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Implementing *Mahārah al-Kalām* in Bilingual Islamic Boarding Schools: A Multi-Site Case Study in Kudus, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* in three bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency, focusing on implementation patterns, supporting and inhibiting conditions, and instructional development strategies. A qualitative multi-site case study design was employed. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving boarding-school leaders, Arabic language teachers, and students selected through purposive sampling at Pondok Tahfidz Modern Al-Aqsho, Darun Najah Islamic Boarding School, and Pondok Tahfidz Nurul Qur'an MAN 1 Kudus. The findings show that the three institutions share core practices, including *muḥādathah*, *mufradāt* reinforcement, and institutional language supervision, while differing in communicative activities, student adaptation, and language-management practices. Supporting conditions include an established *bi'ah lughawiyyah*, teacher guidance, and consistent supervision, whereas challenges include limited vocabulary, fear of linguistic mistakes, weak peer motivation, monotonous learning activities, and differences in instructional media. The study contributes a contextual multi-site account of how institutional language management and student-level conditions shape the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām*. Based on these findings, five evidence-informed development areas are proposed: strengthening the language environment, expanding communicative activities, enhancing teacher capacity, integrating digital media, and sustaining language programs.

Keywords: Arabic Language; Bilingual Education; Islamic Boarding Schools; Mahārah Al-Kalām; Speaking Skills

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل تطبيق *مهارة الكلام* في ثلاثة معاهد إسلامية داخلية ثنائية اللغة في محافظة كودوس، مع التركيز على أنماط التطبيق، والعوامل الداعمة والمعيقة، واستراتيجيات تطوير التعليم. واعتمدت الدراسة تصميم دراسة الحالة

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متعددة المواقع بالمنهج الكيفي. وجُمعت البيانات من خلال الملاحظة، والمقابلات شبه المنظمة، والتوثيق، بمشاركة مديري المعاهد، ومدرسي اللغة العربية، والطلاب الذين اختيروا بطريقة قصدية في معهد تحفيظ العصر الأقصى، ومعهد دار النجاح الإسلامي الداخلي، ومعهد تحفيظ نور القرآن بالمدرسة الثانوية الإسلامية الحكومية ،الأولى بكودوس. وأظهرت النتائج أن المؤسسات الثلاث تشترك في ممارسات أساسية منها *المحادثة*، وتعزيز *المفردات*، والإشراف اللغوي المؤسسي، مع وجود اختلافات في الأنشطة التواصلية، وتكيف الطلاب، وإدارة اللغة. وتتمثل الظروف الداعمة في وجود *بيئة لغوية* راسخة، وتوجيه المعلمين، واستمرار الإشراف، في حين تشمل التحديات محدودية المفردات، والخوف من الوقوع في الأخطاء اللغوية، وضعف دافعية الأقران، ورتابة الأنشطة التعليمية، واختلاف الوسائط التعليمية. وتتمثل إسهامات الدراسة في تقديم وصف سياقي متعدد المواقع لكيفية إسهام إدارة اللغة ،المؤسسية وظروف الطلاب في تشكيل تطبيق *مهارة الكلام*. وبناءً على هذه النتائج ،تقترح الدراسة خمسة مجالات للتطوير المستند إلى الأدلة، وهي تعزيز البيئة اللغوية ،وتوسيع الأنشطة التواصلية، وتنمية كفاءة المعلمين، ودمج الوسائط الرقمية .واستدامة البرامج اللغوية

الكلمات المفتاحية :اللغة العربية، التعليم الثنائي اللغة، المعاهد الإسلامية، مهارة الكلام، مهارات التحدث.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji penerapan *Mahārah al-Kalām* di tiga pondok pesantren bilingual di Kabupaten Kudus dengan berfokus pada pola penerapan, kondisi pendukung dan penghambat, serta strategi pengembangan pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus multisitus dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan pimpinan pesantren, guru bahasa Arab, dan santri yang dipilih secara purposive di Pondok Tahfidz Modern Al-Aqsho, Darun Najah Islamic Boarding School, dan Pondok Tahfidz Nurul Qur'an MAN 1 Kudus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga lembaga memiliki praktik utama yang serupa, meliputi *muḥādathah*, penguatan *mufradāt*, dan pengawasan kebahasaan institusional, tetapi berbeda dalam aktivitas komunikatif, adaptasi santri, dan pengelolaan bahasa. Kondisi pendukung meliputi *bi'ah lughawiyyah* yang terbentuk, bimbingan guru, dan pengawasan yang konsisten, sedangkan tantangannya meliputi keterbatasan kosakata, kekhawatiran melakukan kesalahan

bahasa, motivasi teman sebaya yang lemah, aktivitas pembelajaran yang monoton, dan perbedaan media pembelajaran. Penelitian ini berkontribusi melalui gambaran kontekstual multisitus mengenai bagaimana pengelolaan bahasa institusional dan kondisi santri membentuk penerapan *Mahārah al-Kalām*. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, diajukan lima bidang pengembangan berbasis bukti, yaitu penguatan lingkungan bahasa, perluasan aktivitas komunikatif, peningkatan kapasitas guru, integrasi media digital, dan keberlanjutan program bahasa.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa Arab; Bilingual; Maharah al-Kalam; Pendidikan; Pondok Pesantren

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A. Introduction

Arabic speaking skill (*Mahārah al-Kalām*) is one of the core communicative competencies in Arabic language learning. However, its implementation in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools continues to face significant challenges, particularly in maintaining Arabic as a consistent medium of communication. Recent empirical research at an Islamic bilingual boarding school in Aceh, Indonesia, found that not all planned Arabic and English language activities were implemented consistently, while students tended to use Indonesian when they were not under supervision. The study also identified students' low motivation and teachers' language proficiency as challenges to sustaining the intended language environment.[1] In this study, a bilingual Islamic boarding school refers to an Islamic boarding institution that formally implements two languages through structured language programs, language-use regulations, and the use of the target languages in educational activities and daily communication. Furthermore, Fadoli identified several major factors contributing to the limited development of *Mahārah al-Kalām*, including insufficient opportunities for oral practice, a shortage of qualified Arabic language instructors, and the absence of a supportive Arabic-speaking environment.[2] These conditions create a substantial gap

[1] Tgk Maya Silviyanti et al., "The Implementation of English and Arabic Practices at an Islamic Bilingual Boarding School," *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan* 43, no. 3 (September 30, 2024): 630–44, https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v43i3.72204.

