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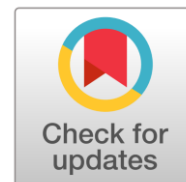


# The Role of Arabic Language Division in Environmental Management to Enhance Arabic Language Skills

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose** - This study examines how Arabic Language Division (Language Division) at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa), with a total of 60 student participants, addresses this issue by integrating environmental management strategies to enhance students' Arabic language skills.

**Design/methodology/approach** - Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, the research draws on interviews, observations, and document analysis to uncover the pivotal role of programs such as language competitions, daily inspections, and a structured reward-punishment system. These initiatives, including certificates, prizes, and educationally oriented punishments, have proven effective in fostering motivation, participation, and proficiency in maharah kalam (speaking skills) and maharah kitabah (writing skills).

**Findings/results** - The findings highlight the transformative impact of the Arabic Language Division in creating a living Arabic-speaking ecosystem by embedding structured practices such as daily Arabic-only communication zones, mandatory speech sessions (muhadharah), peer-to-peer language mentoring, and a reward-punishment system. These initiatives significantly increased students' daily use of Arabic in both formal and informal contexts, improving their fluency, vocabulary retention, and confidence in real-life communication.

**Originality/value** - Bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical application. To sustain and scale these efforts, the study recommends the integration of technology-based programs to complement traditional methods and foster innovation. This research offers a replicable model for other institutions seeking to revolutionize Arabic language education.

**Paper type** - Research paper

**Keywords:** Arabic language division, Environmental management, Reward-Punishment, Arabic language skills.

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## Introduction

Language education faces a silent crisis: a growing gap between teaching strategies and the dynamic needs of modern learners. While the importance of creating immersive language environments is widely acknowledged, many institutions fail to bridge the divide between traditional pedagogies and innovative management



strategies (Bizami, Tasir, and Kew 2023; Chigbu, Ngwevu, and Jojo 2023; Rapanta et al. 2021). This disconnection results in students who memorize grammatical rules but struggle to engage in meaningful communication, a scenario that undermines the very purpose of language education (S. Almelhes 2024). The challenge is further compounded in institutions where Arabic a language of both sacred and academic significance is taught within rigid frameworks that do not fully capitalize on the potential of environmental immersion and motivational techniques (S. A. Almelhes and Alsaiani 2024).

At Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa), a bold and ongoing solution has emerged through the innovative role of Arabic Language Division, which currently implements structured language programs and continues to develop them through consistent environmental management strategies. Unlike conventional language programs that rely solely on classroom instruction, Arabic Language Division integrates environmental management principles with structured language activities, creating an ecosystem where Arabic is not only learned but lived. Programs such as daily inspections, language competitions, and reward-punishment systems have redefined the way students interact with Arabic, transforming it from a subject of study into a medium of expression. This comprehensive approach addresses the shortcomings of traditional methodologies by fostering a community where every interaction reinforces language skills (Masnun, Segaf Baharun, and Sultan Abdus Syakur 2025).

The effective acquisition of Arabic language skills has long been a central concern in Islamic educational institutions, particularly in pesantren, which play a pivotal role in fostering linguistic and spiritual development (Solehudin 2024). However, many institutions still face challenges in creating a supportive environment for language acquisition, often hindered by the lack of structured strategies that integrate educational management with linguistic goals (Solehudin and Arisandi 2024). Previous studies have explored various approaches to enhancing Arabic proficiency, such as immersive language environments and traditional teaching methods (Solehudin and Nur Hanifansyah 2024). While these efforts have shown promise, they often neglect the critical role of environmental management in sustaining long-term language use and motivation among students.

Several studies have explored the management of Arabic-speaking environments in enhancing linguistic skills across various educational contexts. Maghfiroh (2018) examined the implementation of Arabic language environments at Al-Multazam Islamic Boarding School, revealing that formal and informal strategies significantly improved students' language skills by providing consistent practice opportunities (Maghfiroh 2018). Similarly, Said (2023) analyzed programs like International Day, weekly speeches (*muhadharah usbu'iyah*), and language divisions (*qismu al-lughah*) in a Madrasah Aliyah, demonstrating their positive impact on students' speaking abilities through structured activities and evaluations (Sayuthi Said 2023).

