# Learning Arabic as an L2 (Study on the impact of Online Learning on Speaking Skills)

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# Arabic Learning Orientation in *Ma'had* and Islamic Boarding Schools, and its Relevance to the Need for Human Resources with Language Skills in the Globalization Era

## Abstract

*The problem and the aim of the study:* The demand for human resources with language skills in the globalization era is very high. This is because many companies require active and passive language skills as the main criteria for workforce recruitment. In Indonesia, Arabic teaching institutions are categorized into two forms, namely those that teach with communication skills orientation (ma'had) and those with an orientation to understand the concept as an Islamic knowledge source (Islamic boarding schools). This difference causes varied output skills of each institution. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze which output is more relevant to the skills needed in this globalization era.

*Methods:* This study was designed with a quantitative approach. The data source was ma'had and Islamic boarding school graduates who continued their studies at the Islamic Faculty of West Sumatra, Muhammadiyah University with a total of 43 students. Furthermore, data were obtained through tests that included four language skills, and then analyzed using ME as well as T test.

*Results:* It was found that ma'had and Islamic boarding school graduates have advantage in language skill. This is based on data which showed that they have advantage in speaking, but weak in reading and writing. Meanwhile, the Islamic boarding school graduates have advantage in reading and writing, but the listening skills of graduates from both institutions are balanced.

*Conclusion:* Language skills in listening and communication aspects are essential as interpreters, tour guides, consultants and other opportunities. Meanwhile, human resources with writing skills are needed in the field of manuscript translation and text analysis. Therefore, both graduates have the same opportunity in the globalization era but with different contents.

*Keywords:* Language Skills, Ma'had Graduates, Islamic Boarding School Graduates, Globalization Era.

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## Introduction

Language as a means of communication has an important position in building human quality, language ability is an indicator of human resources readiness facing the globalization era (Abdalla Abdalgane, 2020; Matthes & Thakkar, 2012). It is said that because the understanding the reality and how to do something starts from language, it is difficult for the generations to be able to compete in the era of globalization without good language skills. Arabic in its position as one of the international languages used in the official forum of the United Nations (Alhawary, 2018). It makes this language increasingly studied (Al-Busaidi, 2015) by the wider community in various countries, one of them is Indonesia (Ritonga et al., 2021).

Students who study at the Islamic religious faculty at the Muhammadiyah University of West Sumatra have different backgrounds, such as high school, vocational high school, MA, Islamic boarding schools and ma'had al-Zubair bin al-Awwam. Related to this research, it is interesting for researchers to find out more about the language skills possessed by students who have an Islamic boarding school education background and students who come from ma'had al-Zubair bin al-Awwam. The interest in exploring Arabic language skills in both student backgrounds is also related to the realities of learning in the classroom, students who come from these two backgrounds are quite active in participating in the learning. The language skills possessed by students from the Islamic boarding school and ma'had al-Zubair bin al-Awwam background are then increasingly interesting to study by looking at the dominance of their language skills and their relevance to face global competition readiness.

Technological advances have made global competition tighter in the 21st century. Helaluddin and Fansori say that in this 4.0 era, language skills improvement is needed for learners, because mastery of foreign languages is one of the most important skills for humans (Helaluddin & Fransori, 2019). Interaction between humans can occur anytime and anywhere from various parts of the world through sophisticated technology, so it is necessary to master foreign languages both orally and in writing. Maani et al. in their research revealed that the ability to speak foreign language for students is very much needed in facing the globalization era (Maani et al., 2015), and foreign language skills for Indonesian students need to be improved, so that they are able to compete in the international world (Thitthongkam et al., 2011).

In following the flow of world developments, whether to face social, political, educational or economic competition, it requires good skills in foreign languages in order to master science and technology. Foreign language skills are also needed in understanding culture globally, in order to establish good communication between people. In facing global challenges in the disruption era of the industrial revolution 4.0, it requires mastery of Arabic as a complete communication tool, both orally and in writing. So that the Arabic language environment needs to be raised by all observers of education and language.