[2] Ach. Fadoli, "Ta'lim Maharah Al-Kalam Fi Al-Ma'had Al-Salafi Bayna Al-Musykilah Wa Al-Hulul," *Al Intisyar* 8, no. 1 (June 2023): 15–31, https://doi.org/10.32505/intisyar.v8i1.6055.

between the institutional objective of fostering active Arabic communication and the realities of language use within Islamic boarding schools.

Previous studies have extensively examined the teaching and development of *Mahārah al-Kalām* in Islamic boarding schools, but they have generally emphasized particular dimensions of the learning process rather than examining how multiple institutional and social factors interact in shaping students' speaking practices. Maghfurin et al. and Yusuf et al., for example, examined students' difficulties in developing Arabic speaking skills, particularly those associated with limited vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking confidence.[3] Malkan et al. highlighted language discipline as a mechanism for strengthening Arabic language competence,[4] while Sofyan et al. and Maf'udah et al. emphasized the role of the boarding school environment and linguistic landscape in supporting Arabic language development.[5] More recent studies have examined environment-based *Mahāratul Kalām* learning,[6] institutional language development through Language Improvement Centres,[7] and innovative pedagogical approaches to productive Arabic skills.[8] Silviyanti et al. further examined Arabic and English language practices in an Islamic bilingual boarding school in Aceh and identified inconsistencies in language activities, teachers' language

[3] Ahmad Maghfurin et al., "Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills In Traditional Pesantren," *Alsinatuna* 9, no. 1 (December 2023): 16–28, https://doi.org/10.28918/alsinatuna.v9i1.1957; Alya Maulia Yusuf, Taufik Hidayat, and Soraiya Usman, "Problematika Pembelajaran Maharatul Kalam Dalam Bahasa Arab (Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren Al-Minhaj Shahabah, Bogor, Jawa Barat)," *Journal on Education* 7, no. 1 SE-Articles (July 2024): 2228–35, https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v7i1.6780.

[4] Mardhiya Agustina Malkan, Wardhatul Jannah, and Rif'ah Kasyfuddin Jamhuri, "Arabic Language Skills Development Through The Application Of Language Disciplines In Modern Islamic Boarding Schools/ تطوير مهارات اللغة العربية وجعلها نظاما للتواصل في المعهد الإسلامي العصري," *Jurnal Al-Maqayis* 9, no. 2 (November 2022): 215, https://doi.org/10.18592/jams.v9i2.6857.

[5] Akhmad Sofyan et al., "Islamic Boarding School Linguistic Landscape in The Development of Arabic Language Skills and Islamic Knowledge," *International Journal of Educational Research & Social Sciences* 3, no. 6 (December 2022): 2178–85, https://doi.org/10.51601/ijersc.v3i6.563; Syafiyatul Maf'udah, Uril Bahruddin, and Nur Hasan Abdul Barry, "Arabic Language Practice in Islamic Boarding Schools : (A Linguistic Landscape Study)," *Shaut Al Arabiyyah* 13, no. 1 SE- (March 2025): 203–19, https://doi.org/10.24252/saa.v13i1.55860.

[6] Abdul Kamil, Hari Febriansyah, and Tubaagus Kesa Purwasandy, "Pembelajaran Mahāratul Kalām Berbasis Lingkungan Pondok Pesantren," *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 8, no. 1 (2025): 320–29.

[7] Ilyas Ilyas, Muh. Rasmi, and Muhammad Rusydi, "Improving Modern Pondok Students' Arabic Language Skills in Indonesia: Language Institutions as Language Improvement Central," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 2 (June 2024): 1303–13, https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.5095.

[8] Mukhtar I. Miolo, "Strategi Inovatif Dalam Pengajaran Keterampilan Berbicara Dan Menulis Bahasa Arab: Sebuah Tinjauan Pedagogis," *Al-Kalim : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 4, no. 1 (April 2025): 65–87, https://doi.org/10.60040/jak.v4i1.153.

proficiency limitations, students' low motivation, and the use of Indonesian when students were unsupervised.[9]

Despite these contributions, the existing literature provides limited explanation of how these dimensions operate together in the everyday implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* within bilingual Islamic boarding schools. In particular, previous studies tend to examine language discipline, linguistic environment, institutional language management, pedagogical strategies, or student difficulties as relatively distinct issues, leaving insufficient explanation of how institutional language policies are translated into daily speaking practices through teacher modelling, peer interaction, environmental reinforcement, and students' psychological responses. This study addresses this analytical gap by examining the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* as an interconnected institutional and social process rather than as a purely classroom-based language learning activity. Focusing on three bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency, the study analyses the challenges encountered in implementing Arabic speaking practices and examines how institutional policies, teachers, peers, language environments, and student characteristics interact to support or constrain their implementation.

Based on an initial exploratory observation conducted before the main fieldwork, several potential challenges were identified in the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* in bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency. The observation indicated that students encountered difficulties related to Arabic grammar, confidence in oral communication, motivation and peer support, as well as the availability of instructional media for spoken language practice. These observations were used to provide an initial understanding of the research context and to formulate the research problem rather than to constitute the primary empirical findings of the study. The subsequent fieldwork, involving observations, interviews, and documentation, was therefore conducted to examine these issues systematically and to verify how linguistic, psychological, social, and institutional factors shape the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām*. Accordingly, this study investigates the challenges encountered in implementing *Mahārah al-Kalām* and examines the factors that support or constrain its implementation within bilingual Islamic boarding schools.

These conditions underscore the importance of conducting a more comprehensive investigation into the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* in bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the patterns through which Arabic speaking skills are implemented, identify the factors that facilitate and hinder the learning process, and formulate empirical findings that may

[9] Silviyanti et al., "The Implementation of English and Arabic Practices at an Islamic Bilingual Boarding School."

serve as the basis for developing more effective instructional strategies within bilingual Islamic boarding school contexts.

