Strategies for improving Arabic language ability through language Environment: Phenomenology studies in Islamic boarding schools

by Pps Mahyudin Ritonga

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Mahyudin Ritonga [a] [1] iD , Talqis Nurdianto [b] iD , Rahmawati [c] iD

aMuhammadiyah University of West Sumatra, Indonesia
bUniversitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia
cUniversitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia

Abstract

This article provides an analysis of the strategic steps undertaken by the institution in developing an Arabic language environment. The main problem of research is related to how the strategy undertaken by pondok pesantren Darussalam Parmeraan in developing Arabic language environment. To answer this research question the method used is descriptive qualitative. Sources of research data is the manager of pondok pesantren and students. Techniques used in data collection are interviews, observation, and documentation. The result shows that pondok pesantren of Darussalam Pameraan has done some strategy in developing Arabic language environment that is Arabic takhashshush program, mufradat shabahiyyah, tadrib muhadatsah shabahiyyah, giving mufradat to teacher, using Arabic language as the language of introduction in classroom, al-usbu' al-'arabi, the practice of muhadharah and jadal wa musabaqah al-lughah. These findings prove that the language environment can be the right choice to help improve learners' skills in speaking. The language environment can also eliminate the rigidity of learners in expressing the contents of their minds.

Keywords: Arabic language; environment; development; strategy; speaking

1. Introduction

Information that is still often heard is complaints about difficulties in learning Arabic (Al-Wizan & Al-Khiyath, 2014). The place of learning Arabic in Indonesia generally does not provide information about the ease of learning Arabic, but instead becomes a source of information to popularize the difficulty of learning Arabic. The above statement is based on the unclear direction of the skills to be achieved in learning Arabic in some institutions, whether listening, speaking, reading or writing skills. The ambiguity of the learning objectives causes Arabic to be less desirable and even seen as a difficult subject, and in the end the output of institutions that teach Arabic have all-rounded skills.

Darussalam Islamic boarding school located in Parmeraan Village, Dolok District, Padang Lawas Utara Regency, North Sumatra, is one of the educational institutions that makes drastic changes both physically and non-physically. Physically, this pesantren has changed from what was originally a small hut for students to become a dormitory nuance. While the non-physical changes can be seen from the quality of Islamic boarding school students who can compete with students from other

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[1] Corresponding author:
  E-mail address: mahyudinritonga@gmail.com

Islamic boarding schools, both in the *Musabaqah Tilawatil Quran*, *Musabaqah Hifzhil Quran*, *Musabaqah Syarhil Quran*, *Musabaqah Fahmil Quran*, sports and so on.

Physical changes that occur in the Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic boarding school environment have an impact on strategies for developing a speaking environment. As it is known that during the period of student living in the 1-3 person per cottage system the supervision of the use of language by students was quite difficult. Based on the results of interviews with Umaruddin it is known that in the past the control of the use of language among student was limited, this is inseparable from the distance of residence between one student with the other student far apart, pickets go around to the huts for supervision, while the number of pickets every day is limited.

A similar statement was also made by Rajawali Ritonga, every night the picket conducts surveillance to the student resting place and if anyone commits a language violation they are subject to punishment with a hair clipper. However, the obstacle faced according to him is the limited number of pickets, the conditions of residence of students who have distance to open space for students to commit language violations because pickets cannot always be around them.

The difference between the two conditions in the Darussalam boarding school environment mentioned above leads to a change in strategy that must be carried out by institutions in developing the language environment. The change in strategy referred to is as mentioned by the musyafa namely student residences that make it easier for musyrif, (Al-Wizan & Al-Khiyath, 2014) mudabbir in conducting guidance and control of language use among students.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Dulay explained that the quality of the language environment is important for a learner to be able to succeed in learning a second language (Dulay, 1982). The language environment is the most important part for the success of a learner in learning a foreign language (Al-Busaidi, Hashmi, Musawi, & Kazem, 2016). From this opinion it is understood that the quality of an environment is very instrumental in creating language skills. The author understands that the quality referred to by Dulay is to create a language environment that takes into account the rules contained in the language. This means that in creating *lughawiyyah bi'ah* for Arabic, for example, the manager and all the systems in it pay attention to the standard methods contained in Arabic to be applied in the existing Arabic environment.

In the context of developing the Arabic language environment, there are five kinds of language environments that need serious attention from all parties, 1) the environment of vision and vision (*al-bi'ah al-mar'iyyah*) in the form of pictures, liflets, announcements, madding, information boards , which all contain Arabic writing, 2) the auditory and visual environment (*al-bi'ah al-sam'iyyah wa al-mar'iyyah*) in the form of a place to hear lectures, lectures, music, radio broadcasts, Arabic Television, 3) the social environment or interaction of teaching and learning using Arabic, 4) the academic environment, in the form of higher education policies in requiring the use of Arabic on certain days, and 5) a conducive psychological environment that is the formation of a positive image of the Arabic language (Wahab, 2005).