In realizing language skills, it is necessary to have specific strategies so that the expected skills will be obtained immediately, so that learning a foreign language can be maximally achieved (Šafranj, 2013), the main objective of foreign language learning is to be able to communicate and to join the global community. Therefore, in facing global competition, students need to be equipped with good foreign language skills especially in Arabic to improve their ability to communicate in Arabic both orally and in writing. Thus more in-depth research is needed regarding Arabic language skills for students in order to prepare themselves to face global competition in the 21st century.

## Materials and Methods

This research was a quantitative research. The data sources of this research were all students of the Faculty of Islamic Religion in the odd semester of 2019/2020 who take Arabic courses that consist of the Islamic religious education study program, Islamic education, Islamic law and Islamic counseling. From the existing population, the researcher took a sample with a purposive technique, where the researcher made the indicators for the sample: 1) Students at the Islamic religious faculty and taking Arabic language courses, 2) The intended student was a Islamic Boarding School graduate and has never studied at ma'had, or 3) students graduated from ma'had but not alumni of Islamic boarding schools.

From the established criteria, a research sample of 43 (forty three) people was obtained as in the following table:

**Table 1**

*Research Sample*

| No | Sample Background | Total |
|----|-------------------|-------|
| 1 | IBS Graduate | 16 |
| 2 | Ma'had Graduate | 27 |
| | Total | 43 |

From the research sample, data will be obtained in the form of Arabic test results that measure four language skills at once. While readiness to face the current competition of globalization, data were obtained based on the sum of the scores obtained by students in the four language skills. For this reason, the criteria for readiness to face the flow of globalization are measured by:

First, if the student achieves a maximum score on four language skills then it is included in the very ready category. Second, if the student reaches a minimum passing score of four language skills then it is included in the ready category. Third, if a student scores only on two language skills while the other two skills do not reach the minimum limit then they are included in the "unready" category. Fourth, if the student only reaches the minimum limit in one aspect of language skills then it is included in the "not ready" category. Therefore, indicators of readiness to face globalization competition can be seen in table 2 below:
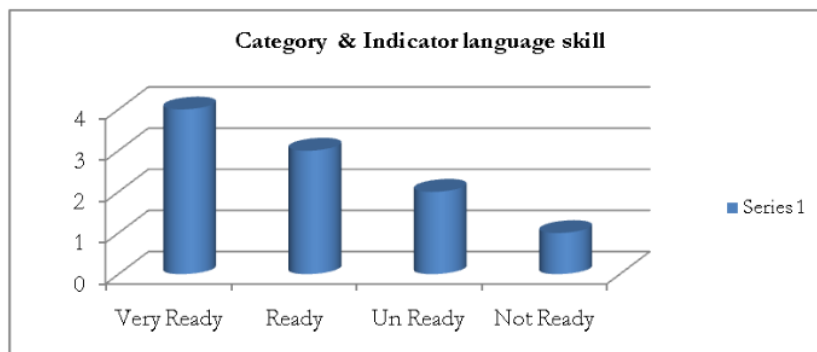


**Diagram 1.**

*Student readiness to face globalization competition based on their Arabic language skills*

The categorization of the assessment given is that each Arabic language skill is given a maximum score if the student got score of 21.5-25, or the equivalent of a score of 86-100, a good score is given if the student scores 17.5-21.4, or equivalent. with 70-85.6. Meanwhile, if students get a score of 13.5-17.4 or equivalent to a grade of 54-69.6 then it is unready category, and if the student has a score of 0-13.4 in each of the four skills or is equivalent to 0-53, 6 then it is in the not ready category.

The research data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel software with the t test formula, namely: H0 = $\mu$ 1 ≤$\mu$ 2 (Output of ma'had with Islamic Boarding School is the same or almost the same in Arabic language skills). H1 = $\mu$ 1 > $\mu$ 2 (Ma'had output is better than Islamic Boarding School in Arabic language skills).

