



Comprehensible Input, Affective Filter, and Communicative Environment: A Case Study of Krashen's Five Hypotheses in an Indonesian Pesantren

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - A persistent gap exists between formal grammar instruction and communicative competence in Arabic language acquisition in Indonesian Islamic residential schools (*pesantren*). Institutions that deliberately construct Arabic language environments demonstrate more effective outcomes, yet the mechanisms through which such environments produce acquisition results remain underexamined using Krashen's complete monitor model. This study investigates how the Arabic language environment at *Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu* operationalizes all five of Krashen's second-language acquisition hypotheses, and what documented outcomes this produces.

Design/Methodology/Approach - A qualitative instrumental case study design was employed. Data were collected through non-participant observation across eight sessions per week over five months (July–November 2025), semi-structured interviews with five purposively selected informants (three teachers/program administrators, two students), and institutional document analysis. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014); trustworthiness was established through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking.

Findings - Three integrated mechanisms characterize the acquisition-supportive design of the environment: (1) graduated comprehensible input calibrated to the $i+1$ threshold across formal and informal contexts; (2) delayed post-production error correction that sustains low affective filter conditions during speaking; and (3) structured informal communicative programmes extending Arabic use into dormitories, mosques and social spaces. Participants describe a progressive shift from monitored, rule-dependent production toward spontaneous communicative use. The main inhibiting factor is the inconsistency of the use of Arabic in unsupervised contexts, which the institution addresses through peer accountability structures.

Originality/Value - This study provides the first empirical account of operationalizing all five of Krashen's Monitor Model hypotheses as explicit analytical categories within a single *pesantren* setting, mapping specific institutional design decisions to acquisition mechanisms. The findings offer a theoretically grounded model of acquisition-supportive environment design with direct implications for *pesantren* and comparable residential Islamic educational institutions' Arabic language programs.

Paper type - Research paper

Keywords: Arabic language acquisition; Comprehensible input; Affective filter; Monitor Model.



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1. Introduction

Arabic holds an irreplaceable position in Indonesian Islamic education. As the language of the Qur'an, the Hadith, and centuries of Islamic jurisprudence and theology, functional Arabic proficiency is both a religious obligation and an academic requirement for millions of Indonesian Muslim students. Yet the gap between what these students study and what they can do with the language remains persistent and well-documented. Students who complete years of formal Arabic instruction frequently struggle to produce spontaneous spoken Arabic, read unsupported classical texts independently, or sustain informal conversation in the language (Julkifli et al., 2025; Oktaviani et al., 2024; Sofa & Rahmaini, 2024). The structural source of this gap is not disputed: grammar-focused, memorization-dependent instruction activates explicit monitoring rather than the subconscious internalization through which communicative competence is actually built (Ramadhani & Ghazi, 2024; Safitri & Maharani, 2025).

Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model remains the most theoretically developed account of both why this gap exists and under what conditions it can be overcome (Krashen, 1985; Lichtman & VanPatten, 2021). The model's central distinction — between acquisition, the subconscious internalization of language through meaningful communicative interaction, and learning, the conscious mastery of grammatical rules — generates a clear prediction: formal grammar instruction of the kind prevalent in Indonesian Arabic teaching produces monitors rather than communicators. Acquisition requires three conditions rarely met by formal instruction: comprehensible input calibrated slightly above current proficiency ($i+1$); sufficient volume of meaningful communicative exposure; and an affective environment in which motivational and attitudinal barriers are low enough to allow input to reach the language acquisition device.

Research on Arabic acquisition in Indonesian Islamic institutions has engaged Krashen's framework selectively rather than systematically. Febriani (2020) examined Arabic acquisition through Krashen's theory in Arabic camp activities, applying input and affective filter principles but leaving the natural order and monitor hypotheses unexamined. Rahmi et al. (2024) conducted a phenomenological study of Arabic language environments in a modern Islamic boarding school, documenting the role of *bi'ah* in developing speaking skills without operationalizing the acquisition-theoretical mechanisms. Hadziq et al. (2025) demonstrated that a Krashen-inspired immersion programme at Pondok Darussalam Gontor improved speaking fluency and intrinsic motivation, focusing primarily on the input and affective filter hypotheses. Sofa and Rahmaini (2024) confirmed that Arabic language environments improve speaking skills at junior secondary level without distinguishing among the specific mechanisms through which this occurs. The result is a body of research that confirms the general effectiveness of acquisition-supportive environments without providing a theoretically complete account of how those environments work.