Meanwhile, Amrullah explained that: 1) the development of bi'ah 'arabiyyah at MSAA UIN was motivated by the need to familiarize communication with Arabic for mahastudent, 2) the objective of holding the development of *bi'ah' Arabiyyah* was so that mahastudent could speak Arabic both oral and written, printing preachers, and mahastudent can understand Arabic books, 3) the development system is: *Ta'aruf Ma'hady*, *Ta'lim al-Afkar al-Islamiyyah*, *Ta'lim al-Quran*, giving placards, linguistic services , giving material and vocabulary of foreign languages, imposing compulsory Arabic for all residents of Ma'had, presenting native speakers, 4) activities in developing *bi'ah'Arabiyyah* are:

shabah al-lugah, language consulting services, *al-yawm al -'Araby*, *al-musabaqah al-'Arabiyyah*, 5) the supporting factor is UIN Malang requires new students to take a special program of Arabic language development for one year, Arabic language guidance, placards Islamic boarding schools use Arabic, highly motivated, the existence of a language cult after five daily prayers, the existence of muharrikal-lughah, and the existence of a SAC (self access center) (Amrullah, 2008).

Amrullah's research results above show that the success of creating a language environment is inseparable from the existence of policies, commitments and a sense of responsibility from all parties. Amrullah's research above can be used as a step of consideration and can then be applied to Islamic educational institutions that teach Arabic by creating new models that are in accordance with existing environmental conditions.

Meanwhile, Zaid and Ardisya provided conditions for the creation of an Arabic language environment, namely 1) a positive attitude towards Arabic and a strong commitment to advance the teaching of Arabic from related parties, 2) the existence of a number of figures in the educational institution environment capable of communicating with Arabic, 3) availability of adequate funds for the procurement of the necessary facilities and infrastructure (Zaid & Adisya, 2017)). As for creating a formal Arabic environment according to Darussafa'ah are; 1) using an interactionist strategy that relies on communicative activities rather than mechanistic or manipulative drills, and is not focused on methods, 2) using varied material by increasing authentic materials and taking into account the principles of meaningfulness, use and manipulation; attractiveness, 3) broadening linguistic input for students by assigning reading books, magazines, Arabic newspapers, attending Arabic radio and television broadcasts, watching Arabic films, opening Arabic language websites, etc. 4) giving a dominant role to students to communicate, educators do not talk much but direct and facilitate, 5) wherever possible using Arabic, although the use of Indonesian in certain circumstances is not prohibited (Darussafa'ah, 2016), 6) using relevant methods and varied techniques, and 7) design and organize various support activities such as menu exercises Daily Inscriptions, speech exercises, group conversations, interview exercises, exposure to consensus and the like.

Furthermore, Wahab put forward four conditions for the development of the Arabic language environment, 1) there is a positive attitude and appreciation for Arabic from related parties, from which arises a high motivation and sense of need, 2) the rules of the game to tie commitments and unite the vision and determination to develop an Arabic-speaking environment, 3) there are several figures who are able to communicate with the Arabic language actively, and 4) there is an adequate allocation of funds both for the provision of facilities and infrastructure and intensive for the movers and creative teams to create an Arabic-language environment (Wahab, 2005).

The descriptions above indicate that the use of foreign languages both verbally and in writing requires good collaboration between educators and the entire academic community. So, in maximizing its function and role, strategic, effective and efficient actions or efforts need. These efforts are the responsibility of all parties because the implementation is mostly outside the classroom/ outside the teaching and learning process.

Research conducted by some observers of the language as mentioned above is an outcome that still needs to be reviewed for its truth. Because, starting from the skills that should be achieved by students in language learning, there are four, the author states that the language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyyah*) is not effective in achieving four language proficiency, but the combination of *bi'ah lughawiyyah* and the application of linguistic methods that will be applied applicatively. produce four Arabic skills. One thing that cannot be denied is that in creating a lughawiyyah language or bi'ah environment there are often various obstacles, including lack of institutional appreciation of Arabic (Dulay, 1982), lack of learner interest in maturing language skills, lack of available human resources,

facilities and inadequate infrastructure (Putri, 2013).

The creation of a language environment in an educational institution is not something easy. Creating a language environment, in addition to having to be supported by a variety of factors, also requires serious effort, patience, patience, consistency, and a long time. However, although it is not easy, in many studies found that the creation of a language environment is proven to support the success of students mastering the foreign language being taught. As with the results of Sabri's analysis which says that the environment has a very important role in improving language skills especially speaking skills (Sabri, 2016).

In addition, In'ami also emphasized that instead of developing adult language, the language environment also has an important role in developing early childhood language (In'ami, 2017). The creation of a language environment is increasingly gaining attention and is playing an important role today with the development of student-centered learning models by actively involving students and implemented with diverse, interesting, and challenging activities. This article will outline the strategies carried out by the institution in developing the language environment in the Parmeraan Darussalam Islamic Boarding School.