**Research Results**

**Comparison of Final Examination Semester Results for Students of Ma'had and IBS Graduates in Arabic Language Competence**

Data analysis of final semester exam results will be carried out on the two selected samples, namely ma'had graduate students and Islamic boarding school graduate students, to see the dominance of language skills in the two selected samples.

| Variable | Ma'had | IBS |
|---|---|---|
| N | 27 | 16 |
| Max | 86 | 84 |
| Min | 44 | 50 |
| Average | 68.26 | 70.69 |
| Variance | 110.74 | 130.76 |
| Deviation Standard | 10.52 | 11.44 |

From the table above, it can be seen that the highest scores of students who graduated from ma'had and Islamic Boarding School were not much different, from 27 students who graduated from ma'had with the highest score of 86, and out of 16 students who graduated from Islamic Boarding School got the highest score of 84. It also affects the average that is not much different, the average Islamic Boarding School graduate students is only two points higher than the average ma'had graduate students, namely 70.69 to 68.26.

**Analysis of Final Semester Examination Results**

To draw conclusions from the research results, hypothesis testing was carried out. Before testing the hypothesis, the normality test and the homogeneity test are carried out.

## Normality Test

The normality test aims to see the data to be analyzed, the assumption in the statistical test is that the data is normally distributed, namely:

$H0 = L o < L t$

$H1 = L_o > L_t$

$H_0$ was accepted, if $L o < L t$ then the sample comes from a normally distributed population and vice versa if $L_o > L_t$ then the sample comes from a population that was not normally distributed. From the data analysis, the results showed that the ma'had graduate students had Lcount equal to 0. 094, and 0.171 Ltable. Because L o was smaller than Lt, H0 was accepted, meaning that the data were normally distributed. Likewise, students who graduated from Islamic boarding schools have Lcount of 0.147, and Ltable of 0.213. Because Lo was smaller than Lt, H0 was accepted, meaning that the data were also normally distributed.

## Homogeneity Test

In addition to the data normality test on the research sample, it is also necessary to test the homogeneity of the data to see the similarity in some parts of the sample. The homogeneity test was carried out by using the " F-Test Two-Sample for Variances", on the two selected research samples, namely students who graduated from ma'had and students who graduated from Islamic boarding schools. The assumption is that $H0 = F o < F t$ and $H1 = F o > F t$.

From the data analysis, the result shows that Fcount 0.8341 was greater than Ftable 0.4827. Because F was larger from the F table, then H0 was rejected, and H1 was accepted, it means that the data were not homogeneous.

## Hypothesis Test

After testing the normality and homogeneity of the data, it is very important to test the hypothesis on the research data, to see whether or not the results of the two selected sample data were the same or not. As well as to determine that is more dominant between these two samples in Arabic language skills. The assumptions are $H0 = \mu 1 \leq \mu 2$ (Output of ma'had with Islamic Boarding School is the same or almost the same in Arabic language skills). $H1 = \mu 1 > \mu 2$ (Ma'had output is better than Islamic Boarding School in Arabic language skills).

From the analysis of the hypothesis test using the "t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances", the result is that t count was smaller than t table, namely $t o = -0.4918 < t t = 2.022$. It means that H0 was accepted and H1 was rejected, so it can be seen that ma'had

graduates and Islamic Boarding School graduates are almost the same or not much different in Arabic language skills.

## Arabic Listening Skills and Graduates from Ma'had and IBS

## Normality Test

Normality test is aimed to see the data to be analyzed that is normally distributed or not, the assumption in the statistical test is that the data is normally distributed, namely:

$H0 = L o < L t$

$H1 = L o > L t$

H0 is accepted, if $L o < L t$ then the sample comes from a population with a normal distribution and vice versa if $L o > L t$ then the sample comes from a population that was not normally distributed.

| N o. | Gradu ates | N | Lco unt | Lta ble | Descrip tion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ma'had | 2 7 | 0.15 7 | 0.17 1 | Normal |
| 2 | IBS | 1 6 | 0.11 2 | 0.21 3 | Normal |

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the two data samples come from a normally distributed population, namely the L count from the two samples were both smaller than the L table.