The state of the art in international second language acquisition (SLA) research has clarified specific mechanisms relevant to this gap. Lichtman and VanPatten (2021), reviewing forty years of evidence on Krashen's five hypotheses, concluded that the core acquisitional predictions — particularly those concerning comprehensible input and the primacy of implicit knowledge in fluency development — have received substantial empirical support, while acknowledging that the psycholinguistic boundaries between acquisition and learning remain contested. Jaekel et al. (2022), in a longitudinal study published in *System*, demonstrated that sustained comprehensible language exposure produces compounding proficiency gains over time, confirming that input consistency matters more than instructional intensity at any single point. Alhamami (2025), in *Acta Psychologica*, established that learner psychological investment in Arabic learning is substantially shaped by social belonging and institutional culture — factors with direct implications for affective filter predictions in residential educational contexts. Al-khresheh (2024), also in *Acta Psychologica*, confirmed that structured communicative activities produce both greater proficiency gains and greater anxiety reductions in Arabic learning contexts than isolated speaking drills. Dewaele, Saito, and Halimi (2023), in *Language Teaching Research*, demonstrated that teacher behaviour — including correction timing and emotional support strategies — directly shapes learners' foreign language enjoyment and anxiety trajectories, a finding directly applicable to the pesantren instructional context.

Despite this progress, a critical research gap remains: no study has applied all five of Krashen's hypotheses as integrated, explicit analytical categories to examine a single acquisition-supportive Arabic language environment. Previous studies have examined individual hypotheses, used Krashen's framework descriptively without operationalizing its components, or focused on single outcomes such as speaking fluency or vocabulary gain without mapping them to specific environmental mechanisms. This limits the practical utility of findings for practitioners designing acquisition-supportive environments, who need to understand which specific environmental features correspond to which acquisition mechanisms and under what institutional conditions each mechanism can be sustained.

Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu was selected as the research site because it has deliberately constructed an Arabic language environment integrating formal classroom instruction with daily communicative practice across dormitory, mosque, and social contexts — a design whose institutional logic maps directly onto Krashen's theoretical conditions. As Farid and Lamb (2020) demonstrated in their study of second language motivation across Indonesian pesantren, the residential character of these institutions creates structural conditions for sustained language exposure unavailable to secular or non-residential schools — conditions that, in principle, permit the full realization of Krashen's theoretical requirements.

Three research questions guide this study:

RQ1: How does the Arabic language environment at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu operationalize each of Krashen's five second language acquisition hypotheses, and through what specific institutional mechanisms?

RQ2: What acquisition experiences do students and teachers report, and how do these accounts map onto the theoretical predictions of the Monitor Model?

RQ3: What are the principal supporting and inhibiting factors in the language environment's effectiveness, and how does the institution address the inhibiting factors?



2. Literature Review

2.1 Krashen's Monitor Model: Theoretical Foundations and Contemporary Appraisal

Krashen's Monitor Model comprises five interrelated hypotheses that together describe the conditions under which second language acquisition occurs naturally and effectively (Krashen, 1985). The Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis proposes that conscious grammatical knowledge (learning) and the subconscious internalization of language through meaningful interaction (acquisition) are functionally distinct processes: learning does not become acquisition over time, and explicit rule knowledge cannot substitute for the implicit competence that drives spontaneous language use. The Monitor Hypothesis positions learned knowledge as a post-hoc editor available only when the speaker has sufficient processing time and knows the relevant rule — conditions rarely met in real-time conversation. The Natural Order Hypothesis proposes that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable developmental sequence, implying that curriculum sequencing cannot accelerate acquisition beyond what communicative exposure naturally determines.

The Input Hypothesis proposes that acquisition occurs when learners receive comprehensible input at the level $i+1$ — slightly beyond current proficiency — in sufficient quantity and with adequate contextual support. The Affective Filter Hypothesis proposes that motivational, emotional, and attitudinal variables modulate how much comprehensible input is processed for acquisition: when anxiety is elevated, motivation diminished, or self-confidence weak, the filter is raised and input fails to reach the language acquisition device even when it is comprehensible.