3. Methodology and Materials

This research uses descriptive research which emphasizes qualitative data that aims to describe the conditions and situations regarding the strategy adopted by the institution in developing the language environment. This descriptive study describes or summarizes the various conditions or situations that arise in the research subjects. Of course, according to the characteristics of the study rely more on qualitative data, so this study is not intended to look for quantitative generalizations. Data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation study, while the collection process was carried out for 26 days. Observation is used to see a variety of situations, behavior in Islamic boarding schools related to the development of the Arabic language environment. The main data of this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with leaders of Islamic boarding schools, Rois Dar al-Lughah, and Mudabbir.

To verify information from these sources, researchers also conducted interviews with a number of students and teachers in addition to the Arabic language field. In addition, researchers also conduct an analysis of documents related to the object of research, such as curriculum, records of activities and plans of the management relating to the development of the language environment. Triangulation techniques in this study are highly prioritized, both source triangulation, time, and data collection techniques.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on data obtained through interviews, observations and documentation studies it is known that there are several strategies undertaken by the Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic Boarding School through Darul Lughah in developing the language environment. These steps are as in table 1 below.

Table. 1 Language environment development strategy

No	Findings	Description
1	Arabic *Takhashshush* Program	- Learners participate in a special Arabic program - Guided by teachers who are proficient in Arabic
2	*Mufradat shbahiyyah*	Learners are taught a new vocabulary every morning
3	*Tadribat mufradat shabahiyyah*	The vocabulary taught is practiced in sentences every day.
4	Giving *Mufradat* to Teachers	Learners deposit the vocabulary they memorized to the teacher
5	Using Arabic as the language of instruction	The learning process is carried out using Arabic.

	in learning	
6	*Al-Usbu 'al-'Arabi* and English Week	Pondok Pesantren sets a specific day for practical use of language, both Arabic and English
7	*Muhadharah* training	learners display their skills of speech, poetry and Arabic songs at muhadharah activities

Arabic Takhashshush program

Takhashshush al-lughah al-'Arabiyyah at Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic boarding school is in the form of the formation of a group of students specializing in Arabic. The existence of groups like this has been found in many other institutions, and in general the existence of Arabic groups aims to explore languages for special purposes, such as Arabic for tourism, Arabic for hajj purposes, Arabic for Indonesian workers, journalism in the military (Nur, 2015) and others, while the special Arabic program at Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic boarding school is not intended specifically to explore *li aghradh al-khash material* but the main orientation is to realize students who are able to communicate with Arabic in various aspects of life.

Figure 1. Activities in a Special Arabic Program

The *takhassus* program aims to form special groups that study Arabic. The existence of these groups is expected to be an extension of the institution to invite and stimulate other students in practicing Arabic in the boarding school environment. This language group is not many, consisting of only two groups, one group of men and one group of women, each group consisting of 20 people.

The procedure for the recruitment of this language group is through rigorous selection through tests conducted by Darul Lughah, the form of tests conducted is written and oral tests. The program provided for them is additional Arabic learning twice a week and the curriculum is directed towards conversation (*muhadatsah*) and teaching and learning activities are mostly carried out in Darul Lughah. This is intended so that the students feel proud to be included in the language group so that they will always be enthusiastic in learning Arabic and practicing it in everyday conversation.

The existence of language groups in addition to contributing to developing the language environment also strengthens the ability of students in Arabic, Rival Dian Solih Lubis said that they have received a lot of lessons in Arabic, because the Darussalam curriculum uses many *kitab kuning* both in matters of fiqh, aqeedah, morals, date, hadith and others. But according to Rasyid Ripai Ritonga before the existence of a language group they had difficulty in using Arabic as a language of communication, because there was no habituation.

The statement of Rois Darul Lughah and the two student above shows that the Parmeraan

Darussalam Islamic Boarding School undertakes to implement the habituation as initiated by the behaviorists, namely observable habits and automatic habits (Laila, 2013). Habits that can be observed are the basic truths in which their form can be designated and their movements can be observed, in this case they reject the existence of internal mental processes. While automatic habits are through a habit that will turn into something automatic, habits like this occur unknowingly and can manipulate difficulties in receiving stimulus.

Mufradat Shabahiyah

In learning a foreign language, students are usually introduced to the elements of the language being studied, one of which is the vocabulary (مفردات). *Mufradat* or vocabulary is a form of *jama'* (plural) of *mufrad*, which is a *lafaz* or word consisting of two or more letters and shows the meaning, both in the form of *fi'il* (verb) and *ism* (noun) (Mohamed & Ibrahim, 2016). Vocabulary is a treasure or vocabulary of a language (Ortega, 2009). Vocabulary can also be said as the number of words each language has. Between one language and another, the number of vocabulary they have is different. This is because the amount of vocabulary is not fixed, depending on the culture of each language and continues to develop in accordance with the progress of science and age.