## Homogeneity Test

To see the similarity or uniformity of the variance of the selected data, a homogeneity test was carried out on the two samples using the " F-Test Two-Sample for Variances" analysis. From this analysis, the results obtained that Fcount was greater than Ftable, namely $F o = 0.651 > F t = 0.474$, meaning that the data had a variance that is not homogeneous.

## Hypothesis Test (T Test)

To determine which is more dominant between these two samples in Arabic language skills based on *maharah istima'*. The assumptions are $H0 = \mu 1 \leq \mu 2$ (Output of ma'had with Islamic Boarding School is the same or almost the same in *maharah istima'*). $H1 = \mu 1 > \mu 2$ (Ma'had output is better than Islamic Boarding School in *maharah istima'*). From the analysis of the hypothesis test using the " t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances", the result showed that t was greater than t table, namely $t o = 3,750 < t t = 2.023$. It means that H0 was rejected and H1 was accepted, so it can be seen that ma'had graduates are better or more

dominant in Arabic language skills based on *maharah istima'*.

### Arabic Speaking Skills of Ma'had and IBS Graduates

### Normality Test

Normality test is to see the data to be analyzed. The assumption in the statistical test is that the data are normally distributed, namely:
H0 = L o <L t
H1 = L o > L t

H0 is accepted, if L o <L t then the sample comes from a population with a normal distribution and vice versa if Lo > Lt then the sample comes from a population that is not normally distributed.

| No. | Graduates | N | Lcount | Ltable | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ma'had | 27 | 0.147 | 0.171 | Normal |
| 2 | IBS | 16 | 0.138 | 0.213 | Normal |

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the two data samples come from a normally distributed population, namely the Lcount from the two samples are both smaller than the Ltable.

### Homogeneity Test

To see the similarity or uniformity of the variance of the selected data, a homogeneity test was carried out on the two samples using the " F-Test Two-Sample for Variances" analysis. From this analysis, the results obtained that Fcount was greater than Ftable, namely Fo = 0.721> Ft = 0.474, meaning that the data had not homogeneous variance.

### Hypothesis Test (t Test)

To determine the more dominant between these two samples in Arabic language skills based on *maharah kalam*. The assumptions are H0 = μ 1 ≤μ 2 (Output of ma'had with Islamic Boarding School is the same or almost the same in *maharah kalam*). H1 = μ 1 > μ 2 (Ma'had output is better than Islamic Boarding School in *maharah kalam*).

From the analysis of the hypothesis test using the " t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances", the result is that t count was smaller than t table, namely t o = 1.125 < t t = 2.023. It means that H0 was accepted and H1 was rejected, so it can be seen that ma'had and Islamic Boarding School graduates were almost the same in Arabic language skills based on *maharah kalam*.

### Arabic Reading Skills of Ma'had and IBS Graduates

### Normality Test

Normality test is to see the data to be analyzed, the assumption in the statistical test is that the data are normally distributed, namely:
H0 = L o <L t
H1 = L o > L t

H0 is accepted, if L o <L t then the sample comes from a population with a normal distribution and vice versa if L o > L t then the sample comes from a population that is not normally distributed.

| No. | Graduates | N | Lcount | Ltable | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ma'had | 27 | 0.133 | 0.171 | Normal |
| 2 | Islamic Boarding School | 16 | 0.137 | 0.213 | Normal |

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the two data samples come from a normally distributed population, namely the Lcount from the two samples are both smaller than the L table.

### Homogeneity Test

To see the similarity or at least the variance of the selected data, a homogeneity test was carried out on the two samples using the analysis " F-Test Two-Sample for Variances". From this analysis, the results obtained that Fcount was smaller than Ftable, namely F o = 1.052> F t = 2.341, meaning that the data had a homogeneous variance.

### Hypothesis Test (t Test)

To determine which is more dominant between these two samples in Arabic language skills based on *maharah istima'*. The assumptions are H0 = μ 1 ≤μ 2 (Output of ma'had with Islamic Boarding School is the same or almost the same in *maharah qiro'ah*). H1 = μ 1 > μ 2 (Ma'had output is better than Islamic Boarding School in *maharah qiro'ah*).