The Monitor Model has attracted sustained critical engagement since its formulation. McLaughlin (1987) challenged the acquisition–learning distinction on the grounds that it does not generate falsifiable predictions. Gregg (1984) questioned whether Krashen's constructs — particularly the affective filter — have sufficient theoretical precision to serve as explanatory mechanisms rather than descriptive labels. VanPatten (2015) reconceptualized the distinction within a broader implicit–explicit knowledge framework. Lichtman and VanPatten (2021) conducted a comprehensive forty-year retrospective, concluding that the core acquisitional predictions have received substantial empirical support while calling for greater precision in operationalizing each hypothesis as a testable construct. Loewen (2021), from an instructed-SLA perspective, argued that explicit instruction and corrective feedback can support acquisition under specific conditions — a position with direct implications for the pesantren formal classroom context.

These critiques do not invalidate the model's practical utility, but they restrict the strength of causal claims that case study evidence can support. Accordingly, this study treats Krashen's five hypotheses as analytical categories — explicit lenses through which institutional design and participant experience can be described and interpreted — rather than as confirmed causal mechanisms, following Lichtman and VanPatten's (2021) recommendation for precision in operationalization.

2.2 Arabic Language Environments in Residential Islamic Educational Institutions

The concept of *bi'ah lughawiyyah* (Arabic language environment) has been recognized in Arabic language education research as a necessary condition for acquisition beyond the classroom (Fithriyah et al., 2024; Ramadhani & Ghazi, 2024). In residential Islamic educational contexts, the language environment encompasses not only formal classroom instruction but the full institutional ecology of language use: dormitories, mosques, dining facilities, recreational areas, and administrative interactions. Research has consistently found that institutions where Arabic is used across these contexts produce higher levels of communicative competence than those where Arabic use is confined to the classroom (Aflisia et al., 2022; Huda et al., 2025; Sofa & Rahmaini, 2024).

The mechanism for this effect aligns directly with Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Sustained informal language use exposes learners to a wider range of vocabulary, syntactic structures, and pragmatic conventions than classroom instruction can provide, and does so in contexts where communication is genuine. This distinction is theoretically significant: Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis — proposing that meaning negotiation in conversation accelerates acquisition by drawing learners' attention to comprehension gaps — requires precisely the kind of authentic communicative exchange that informal residential language environments generate. Mohammad Syam'un Salim (2013) synthesized Krashen's and Ellis's frameworks to argue that authentic communicative interaction, not input exposure alone, is the proximal mechanism of acquisition in residential Islamic educational contexts.

Research on pesantren Arabic environments has documented this relationship across institutional types. Hadziq et al. (2025) found that comprehensive integration of formal instruction and informal communicative practice at Pondok Darussalam Gontor produced notable improvements in speaking fluency and intrinsic motivation. Huda et al. (2025) documented Arabic speaking strategies at Pondok Modern Darul Ma'rifah Gontor, finding that systematic informal communicative practice was the strongest predictor of oral production development. Naqiyah et al. (2024), examining the public speaking programme at Manahijussadat Islamic Boarding School, found that structured programme monitoring was essential for sustaining communicative gains. Murtadho et al. (2025) confirmed that communicative approaches in Arabic language education enhanced learner interaction and proficiency across pesantren contexts. Indayati et al. (2025) further documented how positive reinforcement for Arabic use complements the affective filter reduction mechanisms Krashen identifies, confirming that institutional feedback culture shapes acquisition conditions in ways consistent with the model's predictions.

2.3 Affective Factors in Arabic Second Language Acquisition

Foreign language anxiety is among the most consistently documented inhibitors of second language acquisition, and Arabic presents a specific constellation of anxiety-inducing features: an unfamiliar script, a phonological system containing sounds absent from Indonesian, complex non-linear morphology, and the religiously high-stakes significance of correct Quranic recitation (Alhamami, 2025; Almelhes, 2024). Liu et al. (2023) established that anxiety and motivation in second language learning operate dynamically and interdependently:



elevated anxiety suppresses the motivational investment needed to sustain acquisition, while successful communicative experience — even when errors are frequent — reduces anxiety and builds motivational momentum.

Dewaele, Saito, and Halimi (2023), in a mixed-modelling longitudinal investigation published in *Language Teaching Research*, demonstrated that teacher behaviour directly shapes learners' foreign language enjoyment and anxiety trajectories. Teacher immediacy, clarity, and emotional responsiveness — including the timing of corrective feedback — predict both immediate affective states and longitudinal proficiency gains. This finding has direct institutional implications: the pedagogical culture of an institution, including how and when errors are corrected, functions as an ongoing modulator of affective filter conditions throughout the entire programme.