This research is significant for the study of Arabic language education because it addresses an important issue in the relationship between *bi'ah lughawiyyah* and communicative language practice in Islamic boarding schools. Existing studies have demonstrated the importance of language discipline, linguistic environment, institutional language management, and pedagogical strategies in supporting Arabic language development; however, these dimensions are often examined separately. This study extends this understanding by examining *bi'ah lughawiyyah* not simply as an environment that facilitates language exposure, but as an institutional and social system in which language policies, teacher modelling, peer interaction, supervision, and students' psychological conditions jointly shape opportunities for Arabic oral practice. The study therefore provides a contextual explanation of why the formal establishment of a bilingual language system does not necessarily result in consistent Arabic communication in everyday interactions. This perspective is particularly relevant to bilingual Islamic boarding schools, where language practices are shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by institutional regulations and social interaction beyond the classroom.

This study makes a specific conceptual contribution by proposing an integrated understanding of *Mahārah al-Kalām* implementation as an interaction between institutional language management, language-environment reinforcement, and student-level factors. Rather than treating speaking difficulties solely as problems of students' linguistic competence or instructional technique, the study explains how institutional language policies are translated into everyday speaking practices through teacher modelling, peer interaction, supervision, and the availability of opportunities and media for oral practice. Practically, this framework provides a basis for Arabic language teachers and Islamic boarding school administrators to evaluate *Mahārah al-Kalām* implementation across classroom and everyday communication settings, particularly by strengthening language modelling, peer-supported practice, consistent language policies, and supportive *bi'ah lughawiyyah*. The findings may also provide contextual evidence for developing communicative Arabic language programs suited to the institutional and social characteristics of bilingual Islamic boarding schools.

B. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a multi-site case study design. The case examined was the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* within bilingual Islamic boarding school settings, particularly the language policies, instructional practices, communication activities, and language environments through which Arabic speaking skills were implemented. The study was conducted at three research sites in Kudus Regency: Pondok Tahfidz Modern Al-Aqsho Gebog, Darun Najah Islamic Boarding School Mejobo, and Pondok Tahfidz Nurul Qur'an MAN 1 Kudus. These

sites were selected because the study focused on Islamic boarding schools implementing bilingual language programs and providing contexts for the practice of *Mahārah al-Kalām* in educational and everyday communication. The multi-site design enabled the researcher to examine similarities and differences in the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* across the three institutional contexts.

This study constituted field research, with the researcher serving as the primary research instrument. Primary data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The observations focused on students' communication practices, teachers' instructional methods, and the language policies implemented by the Islamic boarding schools. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the language program, active participation in *Mahārah al-Kalām* activities, and willingness to provide information openly. Interviews were conducted from 13 to 19 December 2025 with boarding school leaders, Arabic language teachers, and students at the three research sites. Secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, language guidebooks, activity schedules, language program archives, and relevant previous studies.

Data were analyzed interactively and continuously using the qualitative data analysis model developed by Miles et al., consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.[10] During data condensation, information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation was selected according to its relevance to the research focus. The relevant information was then organized into thematic categories concerning the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām*, including language policies, language-environment management, teacher roles, student communication practices, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors. The categories were subsequently compared across the three research sites to identify recurring patterns and contextual differences. The findings were presented through narrative descriptions and thematic tables, while interpretations were verified by comparing information obtained through different data-collection techniques and sources.

The trustworthiness of the data was addressed through source and technique triangulation and member checking.[11] Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from boarding school leaders, Arabic language teachers, and students, while technique triangulation involved comparing interview, observation, and documentation data. Member checking was conducted to confirm the consistency of the interpretations with information provided by the informants. The study also

[10] Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (California: Sage Publications, 2014).

[11] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).

obtained permission from the participating Islamic boarding schools and maintained the confidentiality of informants' identities.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Implementation of Mahārah al-Kalām in Bilingual Islamic Boarding Schools

The implementation of Arabic speaking skills (*Mahārah al-Kalām*) in the three bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency demonstrates a relatively similar pattern, namely direct language practice, vocabulary (*mufradāt*) reinforcement, and the enforcement of language discipline through institutional regulations and sanctions. However, variations exist in terms of implementation, the intensity of supervision, and the characteristics of the language environment in each Islamic boarding school. At Pondok Tahfidz Modern Al-Aqsho Gebog, daily *muḥādathah* and weekly *muḥāḍarah* are compulsory activities supported by intensive supervision. Every student is required to speak Arabic both inside and outside the classroom, and disciplinary sanctions (*ta'zīr*) are imposed on those who violate the language regulations. Participants perceived these practices as supporting a more consistent Arabic-speaking environment by encouraging students to use Arabic regularly in their daily interactions. This finding is consistent with Nafisa et al., who emphasized the importance of an integrated curriculum combining theory, practice, and social discipline to strengthen *Mahārah al-Kalām* instruction in Islamic boarding schools.[12]

At Darun Najah Islamic Boarding School Mejobo, the bilingual system is implemented through a gradual approach by providing an adaptation period for new students before requiring them to communicate entirely in Arabic. The instructional methods include *halaqah*, outdoor *muḥādathah*, and daily vocabulary enrichment, supported by the placement of Arabic vocabulary labels on various locations and objects throughout the boarding school. Nevertheless, the implementation of *bi'ah lughawiyyah* still requires further reinforcement, particularly in fostering peer motivation, while differences in students' educational backgrounds also influence the consistency of language use. This finding is in line with Amrullah et al., who argued that the success of Arabic speaking instruction is strongly influenced by students' motivation and peer involvement in developing a communicative culture within Islamic boarding schools.[13] However, the present study demonstrates that the influence of peer learning becomes more effective when accompanied by a consistent language control system. In practice, peer learning through small-group discussions and peer

[12] Nafisa et al., "Implementation of an Integrated Curriculum in Improving Arabic Speaking Skills," *Izdihar : Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 6, no. 3 (January 2024): 267–278, https://doi.org/10.22219/jiz.v6i3.27418.