To be able to communicate in a foreign language one must have mastery over a number of vocabulary words (Al-Ghali & 'Abdullah, 2006), without that it can be said to be impossible for a person to communicate naturally in a foreign language. Regarding this problem, Amarullah emphasized that vocabulary is one of the elements of language that must be mastered by foreign language students to be skilled in communicating in that language (Amrullah, 2008).

Arabic learning in Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is actually not new to students, because this boarding school uses two curricula, the curriculum set by the ministry of religion and the boarding school curriculum. The 100% pesantren curriculum uses Arabic books known as the yellow books, but despite this the students' ability to speak Arabic is still slow and limited. Roisuddin also revealed that in order to realize students who are skilled in communicative Arabic the institution cannot rely solely on learning Arabic and teaching Islamic science through the *kitab kuning* in class.

To support the acceleration of the achievement of communicative Arabic language skills, the boarding school through Darul Lughah made an innovation in the form of *shabahiyyah mufradat* called *ilqa 'al-mufradat*. The organization of *ilqa al-mufradat* activities may be a translation of the process of acquiring a second / foreign language which takes place naturally in the environment of the language speaker. If in the native environment of language speakers learn students get the vocabulary displays they need through interaction with the language speaker community that takes place at any time, then for the environment of educational institutions outside the environment of language speakers need to be planned programmed activities that can enrich the vocabulary needed to communicate naturally in foreign languages are learned, because, students do not at all times and every opportunity to obtain vocabulary input as experienced by students who are in the environment of language speakers.

Based on the above, the *ilqa' al-mufradat* activity is oriented towards the achievement of language skills as well as a part of forming habits in the foreign language being learned (Khalifah, 2003). In an effort to achieve meaningful language skills with this activity students are expected to have the skills to use vocabulary functionally provided in the language activities undertaken. This orientation is in line with the will of the communicative approach. As for the portion of the formation of habits in foreign languages because in the activities of *ilqa' al-mufradat* student imitating vocabulary pronunciation and practice of using it in sentences repeatedly, as strongly advocated by supporters of the theory of behaviorism (Oktariska, Toenlioe, & Susilaningsih, 2018). From this situation the

similarity can be drawn from the two orientations above, namely teaching students to use language functionally in communication by avoiding in-depth study of aspects of grammar and language learned.

The *ilqa' al-mufradat* activity in Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is one of the types of daily activities that must be followed by students. This activity is scheduled twice a day and a night, that is before a night's rest and after the morning prayer. The time spent for this activity ranges from 20-30 minutes. The implementation of this activity was coordinated by the Darul Lughah section and overseen by the mushyrif al-lughah. The officers who lead the presentation of the mufradat are boarders /rooms (*mudabbir*) who come from class IV, while students who take part in the *ilqa' al-mufradat* activities are grouped by boarding.

The steps in the presentation of *ilqa' al-mufradat* activities mimic the steps of *mufradat* learning done by the teacher in the class even though it is not exactly the same. The activities of *ilqa' al-mufradat* began with *mudabbir* playing new words in Arabic or English in front of the students in the dormitory. The next stage *mudabbir* reads the new word followed/imitated by student members of the hostel. According to Umar this reading was carried out several times until it was believed that members of the hostel had been able to mimic the pronunciation of the word correctly. Then asked if any of the boarding school students who already know the meaning of the new word that has been read, if indeed there is, he was asked to mention the meaning of the word in Indonesian, then the person concerned was asked to give examples of the use of the word in perfect sentences. If no one in the dormitory knows, the *mudabbir* explains the meaning of the word. The next step is reading the new word again by placing it in a perfectly simple sentence followed by a member of the dormitory. And so on for the second and third new words.

Mudabbir who is sitting in class IV is a form of involving students as desired in constructivist learning (Proctor, Silverman, Harring, & Montecillo, 2012), namely the involvement of students as actualization of themselves and will show their abilities, students also learn a lot and work and work in the group. This appointment has several benefits, both for *mudabbir* and also for other students. For mudabbir this is a practice container for cleaning up others in foreign languages, especially aspects of the pronunciation of words and their use in sentences. As for the other students, the presentation of the *mufradat* by *mudabbir* gave a different nuance, psychologically felt more relaxed but still had to be serious when attending the *ilqa' al-mufradat* activities. The students are more brave to express themselves to ask questions, set an example, recite vocabulary aloud even by shouting. This condition can give a strong impression in students to receive the vocabulary presented.

However, there were some weaknesses that were found during the activities of *ilqa' al-mufradat* including among those participating in *ilqa' al-mufradat* which were very crowded because they were grouped based on the hostel where they lived, so that participants in *ilqa 'al-mufradat* could reach more than 100 people. This situation makes the activity seem less effective, because it is difficult to oversee the involvement and seriousness of students when participating in activities, such as when imitating pronunciation and imitating examples of the use of words in sentences. In addition, the number of students in such a large group causes not all students to be able to check their pronunciation and understanding of the words given. Also, only a handful of students have the opportunity to express themselves to ask questions, answer questions, make examples, and so on. Though this needs to be considered in order to foster the enthusiasm and motivation of students in learning foreign languages, especially new vocabulary.