From the analysis of the hypothesis test using the " t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances", the result is that t count is smaller than t table, namely t o = -3.998 < t t = 2.023. It means that H0 is accepted and H1 is rejected, so it can be seen that ma'had and Islamic Boarding School graduates are almost the same or not much different in Arabic language skills based on *maharah qiro'ah*.

### Arabic Writing Skills from Ma'had and IBS Graduates

### Normality Test

Normality test is to see the data to be analyzed, the assumption in the statistical test is that the data are normally distributed, namely:

H0 = L o <L t

H1 = L o > L t

H0 is accepted, if L o <L t then the sample comes from a population with a normal distribution and vice versa if L o > L t then the sample comes from a population that is not normally distributed.

| No. | Graduates | N | L count | L table | Description |
|-----|-----------|---|---------|---------|-------------|
| 1 | Ma'had | 27 | 0.159 | 0.171 | Normal |
| 2 | Islamic Boarding School | 16 | 0.141 | 0.213 | Normal |

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the two data samples come from a normally distributed population, namely the Lcount from the two samples are both smaller than the L table.

### Homogeneity Test

To see the similarity or at least the variance of the selected data, a homogeneity test was carried out on the two samples using the analysis " F-Test Two-Sample for Variances".

From this analysis, the results obtained that Fcount was greater than Ftable, namely F o = 0.631> F t = 0.474, meaning that the data had not homogenous variance.

### Hypothesis Test (t Test)

To determine which is more dominant between these two samples in Arabic language skills based on *maharah istima'*. The assumptions are H0 = μ 1 ≤μ 2 ( Ma'had output with Islamic Boarding School is the same or almost the same in *maharah kitabah*). H1 = μ 1 > μ 2 (Ma'had output is better than Islamic Boarding School in *maharah kitabah*).

From the analysis of hypothesis testing using the " t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances", the result is that t count was smaller than t table, namely t o = -2.131 < t t = 2.023. This means that H0 was accepted and H1 was rejected, so it can be seen that ma'had and Islamic Boarding School graduates are almost the same or not much different in Arabic language skills based on our maharah kitabah.

### Students' Readiness in Facing Global Competition is based on Language Skills

The readiness of students in facing global competition can be seen based on the results of the frequency distribution of data from the two selected samples, namely graduates of ma'had and graduates of Islamic boarding schools.

Distribution of frequency & percentage of Ma'had graduates.
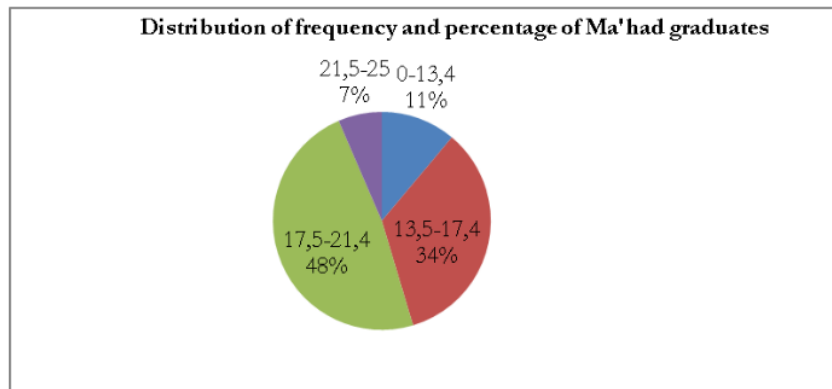


From the diagram above, it can be seen that 7% of ma'had graduate students were ready to face global competition, and 48% say they were ready, 34% of students were unready to face global competition, and 11% were not ready to face global competition.