[13] Ahmad Fikri Amrullah, Bakri Muhammed Bakheit, and Miftahul Huda, "Development Strategy of Speaking Skill for The Tsanawiyah Level/ استراتيجيات تنمية مهارة الكلام للمرحلة الثانوية," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 6, no. 2 (July 2023), https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v6i2.23220.

grammatical correction has proven capable of increasing students' self-confidence and encouraging them to use Arabic more communicatively.

Unlike the previous two institutions, Pondok Tahfidz Nurul Qur'an MAN 1 Kudus implements a relatively strict language enforcement system by imposing a financial penalty of IDR 1,000 for every word spoken in violation of the language policy. Its core language programs include daily *muḥādathah*, weekly *khiṭābah*, and competitive activities such as Arabic speech and drama competitions. The combination of language discipline and communicative activities was observed to encourage students' participation in formal Arabic speaking activities, particularly in *khiṭābah* and speech competitions. However, compliance with language regulations should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence of intrinsic motivation or broader communicative competence. The financial penalty functions primarily as an external mechanism for regulating language use, while students' confidence and willingness to communicate may depend on additional factors beyond disciplinary compliance. This finding is consistent with Mahsunah et al., who emphasized the importance of sustainable language program management in establishing a conducive socio-linguistic environment within Islamic boarding schools.[14]

In addition to the teachers' role, differences were also observed in the use of instructional media across the three research sites. Al-Aqsho utilized audiovisual media, including Arabic-language films and digital presentations, whereas the other two Islamic boarding schools predominantly relied on text-based materials and classical Islamic textbooks. This difference suggests that Al-Aqsho provided students with additional forms of exposure to spoken Arabic through audiovisual materials; however, the present study did not systematically assess whether this difference resulted in higher speaking proficiency or learning gains. Therefore, the use of instructional media is interpreted here as a contextual feature of the learning environment rather than as a demonstrated causal factor in students' speaking development. The observed use of audiovisual materials is consistent with the principles of the direct and audiolingual methods discussed by Husna et al., particularly the use of imitation, repetition, and contextualized language practice.[15] Similarly, Nurkhamilah reported the use of interactive techniques such as the *chain story* method to engage students in Arabic speaking activities.[16] Accordingly, the integration of educational technology can be

[14] Mursyidatul Mahsunah et al., "Tanfīż Barāmij Al-Lugat Al-ʿArabiat Li Taḥsīn Mahārah Kalām Ladayya At- Ṭullāb Fi Maʿhad," *Al Mahāra: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 9, no. 2 (December 2023): 257–68, https://doi.org/10.14421/almahara.2023.092-06.

[15] Muhammad Ahsanul Husna et al., "Implementasi Materi Mahârah Al-Kalâm Dalam Transformasi Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Perspektif ACTFL Pada Pondok Pesantren Salaf," *Arabi : Journal of Arabic Studies* 7, no. 1 (June 2022): 38–50, https://doi.org/10.24865/ajas.v7i1.458.

[16] Mila Nurkhamilah, "Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills Through the Chain Story Technique at Islamic Boarding School," *Penelitian Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 2, no. 02 (August 2025), https://doi.org/10.61511/pips.v2i02.2025.2238.

considered a potential resource for expanding opportunities for communicative practice in bilingual Islamic boarding schools, although its specific effect on students' speaking proficiency requires further systematic assessment.

2. Challenges as well as Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Mahārah al-Kalām Learning

The findings indicate that the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* in bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency is closely related to the interaction among the language environment, institutional policies, and students' psychological readiness. The interview findings show that a supportive *bi'ah lughawiyyah* (Arabic language environment), consistent language regulations, and students' readiness to participate in Arabic communication operate together in shaping students' speaking practices. At Pondok Tahfidz Modern Al-Aqsho, language discipline is reinforced through sanctions and continuous supervision by the student management board, whereas at Pondok Tahfidz Nurul Qur'an MAN 1 Kudus, financial penalties are imposed on students who violate the language policy. These institutional mechanisms provide external support for maintaining Arabic use in daily interactions, while the language environment creates opportunities for students to repeatedly practice Arabic communication. However, the findings also indicate that institutional regulation alone does not fully explain students' speaking practices, as students' willingness and psychological readiness to communicate are also relevant to the implementation process. This is consistent with Wahab et al., who emphasized the importance of communicative interaction and social control mechanisms in supporting Arabic speaking skill development.[17] Accordingly, the consistent habituation of Arabic communication in daily activities can be understood as a process supported by the interaction between institutional regulation, environmental reinforcement, and students' readiness to participate in Arabic communication.

Supporting factors also include the role of teachers and a well-established instructional guidance system. The *ustādh* not only function as instructors but also serve as pronunciation models and primary motivators. At Al-Aqsho, teachers directly guide students' pronunciation, correct grammatical errors, and provide additional assistance for less active students. At Darun Najah, teachers allow newly admitted students a period of linguistic flexibility to reduce psychological pressure before requiring them to communicate entirely in Arabic. This finding supports the theory proposed by Aini and Septi, who argued that the quality of interaction between teachers and students within a supportive learning atmosphere enhances students' self-confidence and

[17] Wahab Wahab et al., "The Language Division's Efforts in Community-Based Arabic Speaking Skills Training," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 8, no. 3 (September 2025), https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v8i3.32555.

willingness to speak.[18] Teachers therefore become the dominant factor contributing to the successful development of *Mahārah al-Kalām* through direct corrective feedback and affective instructional approaches.

On the other hand, the findings identified several student-level barriers to the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām*, including limited vocabulary, fear of making linguistic mistakes, and reluctance to participate in Arabic communication. One student from Darun Najah stated, *"Sometimes I am afraid to speak because I worry that my grammar is incorrect, so I prefer to remain silent."* A student from Al-Aqsho similarly reported difficulties associated with limited vocabulary and fear of incorrect pronunciation due to insufficient understanding of Arabic grammar. Another student from Darun Najah observed that some peers were reluctant to speak Arabic because they considered it difficult and complicated. These accounts illustrate how linguistic difficulties, concerns about making mistakes, and peer attitudes may constrain students' willingness to communicate. Although these findings do not establish the prevalence of psychological barriers among all participants, they demonstrate the relevance of students' individual experiences and social interactions to the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām*. Accordingly, peer mentoring, constructive feedback, and opportunities for low-pressure speaking practice may help address the barriers identified in the interviews.