The type of vocabulary given in *ilqa' al-mufradat* activities can be in the form of new vocabularies for students at their respective levels as a form of enrichment from what is obtained while attending classroom learning, but can also only be a repetition in the context of affirmation / reinforcement. In

the *ilqa' al-mufradat* activities, 2 to 3 vocabularies were given. The choice of vocabulary given follows the rules starting from close, which are in the environment of students, and have a high frequency of use.

The vocabulary groups given during *ilqa' al-mufradat* activities are distinguished based on the student class. Student class I vocabulary groups are given starting from getting to know objects, people, and events that are around the room and everything in it, tools/clothing used daily, bathrooms, classes / schools, and so on. Class 11 has been combined with verbs regarding daily activities, for Arabic mainly examples in perfect sentences given using *fi'il mudhari* '(eg انا اشرب القهوة كل صباح) and *fi'il 'amr* (for example ياأخي ، اقفل باب الحجرة), and for English in the form of sentences using the present continuous tense form (for example, I am doing my home work), and the command form (for example clean your room), class III is increased again with a wider scope. As for classes IV to class VI, they are already in the form of termat and *asalib*.

One of the things that needs to be a concern and future thinking is that until now there has not been a clear classification of the vocabulary given for each level. The vocabulary given is still mixed between one level and another. So, there is a high possibility of unnecessary repetition, such as the vocabulary given when class I is given again in class II. In addition, the number of vocabulary given for each class in one semester or one year is uncertain.

Still in the context of enriching the vocabulary of foreign languages owned by students, besides being obtained through the activities of *ilqa' al-mufradat* which is carried out routinely every day, students also get vocabulary enrichment through vocabulary boards (لوحة المفردات) prepared by *musyrif al-lughah*. This vocabulary board contains 1-2 vocabulary / terms which are considered to have a high frequency of usage. This vocabulary board is taken by the class leader (class representative) every day when he goes to school in the morning in the *musyrif al-lughah* room to be hung in the classroom until the end of teaching and learning activities on that day. Upon returning from school, the vocabulary board is ushered back to its original place of collection. From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the ilqa 'al-mufradat activity carried out at the Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic Boarding School is one of the right efforts in order to create a language environment to accelerate mastery of foreign language skills of students so that they can support success in learning foreign languages as a whole.

Tadrib Muhadatsah Shabahiyyah

One of the orientation of foreign language learning which is highly prioritized in Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic Boarding School is to make students able to speak in a foreign language that is learned fluently and can be understood. To achieve this goal, in addition to requiring students to always use official language in daily conversation, the Islamic Boarding School through the musyrif al-lughah institute also conducts conversational training activities in Arabic and English for students. This activity is a part of the language discipline that must be followed by all students. Abandoning this activity for no apparent reason may be subject to sanctions.

Conversation exercises are part of the effort to create a speaking environment for students. In the view of constructivism, this activity provides an opportunity for students to construct their skills using foreign languages verbally in a variety of prescribed contexts (Proctor et al., 2012). Because students are confronted with various contexts of conversation that usually take place in their daily lives in pesantren, such as conversations while queuing for a shower, in a dining room, in a medical clinic, and others. This strategy motivates students to arrange their own conversation sequences that they want to practice, at the same time they discuss with friends who will be their partners in conversation training, so that creative forms of conversation are generated by students. If this continues to be developed it

will greatly support the acceleration of the achievement of language skills by students.

Conversation exercises at the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School are held twice a week, on Monday and Friday with an allocation of about 30-45 minutes. Because it is held in the morning, it is called *muhadatsah shabahiyyah* (morning conversation). The arrangements for *muhadatsah shabahiyyah* are based on the ongoing language week program. If you are on an Arabic week, the exercise you will do is *muhadatsah 'arabiyyah*, and if you are on an English week then you will be trained in English conversation.

The practice of *muhadatsah shabahiyyah* is a part of language activities with direct guidance from the mushyrif al-lughah. To support this activity Darul Lughah has produced a book "Daily Conversation" which contains examples of conversations in various situations in Arabic and English. This book has been corrected by teachers who are competent in each language. This Daily Conversation book is used as a guide in the muhadatsah shabahiyyah activities as well as a backrest for students in daily conversations in the official language of the pesantren. When the activity takes place the guidelines for intensive conversation training support communicative skills. Language learners must continue to be encouraged to interact with other students using the foreign language being studied. So that he can get fluency in communicating in acceptable language, not only in grammatical accuracy as is usually found in formal learning. This conversation can be developed by the language division or mus -rif al-lugkah who is at the activity site.