Aubrey (2022), using an idiodynamic method to track moment-to-moment anxiety fluctuations during second language speaking tasks, demonstrated that specific interactional features — unfamiliar partners, time pressure, and evaluative contexts — produce the largest anxiety increases. Error correction during speech production inserts precisely this evaluative pressure at the moment when communicative engagement is highest. Post-production correction, by contrast, allows the communicative episode to conclude successfully before evaluation is introduced. Alhamami (2025) extended these findings to the Arabic learning context, demonstrating that learner psychological investment is substantially shaped by social belonging, institutional culture, and the perceived meaningfulness of language use contexts — factors that map directly onto the residential pesantren environment.

2.4 Theoretical Synthesis and Research Rationale

The literature reviewed above establishes that acquisition-supportive Arabic language environments share three consistently documented features: comprehensible input calibrated to learners' current proficiency (operationalizing Krashen's $i+1$ principle); affective conditions that reduce evaluative anxiety during communicative engagement (operationalizing the Affective Filter Hypothesis); and sustained informal communicative practice extending meaningful language exposure beyond the classroom (operationalizing the Input and Interaction hypotheses). What the literature does not yet provide is a study that documents all five of Krashen's hypotheses as explicit, operationalized analytical categories within a single institutional setting, mapping specific institutional design decisions to specific acquisition mechanisms. This study addresses that gap by treating the Arabic language environment at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu as an instrumental case (Stake, 1995) through which the institutional operationalization of each hypothesis can be documented systematically.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative instrumental case study design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Case study methodology was selected because the research questions concern contextually embedded phenomena that cannot be examined through survey or experimental designs without losing the specificity that makes findings analytically interpretable. Yin (2018) identifies

case study as appropriate when “how” and “why” questions are addressed about contemporary phenomena in their real-world context, without investigator control over behavioural events: both conditions apply here. Stake’s (1995) concept of “instrumental case study” — in which a particular case is examined to illuminate a broader theoretical issue — is applicable: Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu is examined to illuminate the institutional operationalization of Krashen’s theoretical predictions, not as an end in itself.

The study followed reflexive practice throughout: the lead researcher maintained a reflective journal documenting analytical decisions and potential positional biases arising from institutional familiarity with the research site. Preliminary analytical interpretations were shared with a second researcher for review before finalization.

3.2 Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu, an Islamic residential educational institution in Batu City, East Java, Indonesia. The institution was selected through theoretical sampling (Stake, 1995): preliminary fieldwork confirmed that it had deliberately constructed an Arabic language environment integrating formal instruction with daily communicative practice across dormitory, mosque, and social contexts — design features whose alignment with Krashen’s theoretical conditions make it an information-rich research site.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to maximize informational relevance to all three research questions. Five participants were included: three teachers and language programme administrators (coded U.MR, U.NIM, and U.MBY) and two students (coded S.RF and S.KR). Purposive sampling in qualitative case study research seeks information richness rather than statistical representativeness, and the triangulation protocol ensures that participant accounts are cross-referenced against observational and documentary evidence. Teacher participants were selected on the basis of direct involvement in language programme design and instruction. Student participants were selected to represent contrasting proficiency levels and lengths of enrolment, enabling comparison of acquisition experiences across different entry points.

3.3 Data Collection

Three complementary methods were used, consistent with the triangulation requirements of case study methodology (Miles et al., 2014). First, non-participant observation was conducted across formal Arabic lessons, dormitory activities, mosque interactions, and cafeteria conversations over five months (July–November 2025), at a frequency of eight sessions per week. A structured observation protocol documented teacher–student interaction patterns, instructional strategies, material use, student engagement behaviours, and error correction practices. Field notes were recorded during and immediately after each session and subsequently coded as primary data. Second, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with all five participants, addressing perceptions of the language environment’s effectiveness, sources of difficulty and support, affective dimensions of Arabic use, and the role of formal versus informal contexts in acquisition experience. Interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic, audio-recorded with participant consent, and transcribed



verbatim. Third, document analysis was conducted on institutional curriculum records, language programme documentation, and timetable materials, providing structural contextual evidence about the formal design of the language environment.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Analysis proceeded iteratively across all three data sources simultaneously, with themes from interview transcripts cross-referenced against observational field notes and documentary evidence. Initial codes were generated inductively from the data and subsequently organized deductively using Krashen's five hypotheses as analytical categories — an approach consistent with theory-driven qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Trustworthiness was established through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking, in which preliminary analytical findings were shared with two participants for review. No discrepancies requiring revision were identified in the member-checking process.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Institutional Architecture of the Language Environment: Operationalizing Krashen's Five Hypotheses

The Arabic language environment at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu is organized around the deliberate integration of two functionally distinct but theoretically complementary learning contexts: formal classroom instruction and daily informal communicative practice across the full residential institutional environment. This integration is not incidental but reflects an explicit institutional commitment to providing both the structured linguistic foundation that formal instruction supplies and the meaningful communicative exposure that acquisition, in Krashen's account, actually requires. This dual-context architecture is consistent with Farid and Lamb's (2020) finding that Indonesian pesantren offering structured language immersion — rather than disciplinary language enforcement alone — produce more sustainable motivational investment in the target language.