Frequency of Arabic language by graduates of Islamic boarding school
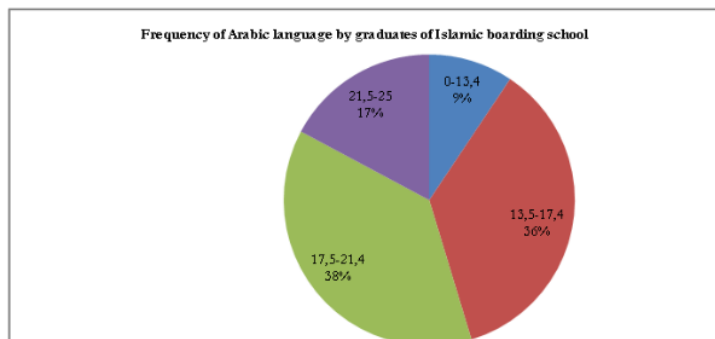


Based on the diagram above, it can be seen that 17% of Islamic Boarding School graduate students were very ready to face global competition, and 38% said they are ready, 36% of students were not ready to face global competition, and 11% were not ready to face global competition.

From these two analyzes, it can be seen that students who are very ready to face global competition in terms of language skills, from Islamic Boarding School graduates more than ma'had graduates, 17%: 7%, meaning that 10% were more highly prepared students who graduate from Islamic boarding schools than students who graduate from ma'had. Meanwhile, students who stated that they were ready to face global competition had more than 10% of ma'had graduates than Islamic Boarding School graduates, 48% of ma'had graduates and 38% of Islamic Boarding School graduates.

Then those who were not ready to face global competition was only 2% different between ma'had graduates and Islamic Boarding School graduates, 34% ma'had graduates said that they were not ready and 36% Islamic Boarding School graduates also say they were not ready to face this global competition. And 11% of ma'had graduate students and 9% of Islamic Boarding School graduate students stated that they were not ready to face global competition in terms of language skills.

**Discussion**

Seen from the average Arabic language skills, the data showed that students who graduated from Islamic boarding schools were 2.43 more superior than Ma'had graduate. Arabic in Islamic boarding schools is a skill that must be mastered by learners, because in Islamic Boarding School, Arabic communication is applied that must be followed by all students or learners. So that it is possible that Islamic Boarding School graduates have the advantage of speaking Arabic, it is only natural that students who graduate from the Islamic Boarding School can be active in Arabic language lectures.

Meanwhile, in listening skills or mastery of *mufradat* that are covered in *maharah istima'*, the data showed that ma'had graduates had more mastery over mufradat than Islamic Boarding School graduates. Mastery of *mufradat* Arabic is very important for learners to acquire other skills (*maharah kalam*, *qira'ah*, and *kitabah*) (Machmudah et al., 2019). *Mufradat* or vocabulary is the main point in acquiring Arabic language skills. So that *mufradat* becomes the main thing mastered by every Arabic learner (Maskor et al., 2016). So it is natural that students who graduate ma'had are actively involved in learning, because they have good mastery of *mufradat*.

Speaking skill is the skill that must be mastered by foreign language learners (Arabic). The research data showed that between ma'had graduates and Islamic Boarding School graduates that there is not much difference in speaking ability between the two outputs. Arabic will still exist if it is still used by humans in various aspects of life (Lubis, 2009). The use of Arabic in everyday life also determines the life or death of the language in a region or country. However, Arabic will never disappear from the earth (Kamusella, 2017), because Allah directly guards and protects it, namely by preserving it as the language of the Quran which has guaranteed its eternity (Nasier, 2018). In using language as an oral communication tool, in addition to accuracy in choosing and mastery of vocabulary, it is also necessary to pay attention to rules or grammar (Alqahtani, 2015). If grammar is ignored, it will cause difficulties in language (Adila, 2019). For this reason, foreign language learners must also be able to master grammar well, so that they can communicate in foreign languages properly and correctly.