The involvement of students in this activity has even begun since the planning of activities. This process illustrates the effort to delegate the role of guiding other students by the teacher (*musyrif al-lughah*) to the implementers who are also from the student circles. This attitude can foster confidence in the implementers about their abilities in both Arabic and English. In addition, this assignment will encourage them to reflect, look at the activities for which they are responsible and think about what can be done with these activities. Because the assignment in carrying out the muhadatsah shabahiyyah activities is carried out collectively, learning groups are automatically formed.

The steps in the practice of *muhadatsah sabahiyyah* are as follows: the student are arranged in a sincere manner and face to face. The *muhadatsah shabahiyyah* clerk from the language section then reads the example of the conversation in the set theme. The recitation was repeated by all students participating in the *muhadatsah shabahiyyah*. This is done at least twice. Then each student who has been in a face to face position is asked to have a conversation that is exemplified by the friend in front of him. While the language department officers go around to supervise, reprimand students who are not serious, or help students who are still having difficulties. After that students are asked to have a conversation which is a development of what is exemplified, meaning that students can add and expand the theme of the conversation in accordance with their abilities. Towards the end of the session, a number of students paired up to demonstrate the conversation in accordance with the theme at the time in front of all students. *Muhadatsah shabahiyyah* activities were closed with advice / motivation from Darul Lughah or *Musyrif al-Lughah* so that students continue to practice using the official language.

There are many techniques and models in conversation training that can be developed in educational institutions, both in curricular and extracurricular activities. Each technique and model is usually based on a particular approach or method. The audio-lingual method, for example emphasizes the need for students to memorize a conversation model, before entering into free conversation. Whereas, the communicative method emphasizes the understanding of the conversation model (Firiady, 2018), (Amrullah, 2008). *Muhadatsah shabahiyyah* held at the Islamic Boarding School of Darussalam seems to be based on the audio-lingual method, where students at the beginning of the activity are asked to memorize the specified conversation model, after they master and are able to

practice it, then they are given the opportunity to have a free conversation on a theme that is same.

Muhadatsah shabahiyyah training is an appropriate step in the effort to develop students' skills in foreign languages (Firiady, 2018). With this activity students are accustomed to actively practicing using the foreign language learned. And the opportunity to practice a foreign language is not only limited when attending the practice of *muhadatsah shabahiyyah* but also in the whole conversation that he does everyday in the pesantren environment. According to Umar *muhadatsah shabahiyyah* activity is the application of the practice phrase makes perfecta, this expression becomes one of the overall slogans of learning activities. Specifically, in the context of learning a foreign language, it means that fluency and accuracy in a foreign language can only be achieved with a lot of practice and practice using the foreign language learned.

Giving Mufradat to Teachers

In order to improve the ability of teachers in Arabic, the language institute in the Islamic Boarding School of Darussalam has a program specifically for teachers and employees that is equipping them with giving *mufradat* once a week. With the hope that they use vocabulary in everyday conversation in the pesantren environment. The method of giving vocabulary is that the teachers gather in the teacher's office before the learning process begins then Darul Lughah prepares five Arabic vocabulary words that are often spoken in daily conversation, then the Arabic teacher recites them out loud and then followed by all teacher, it is intended that what is said is embedded in the brain and will always remember when needed. Thus this activity takes place every week so that teachers are accustomed to using Arabic.

Using Arabic as the language of instruction in learning

The success of an institution in carrying out its program is inseparable from the support of teaching and educational staff who are both subject and object in the program. Kameli and friends emphasized that teachers are the main key in realizing a formal language environment (Ummi & Mulyaningsih, 2016). Therefore teachers in Islamic Boarding Schools are required to use Arabic as the language of instruction in teaching and learning activities, although not 100% is used when teaching proces takes place at least in interaction with their students speaking Arabic, for example in terms of instructing students to come forward he will say taqoddam ilal amam or open your book, then he will say "if I know the pole" and so forth. And usually the class president is given the right by a language institution to record what percentage of teachers use Arabic in the teaching and learning process, although basically it is not appropriate because a student is not fit to find fault with his teacher. But it was considered quite effective because each teacher would race to improve their ability in Arabic.

As is known that the teacher is one of the core components in the learning process, for that a teacher is required to choose an interactive language so that communication runs well (Brown, 2007). The use of Arabic by the teacher as in the Islamic Boarding School in Darussalam although in a limited frequency will have a significant influence on students especially in terms of providing motivation. This statement is based on the research results of Kameli (Kameli, Mostapha, & Baki, 2012) who said that various variations of speech acts used by teachers in learning Arabic have succeeded in providing quality learning processes, increasing motivation.

Al-Usbu 'al-'Arabi and English Week

In order for students to have a balanced mastery between Arabic and English, Islamic boarding schools create programs that regulate the use of both languages known as *al-usbu 'al-abiarabi* for

Arabic weeks and English weeks for English.