4.1.1 Input Hypothesis and Natural Order Hypothesis

Formal instruction addresses the full range of Arabic linguistic competence: vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structure, grammar (*nahwu*), morphology (*sharaf*), and rhetorical expression (*balaghah*). Instructional content follows a graduated difficulty sequence beginning with high-frequency vocabulary and basic sentence patterns before introducing complex grammatical structures and extended discourse. This sequence reflects the Natural Order Hypothesis: students encounter structures slightly above their current processing capacity rather than confronting the full complexity of classical Arabic from the outset. Teacher U.MR described the pedagogical logic underlying this sequence:

"In class, we start with text memorization and understanding meaning, then at the next level students are accustomed to speaking Arabic in daily interactions so that what is learned is not only theoretical."

Teacher U.NIM elaborated on the scaffolding structure:

"We provide vocabulary, sentence structures, and language rules as a foundation, then students are trained through discussions, presentations, and direct speaking practice."

These accounts confirm that formal instruction serves the function Krashen's Input Hypothesis assigns to comprehensible $i+1$ input: it provides linguistic material calibrated slightly above current proficiency, delivered with sufficient contextual scaffolding to remain comprehensible. Teacher U.MBY elaborated this calibration principle:

"We provide material that is slightly above the students' level, but still understandable, so that they are encouraged to develop."

The phrase "still understandable" operationalizes the $i+1$ principle with precision. Input that is comprehensible but challenging — requiring effortful processing without exceeding learners' capacity for sense-making — is what Krashen (1985) identifies as acquisition-driving. This calibration practice is consistent with Jaekel et al.'s (2022) longitudinal finding that sustained comprehensible exposure — rather than instructional intensity at any single point — drives proficiency gains over time. Observation data corroborate teacher accounts: in formal sessions, instructional sequencing proceeded from lexical presentation to guided dialogue to spontaneous production, consistent with a graduated $i+1$ progression. The natural order of acquisition also operated through informal communicative contexts where students negotiated meaning about daily needs, social relationships, and religious practice — contexts generating the authentic input variation that Lichtman and VanPatten (2021) identify as the most reliable driver of natural order progression.

4.1.2 Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis and Monitor Hypothesis

The institutional distinction between formal and informal learning contexts maps directly onto Krashen's Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis. Formal instruction explicitly functions as the source of learned knowledge — the grammatical infrastructure that students can monitor and refine when attention to form is feasible. Acquisition — the subconscious internalization of Arabic through meaningful use — occurs in the informal communicative environment the institution has deliberately constructed alongside formal instruction. Student S.RF captured the experiential difference between the two contexts:

"In class we learn theory, but in the dormitory we must directly practice speaking with friends and teachers, which makes us adapt more quickly."

Student S.KR identified the specific mechanism through which informal practice generated acquisition gains:

"Exercises such as spontaneous questions in class make us accustomed to speaking without overthinking."

The phrase "speaking without overthinking" captures analytically significant experience: it describes the transition from monitoring — producing language by consciously accessing learned grammatical rules — to acquisition-based fluency, in which language use draws on



internalized competence operating automatically. This is precisely what Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis predicts: as implicit knowledge accumulates through meaningful input, learners progressively reduce their dependence on the Monitor, enabling spontaneous production. Loewen's (2021) instructed-SLA perspective adds nuance here: explicit instruction and feedback, rather than being simply ineffective, may function as a bootstrapping mechanism providing learners with the initial grammatical framework within which implicit acquisition can subsequently operate. The pesantren's dual-context architecture instantiates this complementary relationship — formal instruction supporting the Monitor, informal practice driving acquisition.

