized the importance of supporting facilities such as language laboratories, audiovisual media, and learning technology to enrich students' language experiences. Strategies to create an effective language environment include the implementation of campus policies that support the use of Arabic in academic activities, the development of extracurricular activities, the use of digital media such as vlogs and podcasts, and creative collaboration between lecturers and students. Hasan (2021) emphasized that the success of the strategy is highly determined by the consistency of implementation and the active role of lecturers as language models.

The main goal of learning Arabic in college is not only the mastery of grammatical rules, but the ability to communicate effectively. The language environment is a form of implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach which emphasizes language as a means of communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Littlewood (1981) added that language learning will be meaningful if it provides opportunities for students to engage in real communication experiences. Therefore, an active campus language environment is a determining factor in fostering language habits and improving students' speaking skills naturally and sustainably.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the aim of describing the phenomenon of the Arabic language environment and its influence on students' speaking ability. This study was carried out in the Arabic Language Education Study Program at one of the Islamic universities in Java which has a language environment development program as part of learning. The research subjects consisted of 25 fourth semester students, two language coaches, and one language environment program coordinator who were directly involved in the planning and implementation of language activities on campus. The selection of subjects was purposively conducted based on their involvement and relevance to Arabic-speaking activities.

Data collection is carried out through several key techniques. Field observation is used to see firsthand the activities of the language environment such as the implementation of Arabic Day, daily muhadatsah sessions, and nadi al-lughah activities which are a forum for student speaking practice. Through this observation, the researcher obtained a clear picture of student participation, interaction dynamics, and consistency of program

implementation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the views of students and lecturers about the effectiveness of language environment activities, supporting factors, and obstacles they face in an effort to improve their speaking skills. Documentation is used as a complement, including activity notes, program schedules, implementation guidelines, and the results of the evaluation of students' speaking skills available in the study program.

The data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The data reduction stage is carried out by sorting, selecting, and organizing important information that is relevant to the focus of the research. The presentation of data is carried out through the preparation of narrative descriptions and thematic categorization so that the relationship between findings is easier to understand. Conclusions are drawn continuously during the research process to find the patterns, meanings, and implications of the data that has been analyzed. The validity of the data is strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques, namely comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure the validity of the information. This approach allows research to describe phenomena comprehensively and in-depth according to the objectives of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the existence of an Arabic language environment on campus has a significant influence on the improvement of speaking skills of students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program. The systematically built language environment, such as the implementation of Arabic Day, muhadatsah, and nadi al-lughah activities, has provided ample space for students to practice speaking actively and naturally. Based on the results of observations, it can be seen that the frequency of Arabic is used in daily interactions in various areas of the campus, including dormitories, classrooms, and public areas that have been designated as Arabic-speaking areas. This phenomenon shows that the more often students are exposed to and use Arabic, the greater their chances of obtaining fluency and accuracy.

Through observation activities, it was found that students who were active in the language environment showed significant changes in speaking skills. Not only are they more fluent in conveying ideas, but they also show improvements in sentence structure, vocabulary mastery, and proper use of intonation and expression. These changes reflect the theory of second language acquisition put forward by Krashen (1982), which asserts that comprehensible linguistic input plays an important role in the process of language acquisition. In other words, the more students receive meaningful exposure to Arabic in the context of real communication, the more effective the language acquisition process will be.

The results of in-depth interviews reinforce these findings. Most students stated that they felt more confident and motivated to speak Arabic after regularly participating in

language environment activities. They assessed daily muhadatsah and language day activities as an effective forum to enrich vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and reduce fear of mistakes. Students also admit that interaction with peers in an Arabic-speaking environment encourages them to dare to try to speak without feeling pressured by grammatical errors. This is in line with the theory of the Output Hypothesis put forward by Swain (1985), which asserts that the active use of language (output) is important to strengthen language mastery and increase awareness of the correct form of language.

In addition, the language coach lecturer and language environment program coordinator also emphasized that students who were actively involved in Arabic language activities showed significant progress in speaking skills compared to passive students. They observed improvements in fluency in speech, grammatical mastery, and accuracy in the use of sentence structure. This condition shows that active involvement in the language environment plays an important role in building students' communicative skills, which is the main goal of foreign language learning based on a communicative approach (Communicative Language Teaching).

However, this study also found several obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of the language environment. Some students still show a lack of discipline in using Arabic outside of official activities. They tend to return to using Indonesian when interacting informally outside of the activity schedule. This is due to the weak supervision and evaluation system for the implementation of language rules in the campus environment. In addition, the lack of supporting facilities such as bulletin boards, educational posters, and visual communication media in Arabic is also an obstacle in strengthening the linguistic atmosphere on campus. These factors cause the intensity of exposure to Arabic to be not optimal for all students.