In *al-usbu 'al-'arabi* student are required to use Arabic in daily conversation, while in English week in English. This activity also applies to the *ilqa 'mufradat* activity, where in *al-usbu' al-'arabi* the vocabulary is given in Arabic, whereas in English week the vocabulary is in English. As a form of announcement, notification, either verbally via loudspeakers or writing on the bulletin board also adjusts to the language week in progress. Saturday morning apple activities also use Arabic in al-*usbu' al-'ab 'arabi* and use English in English week as well as *muhadatsah* activities.

The determination of the time division of language use through the *al-usbu 'al-'arabi* and English week program is very positive for fostering balanced attitudes and views on the students themselves. Student does not place Arabic higher than Arabic and vice versa. This time division also provides space and opportunities for students to experience firsthand the atmosphere of the use of each language in natural situations. In addition, both Arabic or English vocabulary can develop simultaneously. However, in reality this idealism cannot yet be realized. Because the regulation of time division has not been implemented explicitly. In general students are more likely to use Arabic than English. This could also be the implication of curriculum policies used in Islamic boarding schools that provide a larger portion for learning Arabic. Also, because of the general assumption in a community that places pesantren as an educational institution focusing on the deepening of Islam, Arabic must be prioritized from other foreign languages.

Muhadharah Training

Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic Boarding School seeks to provide broad opportunities for students to practice the use of foreign languages in functional ways. One of the activities oriented to the development of language skills is speech training. This program gives students experience in learning integrated language skills. Because students use interrelated processes between reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

Figure 2. Appearance of Arabic Santri during the visit of the governor of North Sumatra

Muhadharah is one of the positive efforts in creating a language environment. In this activity students find a listening environment. This was experienced when they were delivering a speech, the other participants tried to listen and understand the contents of the speech delivered, and noted the important points of the speech. Student also met with the environment of speaking in this activity, this condition was experienced when he was appointed as a speaker or was asked to deliver *istinbat* from what his colleague had said.

In *muhadharah* training activities that are held once a week the students are grouped randomly into

several groups. Each muhadharah group consists of 35-40 students. In each group there are students from class I to class IV. Class IV students in each group function as *mudabbir*, and in each group class V students are placed as musyrif.

This grouping makes every student have the opportunity to appear as a *muhadharah* officer who covers two people as the master of ceremonies, one person to guide the core *muhadharah* program and another to guide the entertainment program; five to seven people as lecturers. With this arrangement, every student gets an opportunity to be a host at the same time and as lecturers in Indonesian, Arabic and English twice each semester.

Muhadharah training can be categorized as a learning situation that supports students constructing knowledge and experience using foreign languages in meaningful activities. In this activity, from since before and when the activity takes place students will be actively involved. To speak in front of his group's friends, a student is required to explore the theme to be conveyed. Student read library materials, textbooks, notebooks, etc. in order to systematically draft speech material. After that, he tried to write his speech using good sentences and memorize them. At the time of the student's speech training schedule, he tried to present his speech as well as possible. All of these series of processes provide students with very deep learning experiences, so that one day in their lives they are faced with a similar situation or more complex and larger students will be ready to face it.

In connection with learning foreign languages, the practice of *muhadharah* can also be seen as a container for the application of what students learn in various disciplines. From the subject matter of Islamic schools, the Islamic field can be used as a theme, vocabulary learned from Tamrin al-Lughah as a basis for writing speech texts, and the application of writing skills in *al-ta'bir al-'arabi* lessons. As for other fields of study, it can be used as a reinforcement of the content of the speech.

There are a number of notes found in organizing *muhadharah* training activities at the Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic Boarding School, especially for speeches in Arabic or English, including: first, speech training in both foreign languages can be done if students already have knowledge in both foreign languages. enough, and also have experience in various speaking activities. This will be a serious problem for novice students who do not have the knowledge and experience in giving speeches. In addition, this speech is always official and requires a good mastery of language style, and that requires adequate preparation time. For novice students it is impossible for him to make speech texts. So, when it was his turn to appear speaking before his friends in *muhadharah* training, the practice so far that had been done was to memorize the text of the speech that had been provided.

This situation can be a bad cause for student when he is unable to utter a word while on the stand. The simplest possibility is that he hates the practice of *muhadharah* and the most dangerous thing is that he hates the two foreign languages he has learned; secondly, the random grouping of students in a group of *muhadharah*, and also contains students from classes I to IV makes the speech skills of students in a group very heterogeneous. On the one hand this can have a positive impact if senior student can guide their juniors both in making speech texts and in how they are delivered.

However, on the other hand it can have a negative impact, especially for novice students or those who are less skilled in speeches. This very heterogeneous condition can give birth to low self-esteem in students; and third, the fact that student only use existing speech texts and memorize them does not support the development of student language skills. Every student who has language ability is given motivation to compose their own speech texts, according to their abilities and mastery of both foreign languages. This is so that they are trained and have experience in making speech texts, while at the same time applying the entire foreign language learning experience they have experienced.