Alizar et al. (2023) investigated the structured management of Arabic language environments in a pesantren, highlighting effective planning, organization, monitoring, and the use of language activities, teacher role models, and reward-punishment systems as key factors in fostering linguistic proficiency (Alizar, Mulyanto, and Nuril Mufidah 2023). While not directly focusing on Arabic, Bulhayat and Hanifansyah (2021) emphasized the importance of innovative learning media in improving the overall effectiveness of education (Bulhayat, Hanifansyah, and Hakim 2021), including language learning. Furthermore, Hanifansyah and Mahmudah (2024) explored the use of communicative strategies to enhance vocabulary mastery, finding that such approaches effectively improved students' ability to express themselves and interact in Arabic (Hanifansyah and Mahmudah 2024). Collectively, these studies emphasize the importance of structured environments, innovative strategies, and interactive methodologies in supporting Arabic language acquisition in diverse educational settings.

This study focuses on the Arabic Language Division (Language Division) at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa), which employs unique strategies to address these challenges. By implementing a structured reward-punishment system alongside routine language-based activities, Arabic Language Division provides a comprehensive approach to fostering *maharah kalam* (speaking skills) and *maharah kitabah* (writing skills) (Fauzie Shidiq et al. 2024). The central research question investigates how Arabic Language Division integrates environmental management principles into its programs to enhance Arabic language skills effectively.

Building upon previous research on language learning environments, this study identifies a significant gap: the limited exploration of how management strategies influence Arabic language acquisition in Islamic boarding schools. This research aims to contribute to the existing literature by analyzing the practical and theoretical implications of Arabic Language Division 's initiatives. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of adopting technology-driven programs to ensure the sustainability of these efforts, thereby addressing the limitations of traditional methodologies. By bridging the gap between environmental management and language pedagogy, this study highlights the transformative potential of Arabic Language Division in shaping a conducive Arabic-speaking environment.



## Method

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive research design to explore the role of Arabic Language Division in enhancing Arabic language skills through environmental management strategies (Creswell and Creswell 2020). The research is grounded in the theoretical framework of language acquisition and environmental learning, which emphasizes the importance of creating structured, immersive environments for effective language development. The selection of Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa) as the research site is deliberate, given its distinctive approach to integrating linguistic and educational management through Arabic Language Division. The focus is on analyzing programs and activities designed to foster *maharah kalam* (speaking skills) and *maharah kitabah* (writing skills), with the Arabic Language Division serving as the primary unit of analysis.

Primary data for this study were collected from a total of 60 students, along with teachers and Arabic Language Division administrators, using interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. The students were selected to represent various proficiency levels, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of Arabic Language Division's impact across different groups. Secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, program reports, and relevant literature on Arabic language education and environmental management.

Data collection involved a systematic process, beginning with identifying key informants and programs related to Arabic Language Division. Semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions, while observations provided contextual insights into the practical implementation of *Arabic Language Division* strategies (O'Leary 2020). Document analysis complemented these methods by offering a comprehensive understanding of institutional policies and their alignment with the study's objectives. The collected data were analyzed thematically, enabling the identification of patterns and key themes that highlight the role of Arabic Language Division in fostering a supportive Arabic-speaking environment. This methodological approach ensures a holistic understanding of the research problem and supports the development of well-grounded conclusions and recommendations. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, which includes familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This method enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns related to the role of *Qismu Lughah* in fostering Arabic language skills. Triangulation was applied at two levels: Data triangulation, by collecting information from different sources students, teachers, and *Qismu Lughah* administrators to validate findings across perspectives. Methodological triangulation, by combining interviews, direct observations, and document analysis to ensure consistency and strengthen the credibility of the results.

