Implementation of Activity-Based Language Week Program in Improving Arabic Communication Skills at Ma'had al-Jami'ah

by 24 Mahyudin

Implementation of Activity-Based Language Week Program in Improving Arabic Communication Skills at *Ma'had al-Jami'ah*

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ABSTRACT

Improving Arabic speaking skills for non-native speakers are faced with serious problems, so educational institutions must be able to make new breakthroughs in efforts to improve communication skills. *Ma'had al-Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan determines that a program is seen as part of efforts to improve Arabic communication skills, namely "activity-based language week". This study aimed to describe the implementation of the activity-based language week program at Ma'had Al-Jamiah IAIN Padangsidimpuan in Arabic learning, especially *maharah kalam* projected as an alternative to reduce the problematic Arabic skills of PTKI students. This study was carried out with a qualitative approach where data were collected through participatory observation, interviews, and document studies. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman technique consisting of collection, reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. Based on the results, the activity-based language week program was well implemented in four activities with various activities, namely *ilqa' al-mufrodat, muroja'ah, hiwar* practice, and *muhadhoroh lughoh*. These four activities were proven to be able to minimize the difficulties of students in learning Arabic based on improving skills in using Arabic as a means of daily communication. This study recommends further researchers to conduct trials related to the effectiveness of its implementation or examine the language week program.

Keyword

Arabic Language; Communication Skills; Language Week;

مستخلص البحث

إن ترقية مهارات الكلام باللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها تواجه مشاكل خطيرة، لذلك يجب أن تكون المؤسسات التعليمية قادرة على تحقيق اختراقات جديدة في الجهود الرامية لترقية مهارة الكلام عند الطلبة. وقد قرر معهد الجامعة الاسلامية الحكومية بادنج سيدمبوان أن البرنامج ينظر إليه على أنه جزء من الجهود الرامية إلى لترقية مهارات الاتصال باللغة العربية، أي "أسبوع اللغة القائم على النشاط". تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى وصف تنفيذ برنامج أسبوع اللغة القائم على النشاط في معهد الجامع إيان بادانغسيديمبوان في تعلم اللغة العربية، وخاصة مهارة كلام المتوقعة كبديل للحد من المهارات العربية الإشكالية. وقد أجريت هذه الدراسة بنهج نوعي جمعت فيه البيانات من خلال المراقبة التشاركية والمقابلات ودراسات الوثائق. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام تقنية مايلز وهوبرمان التي تتكون من جمع البيانات وتحديدها، والعرض التقديمي، واستخلاص الاستنتاجات. وبناء على النتائج، تم تنفيذ برنامج أسبوع اللغة القائم على النشاط بشكل جيد في أربعة أنشطة ذات أنشطة مختلفة، وهي إلقاء المفردات، والمراجعة، وممارسة الحوار، والمحاضرة. وقد أثبتت هذه الأنشطة الأربعة قدرتها على تقليل الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلبة في تعلم اللغة العربية على أساس تحسين المهارات في استخدام اللغة العربية كوسيلة للتواصل اليومي. توصي هذه الدراسة المزيد من الباحثين بإجراء تجارب تتعلق بفعالية تنفيذه أو دراسة برنامج أسبوع اللغة.

كلمات أساسية   أسبوع اللغة: اللغة العربية: مهارة الكلام

INTRODUCTION

The change in the orientation of Islamic colleges from formal religious education with non-dormitory to informal education with dormitory becomes the background for the emergence of *Ma'had al-Jamiah* (Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi Islam, 2021). The availability of religious courses at Islamic religious universities requires students to learn the Arabic language because it will help them understand the sources of religious teachings, namely the Qur'an and Hadith as well as classical and modern books written using the Arabic language (Ritonga et al., 2021), or provide convenience in memorizing the Qur'an (Ismail et al., 2019). The Arabic language is used by students in daily interactions at Ma'had regardless of their previous background (Marlius et al., 2021). The Arabic language has become the main need for students in the dormitory because all activities are carried out using the Arabic language.