Furthermore, differences in learning facilities and instructional media were observed across the three institutions. Al-Aqsho utilized audiovisual media, including Arabic-language films and digital presentations, whereas Darun Najah and Nurul Qur'an relied more heavily on textbooks and classical learning materials. These differences indicate that the availability of digital and audiovisual resources provides different opportunities for students to encounter and practice Arabic through varied modes of communication. Recent research has increasingly examined the role of digital tools in Arabic speaking instruction. Saad et al., through a systematic literature review of 23 empirical studies published between 2021 and 2025, identified mobile-assisted language learning applications, simulation-based tools, video- and caption-based tools, gamified and interactive applications, and learning management systems as digital tools used to support pronunciation, fluency, and oral communication.[19] The review indicates that these tools have potential to support learners' motivation and speaking performance, while also highlighting the need for further research on effective integration strategies and long-term outcomes. Accordingly, digital media can be

[18] Zakiyyatul Aini and Doni Septi, "Arabic Language Development Program at Islamic Boarding Schools in Sidoarjo Regency," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 1 (February 2023), https://doi.org/10.21070/ijis.v11i0.1644.

[19] Roslizawati Saad, Harun Baharudin, and Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik Yusoff, "The Use of Digital Teaching Tools to Support Arabic Speaking Skills in Secondary School: A Systematic Literature Review," *Educational Process International Journal* 17, no. 1 (2025), https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.17.404.

considered a potentially valuable resource for diversifying students' exposure to Arabic and expanding opportunities for communicative practice. However, in the present study, differences in media availability were observed without systematic measurement of students' speaking outcomes. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that audiovisual or digital media directly improve speaking proficiency. Rather, digital learning media may complement the existing *bi'ah lughawiyyah* when integrated with structured speaking activities and opportunities for interaction.

Table 1. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Mahārah al-Kalām Learning

Category	Islamic Boarding School	Factor	Direct Interview Excerpt
Supporting	Al-Aqsho	Disciplined language environment	"There is a mandatory Arabic language policy accompanied by sanctions. Students who violate the rule receive disciplinary punishment, such as having their hair cut or other ta'zīr sanctions. This has accustomed us to speaking Arabic every day *(Ada peraturan wajib bahasa dan denda, kalau melanggar potong rambut atau takziran. Ini membuat kami terbiasa berbicara Arab setiap hari)*" *(Ust. Choirul Anwar)*
	Darun Najah	*Muḥādathah* and *halaqah* methods	"Every Friday, students walk around the boarding school complex to find new Arabic vocabulary and then discuss it in small groups *(Setiap Jumat santri keliling kompleks untuk mencari mufrodat baru lalu berdiskusi dalam kelompok kecil)*" *(Nyai Muflihah)*
	Nurul Qur'an	Strict supervision and financial penalties	"If a student speaks Indonesian, they are fined one thousand rupiah for every word, so everyone becomes accustomed to maintaining language discipline *(Kalau ada santri bicara pakai bahasa Indonesia didenda seribu per kata, jadi semuanya terbiasa disiplin)*" *(Ust. Zaky Mubarok)*

Inhibiting	Al-Aqsho	Limited vocabulary and fear of making mistakes	"The initial difficulty was my limited vocabulary and my fear of making pronunciation mistakes because I had not yet mastered Arabic grammar *(Kesulitas diawal karena keterbatasan kosakata dan takut salah ucap karena nahwunya belum paham)*" *(Santri Ahmad Sidiq)*
	Darun Najah	Lemahnya motivasi sebaya	"Sometimes friends are reluctant to speak Arabic because they consider it difficult and complicated *(Teman sebaya kadang malas berbahasa Arab, dianggap rumit dan susah)*" *(Santri Amelia Safitri)*
	Nurul Qur'an	Metode monoton	"I hope the learning process becomes more engaging through the use of digital technology instead of only studying, memorizing, and reading *(Ingin pembelajaran yang seru menggunakan teknologi digital, jadi bukan hanya belajar, menghafal, dan membaca)*" *(Santri Zakiya Fawalul Izah)*

Source: Interviews conducted by the author (13–19 December 2025)

Overall, as summarized in Table 1, the principal supporting factors identified across the three Islamic boarding schools are the establishment of a strong *bi'ah lughawiyyah*, the presence of supportive and inspiring teachers, and the consistent implementation of language supervision and communicative activities. The main obstacles identified in the interviews include students' psychological and linguistic difficulties, weak peer motivation, monotonous learning methods, and the limited availability of instructional media. These findings indicate that the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* requires attention not only to students' linguistic competence but also to the institutional and social conditions in which Arabic communication takes place. Therefore, strengthening students' motivation, improving teachers' professional competence, diversifying instructional methods, and integrating appropriate educational technology may support the development of *Mahārah al-Kalām* instruction in bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency. This finding is consistent with

Maghfurin et al., who emphasized the importance of integrating cognitive, affective, and social dimensions in Arabic language learning. [20]

3. Comparative Analysis among Islamic Boarding Schools

Pondok Tahfidz Modern Al-Aqsho shows consistent use of Arabic in students' daily activities, supported by language policies, supervision, and opportunities for communication. The interviews indicate that students are required to use Arabic, while teachers provide pronunciation guidance, correct grammatical errors, and encourage less active students to participate. This pattern can be contextualized through Abdullah et al., who examined the formation of Arabic language environments through a library-based study and emphasized coordinated involvement from school administrators, boarding-school personnel, and students.[21] Their analysis positions the language environment as a supporting condition for speaking practice rather than as a single instructional technique. This perspective is relevant to Al-Aqsho because Arabic use is embedded in institutional routines and supervised communication practices across students' daily activities.