This integrated approach ensured a holistic understanding of the research problem and minimized potential biases, contributing to the development of well-founded conclusions and actionable recommendations.

## Result and Discussion

Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa) has long been recognized as a leading institution in Arabic language education (Baharun and Hanifansyah 2024). Through its integrated approach encompassing both religious and formal education, Dalwa instills the importance of Arabic as the primary medium of communication in students' daily lives (Muhamad Solehudin, Nurhanifansyah, and Syaheed Kholid 2024). A key factor in this success is the role of Arabic Language Division, which is specifically tasked with creating a supportive Arabic-speaking environment (Hanifansyah and Mahmudah 2024). Arabic Language Division manages various programs, including daily inspections, language competitions, and weekly discussion sessions, which not only encourage the use of Arabic but also enhance students' *maharah kalam* (speaking skills) and *maharah kitabah* (writing skills) (Masnun, Hanifansyah, and Khalid 2024). By implementing a structured reward-punishment system, Arabic Language Division ensures students remain motivated to actively and consistently communicate in Arabic. This strategy lays a strong foundation for the development of Arabic language skills, seamlessly integrating linguistic practice into students' daily routines at Dalwa.

Complementing the language environment management strategies implemented by Arabic Language Division, mnemonics offer an innovative technique to facilitate students' retention and understanding of Arabic language material (Mahmudah, Nurhanifansyah, and Khalid 2024). Mnemonics leverage memory aids such as acronyms and creative phrases to help students recall vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and syntactical rules more effectively (Nur Hanifansyah, Mahmudah, and Syakur 2024). Within the Arabic Language Division framework, mnemonic techniques can be integrated into language competitions, daily inspections, and other educational activities to create a more interactive and engaging learning experience. Research indicates that the combination of mnemonic strategies with a structured Arabic-speaking environment not only enhances information retention but also boosts students' confidence in actively using Arabic. Thus, the integration of mnemonics into Arabic Language Division's initiatives at Dalwa not only complements its language environment management efforts but also maximizes overall learning outcomes, fostering deeper engagement and long-term proficiency in Arabic.

### Insights from Interviews with Arabic Language Division Teachers

Teachers from Arabic Language Division emphasized that their role extends beyond classroom instruction to ensure that students consistently use Arabic in their daily lives. One senior teacher remarked, *"The role of Arabic Language Division is not confined to teaching Arabic but also involves fostering its use in everyday interactions."*



*Programs like daily inspections and language competitions have successfully built a habit of speaking Arabic among students, which was previously a challenge.” The teacher also highlighted the effectiveness of the reward-punishment system, stating, “Students are motivated to use Arabic because they know rewards await them, while punishments, such as additional vocabulary tasks or sentence construction exercises, serve as valuable learning tools.”*

### **Perspectives from Students**

Students expressed that Arabic Language Division programs significantly impacted their confidence and fluency in Arabic. One student shared, *“Initially, I struggled to speak Arabic, but through programs like weekly muhadharah (speeches), I became more confident. The reward-punishment system also helped me stay disciplined in using Arabic. Even when I made mistakes, the punishments, such as rewriting vocabulary, felt more like learning opportunities.”* Another student noted, *“Using Arabic outside the classroom helped me quickly learn new vocabulary. We also help each other when someone faces difficulty, which makes learning collaborative and less intimidating.”*

### **Insights from Arabic Language Division Administrators**

Administrators of Arabic Language Division shared their strategic approach to creating an Arabic-speaking environment. One administrator explained, *“Our efforts are not only about support but also about encouraging students to speak Arabic at all times. One of the main challenges is the varied proficiency levels among students, which we address by tailoring activities to different skill levels. For example, beginner students engage in simple conversational drills, while advanced students participate in debates.”* The administrator also acknowledged the potential of technology in enhancing their efforts, stating, *“Integrating learning apps or digital tools could extend our programs and help students practice beyond structured activities.”*

### **Holistic Analysis and Discussion**

The findings highlight that Arabic Language Division has successfully established an immersive and supportive Arabic-speaking environment through its innovative programs. The reward-punishment system emerged as a pivotal strategy, not only motivating students to actively engage in Arabic communication but also fostering discipline and accountability. This aligns with Krashen’s (1985) input hypothesis, which underscores the need for meaningful and comprehensible input in second language acquisition.