Ma'had al-jamiah faced various kinds of Arabic learning problems, both of them are from the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. In general, there are two Arabic learning problems, namely linguistic and non-linguistick (Fikri et al., 2021). Linguistic problems related to language are phonetics, morphology, and grammar, while non-linguistic problems are learning motivation, facilities, programmed teaching methods. The problems of Arabic learning are vary greatly depending on age and learning environment, where every age has its own problems in learning the Arabic language (El-Omari & Bataineh, 2018). Learning Arabic for school students is more influenced by motivation from the surrounding environment, while for university students it is strongly influenced by orientation. The problem with Arabic learning at *Ma'had Al-jamiah* is the low understanding of Arabic and Islamic teachings (Mufidah et al., 2019). This is due to the fact that not all students at Islamic colleges are graduates of Islamic boarding schools or Islamic religious educational institutions but are required to learn Arabic (Ritonga, Widodo, Lahmi, et al., 2021).

Arabic learning at Ma'had Al-jamiah uses direct methods, presentations, cooperative learning (Shiddiq, 2018) and a peer tutor model with a pre-learning approach in shobahul lughoh activities (Mufidah et al., 2018). Arabic learning relies on the role of the dormitory supervisor by determining various linguistic activities with a scheduled activity model (Ritonga et al., 2022). Maximizing Arabic language conversation material can be performed in three stages, namely opening activities, core activities, and affirmation (Maturedy et al., 2020). *Ma'had Al-Jamiah* as an Islamic college has alternatives in Arabic learning. Seeing the various models of Arabic learning at *Ma'had Al-jamiah* as mentioned above in the form of methods, strategies, and teaching programs is useful for accelerating students to master the Arabic language.

This study is based on Muhammad Mas'ud and Urifatun Anis (2020)where one of the programs to accelerate the mastery of Arabic language in *Ma'had Al-jamiah* is to apply the Arab village model by carrying out learning management including planning, organizing, and evaluating. Zurqani et al design daily, weekly, and monthly Arabic learning programs at *Ma'had Al-jamiah* (Zurqoni et al., 2020). Susanti et al (2020) explain that the use of appropriate media leads to more activeness in Arabic learning. This study will complement previous studies related to Arabic learning at Ma'had Al-jamiah by offering weekly learning programs with a student activity approach. After following the learning process, students are expected to be able to improve communication skills using the Arabic language. The Arabic learning alternative must of course adapt to the needs and circumstances so as to achieve learning objectives more effectively. Each Ma'had al-jamiah has its own problems in Arabic learning and requires different learning solutions.

Arabic learning with an activity model makes students involved continuously and actively participate in building the learning experience. Active involvement of students in the learning process will lead them to a learning experience making them the main actors in carrying out the teaching process. Students can enjoy each stage so that they not only know the core material but will also find additional experience.

Arabic learning combined with various activities will make them the subject of learning. Students carry out the material being studied so that they are not only passive listeners but also active. Learning orientation is designed not only to distribute teaching materials that may not leave a mark on students. Students are perceived as capable of doing the stages so that a learning model is built with the andragogical concept. Students are able to think for themselves and solve their own problems so that learning independence is very well developed and in accordance with the desire to learn at their age. Independent learning allows learning beyond the targets set by the teacher because in the process they can develop according to their respective abilities. Optimizing learning activities with this learning model will have an influence in balancing the physical, mental, emotional, and intellectual activities of students. When carrying out activities given by the teacher, students do it physically while thinking about how to do it and analyzing the activity to get maximum results. After completing the activity, each student can appreciate the learning outcomes of themselves and other friends.

Based on the description above, it is found that aspects that have not been worked on by previous researchers, therefore these aspects will be the focus of this research. The focus and purpose of this research is to uncover how the

implementation of activity-based language week programs, and explain the improvement of Arabic communication skills achieved through the program.

In line with the goals described, this research contributes to the learning of Arabic in the future. The expected contribution of this research is: first, to be a reference for academics who have an interest in conducting research on the same content. Second, the results of this study can be used as a reference for Arabic education practitioners who want to apply the language week program to their institutions.

METHOD

This qualitative descriptive study explores the implementation of an activity-based language week program. Data are collected with participatory observation, interviews, and document studies. This study explores the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the language week program to improve Arabic communication skills. This study also explains the inhibiting and supporting factors.