These findings are in line with the opinion of Brown (2000) who emphasizes that the language environment does not only depend on the existence of physical space, but also on the social atmosphere that supports the practice of communication in a sustainable manner. In other words, the success of the language environment depends on the consistency of policy implementation and the involvement of the entire academic community in creating a natural and supportive communicative atmosphere. If students do not feel compelled to use Arabic in various contexts, then the language environment loses its main function as a means of linguistic habituation.

From a psychological perspective, the results of the study also highlight the importance of affective aspects such as confidence, motivation, and social support in the success of learning to speak. Some students revealed that they initially felt awkward or afraid of making mistakes when speaking Arabic. However, after participating in muhadatsah activities regularly, they became more courageous because the atmosphere created was supportive and free from negative judgment. This is in line with the theory of language learning motivation put forward by Gardner and Lambert (1972), which distinguishes between instrumental motivation (the drive to derive practical benefits from language)

and integrative motivation (the desire to be part of a community of language users). A good language environment serves to reinforce both types of motivation simultaneously.

From the results of the interviews, lecturers and language coaches also emphasized the importance of role models from teachers and campus managers. They said that when lecturers consistently use Arabic in academic and administrative communication, students are more easily motivated to imitate. On the other hand, if lecturers and staff rarely use Arabic, students will consider the use of Arabic only as a formality in certain activities. Therefore, institutional policies that support the use of the Arabic language as a whole are an important factor in creating consistency in the language environment.

Another aspect found in this study is the influence of social interaction on the formation of language habits. Based on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), students can learn more effectively through interaction with individuals who are more competent in the target language. In this context, more advanced students act as scaffolding for their peers, helping them overcome difficulties in pronouncing or understanding Arabic expressions. This process makes the language environment a collaborative space where students support each other in learning to speak. This research also shows that the language environment not only plays a role as a forum for linguistic practice, but also functions to form a positive attitude towards Arabic. Students who are actively involved in language activities tend to show enthusiasm and a sense of belonging to the language they are learning. They began to associate Arabic not only as an academic course, but also as part of Islamic identity and culture. This strengthens their intrinsic motivation to keep practicing and improve their speaking skills.

Another obstacle that arises is the lack of Arabic-language digital media that supports learning outside the classroom. Most students still rely on face-to-face interaction in formal activities. In fact, the use of media such as podcasts, learning videos, and Arabic-language conversation applications can expand linguistic exposure and provide opportunities for independent practice. Therefore, the development of digital-based learning technology is an important recommendation to strengthen the language environment on campus. Overall, the results of this study show that the success of the language environment is highly determined by three main factors, as stated by Tarigan (2008): exposure, interaction, and motivation. Exposure allows students to hear and understand Arabic in a variety of contexts, interaction allows them to use the language actively, and motivation is a driver for them to continue participating. These three factors work synergistically in creating a meaningful and sustainable learning process.

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that a well-designed and consistently implemented Arabic environment has a positive impact on improving students' speaking skills. The environment not only functions as a means of linguistic training, but also as a medium for the formation of students' academic, social, and cultural character. The success of this program is highly dependent on institutional support, active participation of students, and innovation in creating communicative and fun activities.

The recommendations of this study emphasize the importance of strengthening language campus policies, improving Arabic-language communication facilities, and utilizing digital technology to expand language practice spaces. Thus, the language environment can play a more effective role as a bridge between theory and practice in learning Arabic.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the existence of an Arabic environment on campus has a significant influence on the improvement of students' speaking skills (maharah al-kalam). A language environment that is planned, consistent, and supported by the entire academic community is able to create a communicative atmosphere that encourages students to actively use Arabic in various academic and social contexts. Activities such as Arabic Day, daily muhadatsah, and nadi al-lughah have proven to be effective in increasing confidence, fluency in speaking, and the accuracy of students' sentence structure. Through continuous interaction, students obtain balanced language inputs and outputs, as described by second language acquisition theory (Krashen, 1982) and output theory (Swain, 1985).

In addition to providing linguistic improvement, the language environment also plays a role in forming a positive attitude towards the Arabic language. Students who are actively involved show higher motivation to continue learning and hone their speaking skills. Psychological factors such as confidence and social support from peers and lecturers also strengthen the learning process. However, this study also found several obstacles, such as the lack of discipline in the use of Arabic outside of formal activities, the lack of supporting facilities, and weak supervision of the implementation of language policies. Overall, the results of this study confirm that the language environment is not only a means of linguistic practice, but also a medium for the formation of students' academic and social character. To maximize its benefits, institutional commitment, program consistency, and digital technology integration are needed in expanding language practice spaces. Thus, the Arabic language environment on campus can function optimally as an applicative, fun, and sustainable learning vehicle in improving students' speaking competence.

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