The findings at Al-Aqsho are also consistent with Harnika et al., who quantitatively examined the relationship between linguistic environment and speaking skills among female students at an Arabic Language Center Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia using statistical analysis.[22] Their study indicates that regular exposure to Arabic within the social environment is related to speaking development. In the present study, however, no standardized speaking test was administered, so the Al-Aqsho findings cannot be interpreted as evidence of measured improvement in speaking proficiency. The student composition includes graduates of Islamic junior secondary schools (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*) and university students. This educational diversity is therefore treated as a contextual characteristic that may create opportunities for peer interaction and language practice, rather than as evidence of higher linguistic competence.

The role of the language environment at Al-Aqsho can be further understood through formal and informal learning settings. Muttaqin et al., in a qualitative case study of an Islamic boarding school, described Arabic acquisition through classroom instruction and informal activities that provide language input, interaction, and

[20] Maghfurin et al., "Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills In Traditional Pesantren."'

[21] Irhamudin Abdullah, Novita Rahmi, and Walfajri Walfajri, "Pembentukan Lingkungan Bahasa Arab Untuk Mengembangkan Keterampilan Berbicara," *Taqdir* 6, no. 2 (January 15, 2021): 71–83, https://doi.org/10.19109/taqdir.v6i2.6283.

[22] Lika Harnika et al., "Impact of Linguistic Environment on Speaking Skills of Female Students at the Arabic Language Center Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia," *Journal of Arabic Language Learning and Teaching (JALLT)* 2, no. 2 (April 16, 2024): 121–36, https://doi.org/10.23971/jallt.v2i2.180.

opportunities for output.[23] Their study identified activities such as *al-muḥādathah*, *ilqā' al-mufradāt*, and *muḥāḍarah* as mechanisms through which students encounter and use Arabic beyond conventional lessons. A similar pattern appears at Al-Aqsho, where institutional language rules are accompanied by supervised communication and teacher support. Thus, implementation at Al-Aqsho is not limited to classroom instruction but involves the broader linguistic environment. Nevertheless, the present study describes these practices qualitatively and does not measure their independent effects on speaking proficiency.

At Darun Najah Islamic Boarding School, the students are university students, and newly admitted students receive a gradual adaptation period before being required to communicate fully in Arabic. This approach gives students time to adjust to the linguistic environment while progressively increasing their participation in Arabic communication. The findings also show that peer motivation remains a challenge. One student reported that some peers were reluctant to speak Arabic because they considered it difficult and complicated. This finding suggests that institutional language policies alone may not ensure consistent participation when students' immediate peer environment does not encourage Arabic use. The Darun Najah case therefore highlights the interaction between gradual adaptation and peer-supported communication, while students' educational background is treated as a contextual characteristic rather than evidence of greater linguistic maturity.

The Darun Najah case can also be related to Fakhiroh and Hikmah, who conducted a qualitative study at Ar-Rohmah Putri II and examined Arabic language development through curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program.[24] Their findings show that language development involves interconnected program components. This is relevant to Darun Najah because the gradual adaptation period forms part of the institution's approach to introducing students to Arabic communication. In addition, Muttaqin et al. demonstrated that Arabic acquisition in boarding schools depends on formal learning and informal opportunities for interaction and language output.[25] The peer-motivation issue at Darun Najah indicates a social

[23] Imam Muttaqin, Bakri Mohamed Bakheit, and Mamluatul Hasanah, "Arabic Language Environment for Islamic Boarding School Student Language Acquisition: Capturing Language Input, Interaction, and Output," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 3 (July 10, 2024): 891–907, https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v8i3.624.

[24] Najiyah Fakhiroh and Khizanatul Hikmah, "Enhancing Arabic Language Proficiency in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Comprehensive Study," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 3 (September 7, 2023), https://doi.org/10.21070/ijis.v11i3.1673.

[25] Muttaqin, Bakheit, and Hasanah, "Arabic Language Environment for Islamic Boarding School Student Language Acquisition: Capturing Language Input, Interaction, and Output."

dimension. However, the present study does not measure the relative contribution of adaptation, peer motivation, or curriculum organization to speaking proficiency.

Pondok Tahfidz Nurul Qur'an MAN 1 Kudus, whose students are predominantly from Islamic senior secondary schools (*Madrasah Aliyah*), provides formal opportunities for Arabic communication through activities such as *khiṭābah* and speech competitions. Everyday Arabic use is also regulated through a financial penalty system for students who use Indonesian. These findings indicate that formal speaking activities and everyday language compliance operate through different mechanisms. Siregar et al., in a qualitative comparative descriptive study at Syamsul Ulum Muhammadiyah Bandung Islamic Boarding School, documented structured Arabic skills training and interactive activities, including *mahārah kalām*.[26] Their student-assessment results reported *mahārah kalām* as the highest-rated skill among those examined, with percentages of 85.4% in 2021 and 87% in 2022. Their study, however, did not examine financial penalties as a language-control mechanism.

Taken together, the three cases demonstrate that the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* is shaped by different combinations of institutional policies, language-environment practices, teacher support, peer interaction, and learning resources. Al-Aqsho emphasizes continuous language supervision and daily Arabic use, Darun Najah combines gradual adaptation with communicative activities, while Nurul Qur'an combines formal speaking activities with strict regulation of everyday language use. These differences indicate that the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* cannot be understood solely through classroom teaching methods. Instead, Arabic speaking practices develop within broader institutional and social environments that determine how frequently students encounter, practice, and use Arabic. Nevertheless, because this study does not employ standardized measures of speaking proficiency across the three institutions, the findings cannot establish which institutional practice produces greater speaking outcomes. The comparison therefore highlights contextual differences rather than differences in effectiveness.