Based on this, both ma'had and Islamic Boarding School graduates have almost equal

opportunities in mastering Arabic as a good oral communication tool in everyday life. Because students at Islamic Boarding School have studied grammar or *qawa'id* in depth (Mahbubah et al., 2020), and one of the characteristics of the Arabic language learning model in Islamic Boarding School is the existence of a communicative Arabic language training center (Zarkasyi, 2020; Fauzi, 2019). The findings of other studies indicate that the Arabic language students become better in schools with their recruitment of education with the right management, and students equipped with the effort to build a commitment to give priority to the mastery of the Arabic language communicative daily (Khaira et al., 2021). Meanwhile, ma'had graduates as the results of the above research have better vocabulary mastery.

In reading skills, research data shows that Islamic Boarding School graduates and ma'had graduates are relatively the same or not much different. Students need Arabic reading skills to understand texts or literature in order to improve understanding in religion. In addition, reading skills in foreign languages are also needed to understand values and ideas across countries (Versteegh, 2015; Alfataftah & Jarrar, 2018) as well as cultural exchanges in responding to the challenges of the current era of globalization.

The research data showed that the Arabic writing skills of Islamic Boarding School graduates and ma'had graduates were not much different. To support writing skills, vocabulary skills are needed, because vocabulary has a significant effect on writing skills in foreign languages (Omar et al., 2016; Viera, 2017). The ability to speak foreign languages is important because of the cooperation between countries (Che Haron et al., 2016) and mastery of foreign languages will create a wider mindset and insight (Stein-Smith, 2017). Through writing, the vocabulary can also be better, because of the repetition of the same words in writing, the vocabulary is memorized by itself, even though it is a difficult vocabulary. So writing using Arabic is one way of mastering Arabic language skills which is good for non-Arabs (Dajani et al., 2014). Writing in Arabic is also very important for communicating in writing, so that to improve Arabic writing skills requires the application of *imla'*.

Politically, Language Arabic is the language of the third after English and Spanish, and has been recognized internationally and used in the official forums of the United Nations. In the world economy, the Middle East is known as the world's largest mineral resource, so Arabic plays an important role in the global economy (Allaq, 2014). Therefore, Arabic language skills must be improved, and the Arabic learning curriculum must be oriented towards the formation of more

competitive language proficiency to answer the challenges of the times in the era of globalization (Morrow & Castleton, 2007). To answer the challenges of the times, then learning Arabic should be prepared to innovate in every field. Arabic learning curriculum innovation is needed to improve the ability to acquire Arabic language. In the face of the challenges of free trade market, businesses in Indonesia absolute communication skills in a foreign language (Tenzer et al., 2017).

From the findings of research on Arabic Language Education study program students who come from two Islamic education institutions who are equally superior in Arabic language skills, it is known that the Arabic language skills of ma'had graduates and Islamic Boarding School graduates are almost the same or not much different based on statistical analysis of grades. The final exam of the semester of the students used as the research sample. In facing global competition, data analysis showed that students graduating from Islamic boarding schools a were 10% more very ready than ma'had graduates. Meanwhile, students who stated that they were ready to face global competition were 10% superior to ma'had graduates compared to Islamic Boarding School graduates. And those who said they were not ready were 34% ma'had graduates, and 36% Islamic Boarding School graduates. Meanwhile, 11% of them were not ready for ma'had and 9% of Islamic Boarding School graduates. This percentage analysis assumes that Arabic Language Education students, whether they come from ma'had or Islamic boarding school graduates, have good abilities to face global competition. However, it needs to be improved again in every Arabic language skill, so that everyone is better prepared to face challenges or competition in the globalization era.

**Conclusion**

From the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that Arabic language education students, both from ma'had and Islamic Boarding School graduates. They have good skills in Arabic, and have enthusiasm for learning and positive activeness in taking language courses. Arabic, because both of these outputs have been equipped with good Arabic from the beginning. For the three skills, these two outputs are almost the same or not much different seen from the analysis of their Arabic learning outcomes in lectures. In listening, Ma'had graduates are better than that of Islamic Boarding School. The two outputs also have a readiness that is not much different in facing global competition when measured from Arabic language skills, in which Arabic is the official

language used in international forums. It can also be used as material for future researchers to conduct research on these two outputs.

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