Data are collected by observing language week activities, in making observations also accompanied by observation guidelines. The data are analyzed with the Miles and Huberman technique consisting of data collection, data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions.
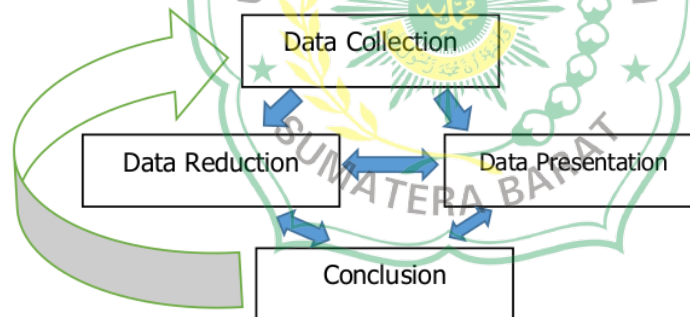

Figure 1. Data analysis model (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

From Figure 1 it can be explained that the analysis model used in this study is interactive. The point is that the analysis of research data is carried out in line with the collection of data until the conclusion. Researchers do an analysis of each data and at the time of reduction and present it, conclusions are raised when the research data is considered to have been saturated.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The language week program is held by *Ma'had Al-jamiah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan for the implementation of Arabic learning. The learning in question is carried out in a non-formal environment namely dormitory. This program is implemented by relying on activities to achieve the objectives of Arabic learning. Learning has two main materials including *istima* 'and *kalam* because it is the main requirement for Arabic language to be used as a daily language in the dormitory. *Istima'* and *kalam* are two *maharoh* which support each other (Fuad Efendi, 2012).

The main objective of this program is to make students able to use Arabic language as a spoken language. Along with the objectives described above, Abdikarimove et al explain that communication activities can improve speaking skills (Abdikarimova et al., 2021). In practice, the communication process that occurs cannot be separated from *istima* 'and *kalam* because in a muhadatsah there must be listening and speaking. In theory, istima' is the main basis for acquiring language to be developed from linguistic theory to receptive language theory so that the basis of language is listening (Çakir, 2018).

Learning includes planning, implementation, and evaluation. This plan is also called learning management as an effort to achieve the goal of effective and efficient Arabic learning (Amrullah et al., 2020). Planning is carried out by mapping materials and activities for students to follow. This program covers several stages, namely making an Arabic language curriculum to serve as a guide for teachers within a year covering teaching objectives, teaching materials, time required, material limitations, and achievement targets. The annual schedule is adjusted to the day of learning, *mufrodat*, and student groups. Planning is also an important element so that it becomes a guide in carrying out teaching activities. With this planning, Arabic teachers will know the process is carried out and the teaching objectives will be achieved.

In accordance with the data obtained in the field, it is known that *Ma'had al-Jam'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan has implemented a language week program, while the forms of activities in this program are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Forms of activity-based language week program at *Ma'had Al-jamiah IAIN*

No	Activity	Description	Target
1	*Ilqa' al-mufrodat*	*Istima'*, *hiwar* (memorizing mufrodat and applying it in various forms of sentences)	Students have the skills to hear and speak Arabic language word for word

2	Muroja'a al-mufrodat	*Istima'* (repeating muforadat given in the last one week)	Students are able to master the mufrodat that has been previously taught both orally and in writing
3	*Hiwar* practice	*hiwar* (fellow students do *hiwar* with the model determined by the teacher)	Students are able to use mufrodat in Arabic conversation
4	*Muhadhoroh lughowiyah*	*Istima', hiwar* (applying the Arabic language into several practical forms, whether hiwar, speech, Arabic debate, short stories, Arabic drama, Arabic interviews, Arabic news reading, Arabic commentators, Arabic talk shows, Arabic fiqh presentations, Stand up comedy, riddles and Arabic songs	Students are able to use Arabic language orally and express it in various ways

Based on Table 1, the language week program is carried out at Ma'had Al-jamiah to improve communication skills. Arabic language consists of 4 forms, namely *Ilqa' al-mufrodat, Muroja'a al mufrodat, hiwar* practive, and *Muhadhoroh lughowiyah*.