Additionally, the integration of differentiated instruction ensures inclusivity, allowing students of varying proficiency levels to benefit from tailored activities. Beginner students reported progress through guided drills, while advanced learners found value in more challenging tasks like debates. This approach echoes Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, emphasizing the importance of scaffolding and peer interaction in language learning.

The interviews also revealed the untapped potential of technology in further enhancing the programs of Arabic Language Division. Administrators and teachers

agreed that digital tools, such as language learning apps, online vocabulary games, or virtual competitions, could provide scalable and sustainable solutions for extending language practice beyond physical environments. This perspective aligns with recent research advocating the integration of technology to complement traditional language instruction.

Overall, the qualitative findings demonstrate that the initiatives of Arabic Language Division not only enhance students' linguistic proficiency but also create a community where Arabic is embedded in daily routines. These strategies provide a replicable model for other institutions aiming to establish a comprehensive language-learning ecosystem. However, the study also highlights areas for improvement, particularly the need to address resource limitations and further explore the integration of technology to sustain and expand the impact of Arabic Language Division.

## **Discussion**

### **The Role of Arabic Language Division in Managing the Arabic-Speaking Environment**

The findings of this study reinforce and expand upon prior research that emphasizes the critical role of structured environments in language acquisition. Like the studies of Maghfiroh (2018) and Said (2023), this research highlights the effectiveness of immersive programs such as language competitions, daily inspections, and *Arabic Language Division*-supervised activities in fostering consistent Arabic use among students. The reward-punishment system employed by Arabic Language Division is particularly noteworthy, as it not only encourages active participation but also addresses challenges in maintaining long-term motivation. Unlike earlier studies, which largely focused on individual programs or traditional teaching methods, this study integrates environmental management principles to create a more cohesive and systematic framework (Pauziah Pauziah and Salamuddin Salamuddin 2024).

By linking these strategies to well-established language acquisition theories, such as Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis, the study demonstrates how Arabic Language Division effectively bridges theoretical constructs with practical applications. Rewards such as certificates and prizes encourage positive reinforcement, while educational punishments, like additional assignments, provide constructive feedback that aligns with pedagogical objectives. This structured approach ensures not only linguistic engagement but also personal discipline, which is less emphasized in prior studies.

### **Impact on Students' Language Skills**

This study supports the findings of earlier research, such as those by Said (2023) and Hanifansyah and Mahmudah (2024), by confirming that immersive programs significantly enhance students' *maharah kalam* (speaking skills) and *maharah kitabah* (writing skills). Observations and interviews with 60 students revealed that regular practice, coupled with structured support from Arabic Language Division, led to notable improvements in fluency, confidence, and expressive ability in Arabic. The interview



process was guided by four main indicators: the frequency of Arabic usage in daily communication; the students' confidence in speaking Arabic during peer interactions and public activities; their ability to construct grammatically correct sentences in spontaneous conversations; and their engagement in writing tasks, particularly in language competitions. These indicators were designed to assess the extent to which the *Qismu Lughah* programs contributed to enhancing students' speaking (*maharah kalam*) and writing (*maharah kitabah*) skills. Writing assignments, often integrated into thematic competitions, provided students with practical opportunities to express themselves in written Arabic, thereby reinforcing their overall linguistic proficiency.

Building on the communicative strategies identified by Hanifansyah and Mahmudah (2024), this study emphasizes the integration of these strategies within an environmentally managed framework. The daily inspections and Arabic-only zones enforced by Arabic Language Division ensure that students are consistently exposed to the language, creating a habitual use of Arabic in both formal and informal settings. This practical application extends beyond classroom learning, fostering a holistic language-learning ecosystem.