4. Implications for the Development of Mahārah al-Kalām Learning in Bilingual Islamic Boarding Schools

Improving *Mahārah al-Kalām* in bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency requires a systematic and sustainable approach. Based on the field findings, the three Islamic boarding schools face challenges in maintaining consistent *bi'ah lughawiyyah* and encouraging students to use Arabic in daily communication. The findings show that language development is supported by daily Arabic practice,

[26] Zulli Umri Siregar, Eva Lathifah Fauzia, and Yusuf Fathurrahman, "Development of Arabic Language Skills for Students at Syamsul Ulum Muhammadiyah Bandung Islamic Boarding School | Pengembangan Keterampilan Berbahasa Arab Santri Pondok Pesantren Syamsul Ulum Muhammadiyah Bandung," *Ta'lim Al-'Arabiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab & Kebahasaaraban* 7, no. 1 (June 1, 2023): 156–74, https://doi.org/10.15575/jpba.v7i1.24453.

vocabulary reinforcement, communicative activities, teacher guidance, and institutional language policies, while several barriers remain, including limited vocabulary, fear of making linguistic mistakes, weak peer motivation, monotonous learning activities, and differences in instructional media. These findings are consistent with Mizan et al., who examined strategies for improving Arabic speaking skills in Islamic boarding schools and emphasized the importance of organized speaking practice and a supportive language environment.[27] Maghfurin et al. likewise highlighted the importance of integrating cognitive, affective, and social dimensions in Arabic language learning.[28] Therefore, the instructional development strategies proposed in this study focus on strengthening the language environment, developing communicative activities, enhancing teacher capacity, integrating appropriate educational technology, and sustaining language programs. These strategies are formulated as recommendations derived from the empirical findings of Al-Aqsho, Darun Najah, and Nurul Qur'an and informed by relevant previous studies.

Table 2. Proposed Implications for Strengthening *Mahārah al-Kalām* in Bilingual Islamic Boarding Schools in Kudus Regency

Stage	Main Strategy	Field Implementation	Primary Objective	Proposed Outcome
I	Strengthening vocabulary and the language environment	Thematic *mufradāt* activities, daily speaking practice, and language supervision	To establish a foundation for active Arabic communication	Expanded opportunities for students to use contextual Arabic vocabulary in daily communication
II	Communicative and performative methods	*Muḥādathah*, *khiṭābah*, debates, and Arabic drama	To develop fluency and opportunities for spontaneous speaking	Expanded opportunities for interactive and spontaneous Arabic communication
III	Teacher training and language policy	Teacher workshops, supervisory	To enhance teachers'	Potentially more consistent implementation

[27] Khairul Mizan, Musdalipa Musdalipa, and Ahmad Mubaligh, "Strategies for Improving Arabic Speaking Skills in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Ad-Dhuha* 5, no. 1 (April 2024): 71–90, https://doi.org/10.22437/ad-dhuha.v5i1.31273.

[28] Maghfurin et al., "Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills In Traditional Pesantren."

		evaluation, and language-policy review	pedagogical support	of communicative teaching practices
IV	Integration of digital media and online assessment	Phonetic practice applications, instructional videos, and voice-recording activities	To diversify learning resources and speaking practice	Additional opportunities for digital speaking practice and feedback
V	Sustainability programs and external networking	Arabic Club, collaboration with universities, and language competitions	To sustain Arabic communication practices	Additional opportunities for Arabic communication within and beyond routine learning activities

Source: Developed by the authors.

The proposed implications for strengthening *Mahārah al-Kalām* are summarized in Table 2, which presents five areas of instructional development derived from the field findings and informed by relevant literature. These areas are presented as recommendations for further development rather than as a validated instructional model. The first stage emphasizes strengthening vocabulary mastery and *bi'ah lughawiyyah* as the foundation of active communication. This recommendation is derived from the student-level barriers identified in the field findings, particularly limited vocabulary and difficulties in speaking Arabic. At Pondok Tahfidz Modern Al-Aqsho, Arabic communication is supported by mandatory language policies and continuous supervision, while vocabulary-related activities are also implemented at Darun Najah through group discussion. Mizan et al. similarly discussed strategies for improving Arabic speaking skills in Islamic boarding schools through organized speaking practice and vocabulary development.[29] Asy-Syifa and Khaerudin further emphasized the importance of connecting knowledge acquisition with internalization and practice in reconstructing a more holistic learning paradigm.[30] Accordingly, thematic *mufradāt* activities, regular speaking practice, and language supervision are

[29] Mizan, Musdalipa, and Mubaligh, "Strategies for Improving Arabic Speaking Skills in Islamic Boarding Schools."

[30] Hawwa Asy-Syifa and Khaerudin, "The Model of Knowledge Acquisition in Islam as a Foundation for Reconstructing the Learning Paradigm," *Mishkat: Journal of Theology and Civilization* 1, no. 1 (2026): 77–88, https://doi.org/10.67964/kndqb313.

proposed to strengthen the connection between vocabulary knowledge and everyday Arabic communication. However, the present study does not establish a specific vocabulary target or quantitatively measure the effectiveness of these activities in improving students' speaking proficiency.

The second stage emphasizes communicative and performative approaches aimed at developing spontaneity, fluency, and confidence in speaking Arabic. Activities such as debates, Arabic drama performances, and weekly speeches provide opportunities for students to use Arabic in authentic social contexts. Millah and Mathoriyah demonstrated the use of philosophical story-based role play as an instructional approach for *Mahārah al-Kalām*, highlighting the potential of contextual and performative activities to support Arabic speaking development.[31] Amrullah et al. discussed action-based learning (*task-based learning*) as an approach that incorporates authentic speaking practice to support the development of speaking skills.[32] Therefore, each Islamic boarding school may develop a regular language activity calendar to provide students with opportunities to respond in Arabic in varied communicative situations. Such performative activities may also provide students with opportunities to develop greater confidence in using Arabic by positioning the language as a medium of communication rather than only as an academic subject.

The third stage concerns strengthening teachers' professional capacity and improving institutional language policies. Teachers function not only as instructional models but also as facilitators who support the Arabic language environment. The field findings indicate that teachers provide pronunciation guidance, correct grammatical errors, and assist students who are less active in Arabic communication. At Darun Najah, teachers also provide newly admitted students with a period of linguistic flexibility before requiring full Arabic communication. Based on these findings, teacher development and language-policy strengthening are proposed as areas for further instructional development. Rojja Pebrian et al. examined a speaking-skills development strategy involving *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) and structured supervision, highlighting the relevance of teacher training and systematic language management.[33] Kumalasari et al. likewise highlighted the increasing complexity of teachers' pedagogical roles in contemporary Islamic education, suggesting the importance of institutional support for teachers in carrying out diverse educational

[31] Faiqotul Millah and Lailatul Mathoriyah, "Innovating Maharah Kalam Instruction through Philosophical Story-Based Role Play: A Quasi-Experimental Study," *Eduvista: Journal of Education and Innovation* 1, no. 1 (2026): 171–85, https://doi.org/10.67964/z09a0605.