Ilqa' al-mufrodat, Mufrodat learning by the dormitory supervisor is carried out every morning for four days, from Monday to Thursday or called shobah al-lughoh. *Mufrodat* (vocabulary) taught is taken from *al-Arabiah baina yadaik*. The new *Mufrodat* will be used by students in daily activities in the dormitory. The number of *mufrodat* taught for one year is 1000 where 656 mufrodat are taken from the book *al-Arabiah baina yadaik* and the remaining 344 mufrodat considered important are taken from other sources. From 1000 mufrodat, 500 mufrodat are taught in the first semester and 500 are taught in the second semester. In addition to teaching the mufrodat, students are also guided to use the mufrodat in a simple form. Students practice vocabulary in speaking with the concept of adding interrogative sentences to mufradat.

$$\text{مفردات} \quad \frac{\text{استفهام + مفردات (اسم)}}{\text{استفهام + مفردات (فعل)}} \quad \text{جملة اسمية/فعلية}$$
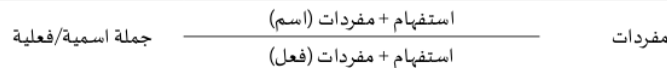
Figure 2. Patterns of Teaching Arabic Vocabulary in the Language Week Program

From Figure 2, it can be understood that the learning of mufradat in *Ma'had al-Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan is carried out by teaching mufradat by

adding question sentences, teaching *mufradat* by adding verbs. In accordance with the data found, this pattern is carried out to strengthen students' understanding of the use of vocabulary that has been learned.

Ilqa al-mufrodat is held every morning, because the ability to absorb lessons for each student is still high and has not received much information so that their minds have not been burdened by other aspects. One of the habits to start learning is to make Arabic language games intended to restore concentration and motivation. This is in line with the findings of language learning observers that language games can increase concentration (Morthy & Abdul Aziz, 2020; Kamal, 2021; Putri et al., 2021).

In order to get used to the use of mufrodat, it is mandatory to use Arabic language while in the dormitory. As a consequence, students who do not use the Arabic language in communicating will receive a predetermined punishment. To find out students who do not use Arabic language, some students are assigned as *jasus* (agents). Usually, punishment is decided during the night of punishment (*lailatul iqobah*). Musthofa and Ilham Rosyadi (2020) explain that giving punishment to students not using the Arabic language in the dormitory can provide motivation to continue using the Arabic language.

After data collection and analysis, this program becomes a support program for Arabic language teaching at the Language Development Center. Students in the dormitory are required to take Arabic learning intensively at the Language Development Center. Learning at the Language Development Center is taught by Arabic language lecturers and managed professionally by using the *al-Arabiah baina yadaik* book for 600 minutes every Monday to Friday regarding lughoh elements (*aswat, mufrodat, tarakib an-nahwiyah*) and *maharoh al-lughowiyah* (linguistic competence consists of *istima', kalam, qiroah* and *kitabah*). This Arabic learning is mandatory material for all students in the first year and included as credits.

There is an integration in the development and implementation of the curriculum so as to make the learning objectives more optimistic to be achieved. This curriculum integration model has also been widely studied by various researchers both at the school and university level, as stated by R. Tolinggi by integrating the Arabic language curriculum in the morning, evening, in the dormitory, or *pesantren* (R Tolinggi, 2020). Integration of Islamic religious curriculum with Arabic language is also an effort to improve the ability to understand the sources of Islamic teachings with Arabic language so that curriculum redesign is carried out (Alsaiari, 2015; Syah, 2016; Ritonga, Widodo, Munirah, et al., 2021). Nurcholis et al state that Integration studied by Zubaidillah is so interesting because it integrates the *pesantren* and public school curriculum in one learning process, including Arabic language (Nurcholis et al., 2020).

Mufrodat murojaah is held on Friday with the aim of knowing mastery of the previously taught *mufrodat*. *Muroja'ah* is carried out by teachers in the morning *(shobah al-lughoh)*. To find out and record memorization.

The form of evaluation of the language week program that applies at *Ma'had Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan is equipped with an evaluation sheet that is used as a reference for students and supervisors. The evaluation sheet contains the Number, student name, student master number, Department and faculty, main topics, and the total mufrodat that have been memorized by students and the signature of the supervisor.

Language week at Ma'had al-Jami'ah Padangsidimpuan is also carried out in the form of Hiwar Practice, as an example can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. *Hiwar* Practice at *Ma'had Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan

Hiwar practice is held on Saturday morning and Sunday night. *Hiwar* practice is carried out in pairs and alternately, where students are given "the hiwar title" will be discussed and developed into a *hiwar*. Students are gathered in a field in the form of a circle and are invited to choose a partner. After students have found their partners to do *hiwar*, after five minutes, students change partners. In practice, all teachers become supervisors to ensure all students do hiwar and help students. As an effort to improve the process of Arabic speaking skills, practice using Arabic language on Saturday and Sunday nights are carried out in the form of *muhadatsah*, as well as punishments for students not using the Arabic language in communicating.