### **Challenges in Implementation**

While the role of Arabic Language Division has been largely effective, several challenges align with findings from previous research, such as those by Alizar et al. (2023), regarding the limitations of resources and variations in student proficiency levels. Administrators cited the absence of sufficient technology-based tools as a barrier to scaling and sustaining these programs. Unlike the innovative strategies for media development explored by Bulhayat and Hanifansyah (2021), this study finds that the lack of digital support, such as mobile applications or online platforms, limits opportunities for independent practice and self-assessment outside structured activities.

Additionally, disparities in students' initial proficiency levels present challenges for equitable engagement. While the reward-punishment system is effective in motivating participation, students with lower starting proficiency may require additional support to benefit fully from the programs.

### **Recommendations for Future Strategies**

To address these challenges, the study recommends integrating technology-based enhancements, such as mobile apps, virtual competitions, and digital learning platforms, to complement traditional methods. Field findings revealed that the *Qismu Lughah* program primarily supports two key aspects of Arabic language proficiency: *maharah kalam* (speaking skills)—through structured daily conversation practices and speech competitions—and *maharah kitabah* (writing skills)—through regular writing tasks and vocabulary enforcement activities. Students showed marked improvements in fluency and sentence construction, especially when engaged in peer-teaching and speech assignments (*muhadharah*).

However, the findings also uncovered notable weaknesses. For instance, while the reward-punishment system increased motivation, it occasionally led to surface-level compliance rather than deep internalization of linguistic principles. Additionally, students with lower initial proficiency levels struggled to keep up with more advanced activities, suggesting a need for differentiated support. The absence of digital tools further limited personalized reinforcement and follow-up outside structured sessions.

Drawing from Said's (2023) insights on program evaluation, implementing a robust monitoring and feedback system is crucial to ensure the adaptability of *Qismu Lughah's* initiatives. Targeted interventions, such as remedial classes, differentiated tasks, and scaffolding support, could bridge the gaps in skill level and sustain motivation more effectively.

By addressing these practical limitations and building on observed field strengths, Arabic Language Division program has strong potential to serve as a replicable model for Arabic language education in Islamic boarding schools. Its combination of environmental language management, community-based practice, and evolving pedagogical strategies marks a significant contribution to the broader discourse on language acquisition and educational innovation.

## Conclusion

Speaking environment at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa). Through structured programs such as language competitions, daily inspections, and the implementation of a reward-punishment system, Arabic Language Division effectively fosters *maharah kalam* (speaking skills) and *maharah kitabah* (writing skills) among students. The findings underscore the significance of integrating environmental management principles with language acquisition strategies, offering a replicable model for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to enhance Arabic language proficiency.

This research builds on prior studies by demonstrating how immersive environments, combined with motivational strategies, can address key challenges in language learning. The innovative use of a reward-punishment system provides a practical and sustainable approach to maintaining student engagement and fostering a conducive Arabic-speaking environment.

However, this study is not without limitations. From a fieldwork perspective, the sampling of interview participants was limited to 60 students and a small number of teachers and administrators, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across all proficiency levels or sub-units within the *pesantren*. Additionally, while the interview guide was developed based on relevant literature, instrument validation was conducted informally through expert discussion without formal pilot testing, which may have influenced the consistency of responses.



The dynamic environment of the *pesantren* also posed challenges, such as interruptions during observations and limited time for follow-up interviews, which may have affected the depth of data collected. Future research could benefit from broader participant inclusion, stratified sampling based on language levels, and the use of validated instruments to enhance reliability. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to explore how the strategies of *Qismu Lughah* affect language acquisition over extended periods.

## Implication

The findings of this study have significant implications for Arabic language education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools. By addressing the identified challenges and adopting the suggested recommendations, institutions can build more effective and sustainable language programs, contributing to the broader discourse on language pedagogy and environmental management. This research thus provides a foundation for further exploration and innovation in the field of Arabic language education.

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