The explanation above shows that muhadharah training activities at Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic Boarding School are an effort to create a language environment that integrates listening (*istima'*),

speech (*kalam*), and perspective (*musyahadah*). From this activity the students can get language input, such as vocabulary/expressions about the arrangement of events in foreign languages, opening and closing words when delivering speeches, and other vocabulary / expressions that are often heard when participating in training activities. This situation has contributed to the development and improvement of the students' language skills.

Jadal wa Musabaqah al-Lughah

This program is a semester routine coordinated by Darul Lughah Islamic Bording School. Through this program students are expected to compete well internally. According to Wakik Lubis *musabaqah al-lughah jadal* program is held after the exam every semester and the announcement of the winners and the delivery of prizes is in line with the submission of student report cards.

The form of *jadal wa musabaqah al-lughah* that has been carried out is as follows: first, debates relating to certain topics using Arabic, the topics offered are usually designed and determined by Darul Lughah and students are welcome to revoke the number whether part of the group will support or refuse statements about existing themes. Language debate participants are usually class IV-VI but are not closed to students who are still in class I, II and III if indeed they have the ability to take part in debating activities. The form of activities is that student are divided into two groups, namely pros and cons, if in the drawing of student get an odd number then they are as a pro group and if the number obtained is even then they belong to the contra group and each group member is three person.

In the implementation each group is given 5-10 minutes to present a topic in Arabic, after that the jury will review the important points of the statement submitted by the participants then ask how the other groups think using Arabic. The aspect that is the focus of assessment in this debate according to Wakik Lubis is the suitability of the flow of thought and language used.

While *Musabaqah lughah* in question is a competition related to language, such as Arabic speech contest, drama competition, quiz competition. The form of this race is the same as the schedule program (debate) in terms of time. The existence of the language debate as explained seems to provide its own motivation for students, as well as the results of Greenhill's research which says that the debate activities have an influence on the language environment (Greenhill, 2016). Looking at the routine of the wa musabaqah al-lughah that is carried out at the Islamic Boarding School at the end of each semester, it can be understood that this institution has several strategies that are quite effective in realizing a living language environment.

5. Conclusion

Based on the description above it can be understood that the strategy undertaken by the Islamic Boarding School in developing the language environment is by several steps, namely: first, the Arabic *Takhassus* Program, which recruits students to take extra language skills development, and they will become part of the usage agent language in the boarding school environment. Second, *mufradhat shabahiyah*, that is *musyrif al-lughah* assisted by *mudabbir* and student who enter the *takhashshush al-lughah* program every morning introducing new vocabulary to all student, giving new vocabulary also being developed in presenting examples of the use of vocabulary in simple sentences, this activity ranges from 20-30 minutes. Third, Darul Lughah gave new vocabulary to the teachers, this activity was intended so that teachers who had less knowledge of Arabic actively participated in using Arabic, the implication was in the fourth strategy, where teachers were given responsibility to use Arabic as a language introduction in teaching and learning activities, the frequency of using Arabic as the language of instruction in accordance with the ability of teachers, but still students are given the right to provide an assessment of the teacher's language.

Next, fifth, is *al-usbu 'al-'arabi* and english week, namely the boarding school enforces the existence of weeks intended to use Arabic and weeks to use English. Sixth, *muhadharah* training, which is a routine activity every weekend at Islamic Boording School, where *muhadharah* activities start from an orderly event, speech, poetry, and other branches using Arabic and English. Seventh, is the *musabaqah al-lughah* schedule, a program that aims to motivate students to demonstrate their abilities, debate and *musabaqah lughah* is usually held at the end of each semester and the giving of prizes is in line with the submission of student report cards.

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AUTHOR BIODATA

Mahyudin Ritonga, is an Arabic Lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Muhammadiyah University of West Sumatera. He received the Doctoral degree from the Islamic Studies at Graduate School of Islamic State University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. He ID Scopus, Sinta ID, Publons, Wos, Google Scholars ID are 57216507441, 5986807, 3574889, AAA-7912-2021, and BTsBXW8AAAAJ. He currently becomes a member of ADRI, IMLA. He works on Arabic Linguistic, Semantics of Arabic Language, Curriculum of Arabic Learning, Strategies of Arabic Language Learning, Research Methodology, and Islamic Education.

Rahmawati is an Arabic Lecturer at the Faakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan, Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang. She received the Doctoral degree from the Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. She ID Scopus 57225048468, Sinta ID 6073326. She currently becomes a member of IMLA. She works on Arabic Linguistic, Curriculum of Arabic Learning, Strategies Arabic Language Learning.

Talqis Nurdianto is an Arabic Lecturer at the Faculty of Language Science and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, He ID Scopus 57219177177, Sinta ID 5973680. He currently becomes a member of IMLA. He works on Arabic Linguistic, Semantics of Arabic Language, Language and Literature.

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