Observation data confirm this functional complementarity. In formal sessions, students engaged with structured input at the $i+1$ level and received corrective feedback on grammatical form. In informal contexts — dormitory conversations, mosque interactions, meal-time exchanges — students engaged in meaning-focused communication in which they negotiated meaning, sought clarification, and received communicative rather than evaluative feedback. These informal contexts are where Long's (1996) interaction mechanism is most clearly operative: students attended to comprehension gaps arising in real communicative exchange and processed additional input to resolve them, without the evaluative pressure that formal classroom correction introduces.

Table 1 maps the key design features of the language environment against the Krashen hypotheses they operationalize.

Table 1: Alignment of Language Environment Design Features with Krashen's SLA Hypotheses

Krashen's Hypothesis	Institutional Implementation	Evidence from Data
Input Hypothesis ($i+1$)	Graduated curriculum from high-frequency vocabulary to complex morpho-syntax; contextual daily language use across all residential spaces	Teacher accounts of scaffolded difficulty sequencing; student reports of progressive vocabulary and structure acquisition; observation of sequenced lesson design
Affective Hypothesis	Filter Delayed post-production error correction; positive reinforcement culture; emphasis on communicative participation over accuracy	Teacher practice of correcting after speech completion; student accounts of growing confidence and reduced speaking anxiety; observation of non-evaluative informal interactions
Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis	Formal instruction as grammatical foundation (Monitor); acquisition through informal communicative practice (implicit knowledge)	Functionally distinct formal/informal environments with documented complementary roles; student self-reports of spontaneous production in informal contexts
Natural Order Hypothesis	Curriculum sequenced from concrete vocabulary and basic patterns to advanced grammar	Instructional sequence documented in curriculum records and corroborated by observation;

	and discourse; informal contexts drive developmental progression	student accounts of emergent syntactic complexity
Monitor Hypothesis	Grammar learning explicitly positioned as editing tool; communicative fluency prioritized over formal accuracy in speaking contexts	Teacher emphasis on speaking confidence before accuracy; student self-reports of spontaneous Arabic use without conscious monitoring in informal contexts

Note. Data synthesised from interview transcripts, observation field notes, and institutional document analysis. Hypothesis labels follow Krashen (1985); contemporary appraisal follows Lichtman and VanPatten (2021).

4.2 Participant Accounts of the Acquisition Process: Mapping Experience to Theory

Participant accounts reveal a consistent experiential trajectory that maps closely onto the Monitor Model’s developmental predictions. In the early stages of enrolment, students report elevated monitoring and self-consciousness in both formal and informal Arabic use: they attempt to produce language by consciously accessing grammatical rules learned in class, with limited fluency and substantial anxiety about error. Over time, as sustained communicative exposure builds internalized competence, students describe a progressive shift toward more spontaneous, less monitored production — the transition from learned performance to acquired fluency that Krashen’s model predicts.

The affective dimension of this acquisition trajectory is equally consistent with theoretical predictions. Teacher U.MBY articulated the institutional correction practice:

“We do not immediately correct students while they are speaking, but after they finish, so they do not feel afraid and remain confident.”

Student S.RF confirmed the experienced effect of this practice:

“We focus first on being brave to speak, even if we make mistakes, and corrections come afterward.”

The delayed correction practice directly implements the affective filter principles Krashen identifies. Aubrey’s (2022) idiodynamic research demonstrated that error correction during speech production produces moment-to-moment anxiety increases precisely at the points of maximum communicative engagement. Correcting after speech completion — as documented here — allows the communicative episode to conclude successfully before evaluation is introduced, sustaining the confidence the model predicts is necessary for input to reach the language acquisition device. Dewaele, Saito, and Halimi (2023) independently confirm that teacher emotional responsiveness and a non-evaluative stance during communicative tasks predict longitudinal improvements in foreign language enjoyment and reductions in classroom anxiety, providing converging evidence for the correction practice observed at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu.



The Natural Order Hypothesis is reflected in students' accounts of their developmental trajectory. Student S.KR described the acquisition sequence:

"We start with basic words, then gradually we can form sentences and eventually speak."

This description traces the emergence of productive competence through a developmental sequence proceeding from lexical acquisition to syntactic production to extended discourse — a progression consistent with the natural order that Krashen proposes is driven by acquisition rather than by instruction. The informal residential environment — where students must communicate about daily needs, social relationships, and religious practice in Arabic — appears to be the primary context in which this natural progression operates, consistent with Huda et al.'s (2025) finding that systematic communicative practice in informal residential contexts produces the most substantial speaking skill development. Almelhes (2024), examining Arabic acquisition strategies among 444 non-native speakers, found that the most effective strategy combination paired classroom instruction in core structures with meaningful communicative use in authentic social contexts — a pattern that mirrors the institutional design documented here.