[32] Amrullah, Bakheit, and Huda, "Development Strategy of Speaking Skill for The Tsanawiyah Level/ استراتيجيات تنمية مهارة الكلام للمرحلة الثانوية."

[33] Rojja Pebrian, Harif Supriady, and Hadi Mar'ie Zein, "Strategy for Improving the Arabic Speaking Skills of the Students of the Darussalam School School, Kota Medan Kota Kelayang Indragiri Hulu Riau," *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling* 8, no. 52 (December 2023): 626–35, https://doi.org/10.35631/IJEPC.852047.

responsibilities.[34] In this context, a language development center (*markaz al-lughah*) may be proposed as a mechanism for coordinating teacher training, monitoring, and periodic language-policy evaluation.

The fourth stage relates to the integration of digital technology and data-based assessment. The field findings indicate differences in the availability and use of instructional media across the three Islamic boarding schools. Al-Aqsho utilizes audiovisual materials, including Arabic-language films and digital presentations, whereas Darun Najah and Nurul Qur'an rely more heavily on textbooks and classical learning materials. In addition, a student from Nurul Qur'an expressed a need for more engaging learning through digital technology rather than relying mainly on studying, memorizing, and reading. Mubaligh et al. discussed the use of audiovisual technology in Arabic speaking instruction and its potential to support pronunciation practice and students' speaking confidence.[35] Herhan and Khaerudin further highlighted the importance of integrating digital literacy into contemporary Islamic education as part of educational responses to digital transformation.[36] Based on these findings, digital tools such as instructional videos, pronunciation applications, and voice-recording activities are proposed as supplementary resources. The use of digital platforms for systematic oral assessment, however, remains a proposed development and was not examined in the present study.

The final stage concerns the sustainability of Arabic language programs. The field findings indicate that Arabic communication is supported through institutional language policies, regular communicative activities, and supervision within the boarding-school environment. Based on these conditions, language communities such as Arabic Speaking Clubs, language competitions, and collaboration with universities or language institutions are proposed as possible mechanisms for extending students' opportunities to practice communicative Arabic. Maghfurin et al. emphasized the importance of integrating cognitive, affective, and social dimensions in Arabic language learning, providing a theoretical basis for creating learning environments that extend beyond formal classroom activities.[37] Such programs may provide additional spaces for students to use Arabic through interaction and performance. However,

[34] Eva Kumalasari, Nayla Wirdatun Ni'ammah, and Chusnul Chotimah, "The Effectiveness of the Tahriri Examination as an Instrument for Measuring Students' Understanding at Al-Hikmah Tulungagung Islamic Boarding School," *Eduvista: Journal of Education and Innovation* 1, no. 1 (2026): 125–37, https://perfidiajournal.com/index.php/eduvista/article/view/30.

[35] Ahmad Mubaligh, Risna Rianti Sari, and Elma Diana Novitasari, "Improving Arabic Speaking Skills Strategies for Islamic Boarding School Students," *Izdihar : Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 5, no. 3 (January 2023), https://doi.org/10.22219/jiz.v5i3.21716.

[36] Faelalika Putri Herhan and Khaerudin, "Reconstructing Islamic Education for the Digital Era: An Integrative Framework of Tarbiyah, Taʿlīm, and Taʾdīb," *Eduvista: Journal of Education and Innovation* 1, no. 1 (2026): 286–99, https://perfidiajournal.com/index.php/eduvista/article/view/59.

[37] Maghfurin et al., "Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills In Traditional Pesantren."

collaboration with universities, international language institutions, and other external organizations was not directly examined in the present study. These activities are therefore presented as future-oriented recommendations rather than as established findings.

D. Conclusion

The findings indicate that the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* in the three bilingual Islamic boarding schools in Kudus Regency follows several common instructional patterns, particularly *muḥādathah* practice, *mufradāt* reinforcement, and language discipline through institutional regulations. However, the implementation differs in the way each institution organizes language supervision, communicative activities, and student adaptation. Al-Aqsho applies continuous language supervision within students' daily activities, Darun Najah emphasizes *halaqah*, peer learning, and gradual linguistic adaptation, while Nurul Qur'an combines formal speaking activities with institutional language regulations and sanctions. These findings show that *Mahārah al-Kalām* is implemented through similar basic practices but adapted to the institutional and social conditions of each boarding school. The study does not establish differences in effectiveness among the three institutions because standardized speaking-proficiency measures were not employed.

The findings also identify several supporting and inhibiting conditions in the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām*. A strong *bi'ah lughawiyyah*, teacher guidance, communicative activities, and consistent language supervision emerged as supporting conditions. Meanwhile, the interviews and observations identified limited vocabulary, fear of making linguistic mistakes, weak peer motivation, monotonous learning activities, and differences in access to instructional media as important challenges. These findings indicate that the implementation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* involves linguistic, psychological, pedagogical, social, and institutional dimensions. However, given the qualitative and cross-sectional design, these factors are interpreted as conditions identified within the research sites rather than independently verified causes of students' speaking proficiency.

Based on these findings, the study proposes five areas for developing *Mahārah al-Kalām* instruction: strengthening vocabulary and the language environment, expanding communicative activities, enhancing teacher capacity and language policies, integrating appropriate digital media, and sustaining language programs. These areas represent evidence-informed recommendations rather than a validated instructional model because the proposed strategies were not implemented or tested in the present study. The study is also limited by its three research sites, purposive participant selection, relatively short data-collection period, absence of standardized speaking-proficiency measurements, and the potential influence of researcher positionality in qualitative interpretation. Future research could employ longitudinal or intervention-based designs, broader participant samples, standardized speaking assessments, and

explicit reflexive procedures to examine the proposed strategies across different bilingual Islamic boarding-school contexts.

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