Based on the results, there are differences in abilities seen from the faculty aspect that Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training students are better than other faculties. This difference is understandable because based on the data, FTIK students are mostly from pesantren with the basic Arabic language. Meanwhile, the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business students have lower Arabic skills than other faculties because many students are from public or

vocational schools so students just learn Arabic and even know Arabic after studying on campus. Likewise in the other two faculties, namely the Faculty of Sharia and Law as well as the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication Studies.

The language week program at *Ma'had Al-jamiah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan can encourage the mastery of Arabic speaking skills (*maharotul kalam*). Of the four faculties namely the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, the Faculty of Da'wah and communication science, the Faculty of Sharia and Law, and the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training students perform better than the other three faculties. The Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training students mostly are graduates of pesantren or other Islamic educational institutions. This can be seen from the results of tests carried out by the IAIN Padangsidimpuan Language Development Center for students every month. To find out the progress, the results of the placement test and the results of the exam in the first month are compared. The previous learning experience can accelerate proficiency in using the Arabic language, especially speaking skills.

Various studies shows that the main problem of Arabic learning is of diverse backgrounds. Several study results also prove that the background of students has an impact and sometimes causes gaps in Arabic learning outcomes (Mukmin, 2019; Ajape et al., 2015; Mahdi & Lubis, 2020; Anandi, 2021). In addition to educational background, the problem is also influenced by the mother tongue because when studying a foreign language, a student will look for equivalent words according to the mother tongue (Alkhateeb, 2016), the same reality does not only occur in Arabic learning but also in other foreign languages (Mnasri & Habbash, 2021; Ridha, 2012).

Another form of language week program activities at Ma'had al-Jami'ah is *Muhadhoroh lughowiyah*. This activity is carried out to practice *mufrodat* not only in the form of ordinary sentences but to get used to it in various ways, both *hiwar*, speeches, Arabic debates, short stories, Arabic dramas, Arabic interviews, Arabic news reading, Arabic commentators, Arabic talk shows, presenting Arabic fiqh material, standup comedy, riddles, and Arabic songs. *Muhadhoroh* is considered an activity to support language habituation because it includes activities that must be performed using the Arabic language.

The language week program that has been implemented at *Ma'had al-Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan can improve the arabic communication skills of students supported by clarity of planning and implementation that is prepared and implemented. This statement is in line with expert opinions that assert that the success of each program starts from correct planning (Freestone, 2012; Wiley & García, 2016; Munthe & Conway, 2017). The results of this study also support the conclusions of Park and Lee who examined the impact of the program on

English language skills, in its conclusion it was affirmed that although statistically no data was found that proved an improvement in language skills, but in reality there was a significant increase in student vocabulary (Park & Lee, 2019).

In accordance with the data presentation and analysis, it can be emphasized that the language week held at *Ma'had al-Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan has not completely provided satisfactory results for all parties, but at least this new program has changed the perspective of students towards Arabic language both in urgency to learn and how to learn. The increase in the ability to use the Arabic language can be seen in daily activities. Therefore, to maximize the learning outcomes of the language week program in improving the speaking skills of students, it takes hard work from the teachers at *Ma'had al-Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan.

CONCLUSIONS

The activty-basic language week program carried out at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* IAIN Padangsidimpuan as well as data and analysis shows that: first, the language week activity program is carried out in the form of *Ilqa' al-mufrodat, muroja'ah al-mufrodat, hiwar practice,* and *muhadhoroh lughowiyah*. Second, the language week activity program that has been implemented has been proven to have an impact on improving students' Arabic skills. The improvement in communicative Arabic language skills is evident from their ability when performing in activities Arabic debates, short stories, Arabic dramas, Arabic interviews, Arabic commentators, Arabic talk shows, standup comedy, riddles, and Arabic songs. Academics and researchers learning Arabic can expand on research that has a link to this topic. As well as studies related to the level of effectiveness of language week in improving speaking skills, or models of strengthening the ability to communicate Arabic with certain programs. Even researchers can then conduct trials of one form of language week program in improving Arabic skills.

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