It is important to note that the affective improvements students describe are based on self-reported experience rather than validated psychometric measurement. Social desirability effects cannot be excluded in institutional contexts where Arabic use is valued and monitored. Future research should incorporate validated instruments such as the Short-form Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Botes et al., 2022) and the Short Form of the Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale (Botes et al., 2021) to provide more precise assessment of affective filter conditions and their relationship to acquisition outcomes.

4.3 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors: Institutional Management of the Acquisition Environment

Analysis of factors affecting the language environment's effectiveness reveals two primary categories: affective-motivational factors determining students' willingness and capacity to engage communicatively, and structural-environmental factors determining the consistency and quality of Arabic exposure across institutional contexts. The interaction between these categories is theoretically significant: Krashen's model predicts that input quality and affective conditions are both necessary for acquisition, and deficiency in either dimension will constrain the acquisition process regardless of the other's strength.

4.3.1 Affective-Motivational Factors

Initial shyness and fear of error in Arabic production are the most consistently documented inhibitors. Teacher U.MR described the challenge and the institutional response:

"At the beginning, students often feel afraid or shy to speak, but a supportive environment encourages them to try. We always emphasize that mistakes are part of the learning process."

Student S.RF described the trajectory from inhibition to engagement:

“At first we felt shy to speak, but because we are continuously encouraged and accustomed to it, now we are more confident.”

This trajectory is consistent with Liu et al.'s (2023) finding that anxiety and motivation in second language learning are dynamically interdependent and self-reinforcing: initial anxiety inhibits the communicative engagement that would generate competence and reduce anxiety, while successful communicative experience — even imperfect communication — generates the competence gains that reduce anxiety and strengthen motivational investment. The institutional practice of emphasizing communicative participation over grammatical correctness deliberately initiates this positive cycle by removing the evaluative conditions that sustain initial anxiety. Dewaele et al.'s (2023) structural equation modelling evidence confirms that foreign language enjoyment — not merely the absence of anxiety — independently predicts proficiency gains, suggesting that the institution's positive reinforcement culture functions as an acquisition accelerant, not merely an anxiety reducer.

Student S.KR confirmed the role of positive reinforcement:

“Positive encouragement and appreciation for students' efforts increase our confidence and motivate us to speak more.”

From an affective filter perspective (Alhamami, 2025; Krashen, 1985), the institution's reinforcement culture lowers the filter not only in formal classroom contexts but across the residential environment as a whole — extending the affective filter construct beyond its original classroom framing to encompass the full residential ecology of the pesantren.

4.3.2 Structural-Environmental Factors

The principal structural inhibiting factor is inconsistency in Arabic use outside supervised contexts. Teacher U.MR acknowledged the challenge directly:

“We encourage students to use Arabic both inside the classroom and outside, although sometimes some still use Indonesian.”

This inconsistency reflects a structural constraint inherent to the pesantren context: the institution cannot fully control the language ecology of all student social interactions. Students' peer social networks, personal communication habits, and Indonesian-dominant relationships create contexts where Arabic use requires deliberate individual commitment that not all students sustain consistently. The volume of comprehensible input that informal Arabic use provides is therefore variable across individual students and over time, creating variation in acquisition rates that the institution's formal programme cannot compensate for fully. This pattern is consistent with Jaekel et al.'s (2022) finding that input consistency — rather than intensity at any single point — is the primary predictor of long-term proficiency gains, and with Farid and Lamb's (2020) observation that Indonesian pesantren students' motivational investment fluctuates in response to the perceived social salience of the target language in informal contexts.

The institutional response is constructive rather than disciplinary: structured communicative programmes designed to make Arabic use socially embedded and intrinsically rewarding. Teacher U.MBY described these programmes:



“Programmes such as ‘group dialogue’ and ‘meal-time activities,’ along with continuous supervision by the student organization, help create an environment where Arabic is actively used.”

This design logic applies the affective filter principle at the institutional level: the conditions for acquisition cannot be mandated through punitive rules without raising the filter, but they can be built through social environments where Arabic use is intrinsically motivated. Student organization supervision functions as peer accountability sustaining Arabic use through social rather than institutional authority, reducing the risk that compliance behaviour driven by fear substitutes for the genuine communicative engagement that acquisition requires. When students use Arabic because peers expect it and because the social fabric of dormitory life makes Arabic the natural choice in many contexts, the communicative function of language use is preserved. Students are speaking to communicate, not merely to satisfy an institutional rule. This distinction matters for acquisition because language use driven by social belonging and genuine communicative intent generates the low-filter, meaning-focused interaction that Krashen’s model identifies as acquisition-driving (Aflisia et al., 2022; Alhamami, 2025).

Table 2 summarises the principal supporting and inhibiting factors documented in the study.

Table 2: *Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Arabic Language Environment at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu*

Category	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
Affective-Motivational	Delayed post-production error correction; emphasis on communicative participation over accuracy; positive reinforcement culture; peer encouragement and social Arabic use norms	Initial shyness and anxiety about error; evaluative self-consciousness in formal speaking tasks; inhibition in front of higher-proficiency peers
Structural-Environmental	Mandatory Arabic use across dormitories, mosques, and social spaces; structured communicative programmes (group dialogues, meal-time conversations); peer student organization supervision	Inconsistent Arabic use in unsupervised peer interactions; code-switching to Bahasa Indonesia in informal contexts; variable institutional monitoring across residential spaces
Pedagogical	Graduated i+1 input sequence; formal-informal environment integration; feedback culture prioritizing meaning before form; contextually embedded communicative tasks	Limited supplementary material diversity beyond core curriculum; variation in individual teacher feedback quality and timing; absence of validated proficiency and affective assessment instruments

Note. Data synthesised from interview transcripts, observation field notes, and institutional document analysis.

The pattern that emerges from this analysis is theoretically coherent and practically instructive. The language environment at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu is most effective when three conditions are simultaneously maintained: comprehensible input at the $i+1$ threshold across both formal and informal contexts; affective conditions sustaining low anxiety and high communicative engagement; and sufficient consistency of Arabic use to generate the exposure volume that acquisition requires. When any condition weakens, acquisition slows and students revert to the monitored production that formal instruction alone produces. This three-condition model, which emerges from the data rather than being imposed on it, is consistent with Krashen's (1985) theoretical predictions, with Lichtman and VanPatten's (2021) contemporary empirical synthesis, and with the existing literature on Arabic language environments in residential institutional contexts (Huda et al., 2025; Murtadho et al., 2025; Sofa & Rahmaini, 2024).

5. Conclusion

This study documented how Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu has translated the five theoretical predictions of Krashen's Monitor Model into specific institutional practices, and what the experiential consequences of those practices are for students and teachers. Three institutional mechanisms account for the environment's acquisition-supportive character: (1) a graduated instructional sequence calibrating formal input to the $i+1$ threshold; (2) a post-production correction practice maintaining the affective conditions necessary for input to be acquired rather than merely processed; and (3) structured informal communicative programmes extending meaningful Arabic exposure into the social contexts where Long's interaction mechanism operates most naturally. These mechanisms are not independent: each reinforces the others, and the environment's effectiveness depends on their simultaneous operation.

The study carries several limitations that future research should address. The single-site instrumental case study design means findings describe the practices and experiences of one institution with specific pedagogical commitments, resource conditions, and student demographics. The small purposive sample — five participants — means participant accounts cannot represent the full range of institutional experiences. Reliance on self-reported affective experience, without validated psychometric instruments such as the S-FLCAS (Botes et al., 2022) or S-FLES (Botes et al., 2021), means affective filter claims rest on participant testimony subject to social desirability effects. The absence of quantitative proficiency measurement means reported acquisition improvements cannot be independently verified against baseline data.

For Arabic language programme practitioners in pesantren and comparable residential Islamic educational institutions, the practical implication of this study is specific: the most consequential design decisions concern the affective conditions of the learning environment and the consistency of informal communicative exposure, not curriculum content or textbook selection alone. Future research should address these limitations through comparative case study designs examining Arabic language environments across multiple pesantren with contrasting institutional profiles; longitudinal designs incorporating validated language assessment instruments; and mixed-methods designs combining the S-FLCAS and



standardized oral proficiency interviews with qualitative case study data to enable more precise assessment of the relationship between affective conditions, environmental features, and acquisition outcomes. The language environment at Pesantren Islam Al-Irsyad Batu demonstrates that acquisition-supportive conditions can be deliberately constructed through pedagogical culture, structured communicative programmes, and peer accountability mechanisms — and that when they are, students' reported acquisition experience reflects the shift from monitored performance to spontaneous communicative competence that Krashen's model predicts.

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