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Analysis of Arabic Teaching Strategies in Multicultural Madrasah Contexts

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Abstract

This study explores effective strategies for teaching Arabic in multicultural madrasah environments. It aims to analyze how teachers plan and implement Arabic instruction that reflects students' linguistic diversity, cultural backgrounds, and learning needs. The research applies a qualitative case study design across several madrasahs with data collected through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and analysis of instructional documents. The findings show that adaptive and inclusive strategies such as communicative methods based on cultural context, differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and the use of digital media increase students' engagement, motivation, and communicative competence. The study also highlights the importance of teachers' creativity, intercultural awareness, and technological skills in managing diverse classrooms. The results contribute to the development of innovative Arabic language teaching models that are relevant to multicultural education and provide practical insights for teachers and policymakers to improve Arabic education quality.

Keywords: *Arabic language teaching; multicultural education; adaptive strategies*

A. Introduction

Arabic language education in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs is very important for religious education, character building, and strengthening multicultural values and environmental awareness. (Nurbayan & Sanusi, 2025) These institutions play a vital role in shaping Indonesia's cultural and religious identity while adapting to the demands of modern education. Arabic serves as an important tool for social interaction and cultural integration in a multicultural environment. This language not only facilitates the understanding of Islamic texts, but also encourages intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, and the preservation of identity among diverse student populations. The integration of Arabic in educational settings and its role in maintaining cultural ties underscores the importance of this language as a bridge in

overcoming cultural and ethnic differences.(Sopian et al., 2025) The strategies used in teaching Arabic in Islamic educational institutions are essential to foster linguistic competence, tolerance, and cross-cultural communication skills among students.

By focusing on internalizing the universal values of Islam, educators can effectively prepare learners to engage with the complexities of a multicultural world, while fostering an environment of respect and mutual understanding.(Bakti et al., 2025) This approach not only enhances students' personal development, but also contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and harmonious society. The research and refinement of this teaching strategy will contribute to the overall effectiveness of Arabic language education in promoting social cohesion and moral development. Despite having an important role, Arabic teaching in Islamic boarding schools and madrassas still faces a number of actual problems. Many teachers still rely on traditional memorization-based methods so that learning tends to be monotonous and does not encourage students' communicative skills. In addition, the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds and abilities often has not been responded to with adaptive teaching strategies, so differentiated learning is rarely optimally realized.(Zulkarnain & Abdullah Khoir, 2023) By addressing these challenges, educators can improve the effectiveness of Arabic teaching in Islamic educational institutions. Moving away from traditional methods and implementing adaptive and differentiated strategies will not only improve students' communicative skills, but also create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.

The limitations of supporting facilities such as interactive learning media, access to technology, and the lack of teacher training in a multicultural approach are also challenges that hinder the effectiveness of learning. This condition shows that there is a gap between the demands of contextual and multicultural Arabic language learning and the teaching practices that take place in the field.(Munip, 2020)

Theoretically, the strategy of teaching Arabic in a multicultural environment is rooted in a humanistic and constructivistic educational paradigm that emphasizes the importance of students' active involvement in building meaning. By basing Arabic teaching strategies on humanistic and constructivistic paradigms, educators can create a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment.(Szabó & Csépes, 2022) This approach not only improves language proficiency, but also supports the development of students' identities, values, and social awareness in a multicultural world. This educational philosophy views language not just as a means of communication, but as a medium for the formation of identity, values, and social awareness.(Issn et al., 2024)

The integration of multicultural education in Islamic boarding schools and madrassas is in line with the principles of multicultural learning theory and the constructivist approach of

Biggs & Tang. This alignment encourages respect for diversity, inclusivity, and critical competency development among students, while addressing contemporary challenges such as the prevention of radicalism and the use of technology to improve learning outcomes. (Latif & Hafid, 2021)

So far, the study of Arabic language learning in Indonesia has emphasized more on traditional methodological aspects or the mastery of linguistic skills alone, while the multicultural dimension inherent in the context of pesantren and madrassas is still rarely explored in depth. Previous studies have generally focused on the effectiveness of specific methods, such as grammar-translation, memorization, or the use of digital media, without highlighting how Arabic teaching strategies can serve as a means of integrating diversity values and cross-cultural communication. As a result, there is a gap between the multicultural reality in the Islamic educational environment and the teaching model used. (Aziz et al., 2024) This gap is the important reason for conducting this research, which is to analyze the practice of teaching Arabic in Islamic boarding schools and madrassas in a multicultural framework, so that it can produce strategies that are more contextual, inclusive, and relevant to the needs of the times.

Based on the description above, this research focuses on how Arabic language teaching strategies are implemented in Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs within a multicultural environment, and how effectively these strategies accommodate students' diverse cultures, backgrounds, and learning needs. The study aims to identify, analyze, and evaluate existing teaching practices while formulating more contextual, inclusive, and empowering strategies. The expected contribution is to enrich theoretical perspectives on multicultural Arabic teaching and provide practical recommendations for teachers, educational managers, and policymakers to develop adaptive, relevant, and effective learning models that strengthen students' linguistic competence while fostering openness, respect, and tolerance.

B. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022) The main focus of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the Arabic teaching strategies implemented by teachers in multicultural madrasah settings. To ensure the data truly reflects the diversity of the learning environment, research subjects were selected purposively, consisting of Arabic teachers who are directly involved in classroom instruction and students representing various cultural, linguistic, and socio-educational backgrounds. Data were gathered through several complementary techniques: classroom observations were conducted to capture real teaching practices, interaction patterns, and the way teachers adapt strategies to student diversity; in-depth interviews with Arabic teachers explored their pedagogical

reasoning, experiences, challenges, and considerations when choosing certain instructional approaches; and document analysis was carried out on teaching modules, lesson plans, materials or worksheets (LKPD), and instructional media to identify how multicultural principles are embedded in the design and implementation of learning. This combination of data sources allows the study to produce a comprehensive and contextualized picture of Arabic teaching in multicultural madrasahs..

The collected data was analyzed with the Miles & Huberman model through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. To maintain the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and methods is used, namely comparing the results of observations, interviews, and document analysis. Thus, this research is expected to identify adaptive teaching strategies, uncover the challenges faced by teachers, and formulate opportunities for the development of Arabic language learning that is more inclusive and relevant to the needs of students in a multicultural context.(Johnson et al., 2020)

C. Result and Discussion

This research was carried out at MTs Negeri 4 Sidoarjo, a state Islamic educational institution located in a dynamic and plural urban area. The school accommodates students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, ranging from pesantren families to the general urban community. The research subjects focused on students in grades VIII A to VIII H with a total of around 304 students, each class containing 38 students. This diversity can be seen from the variation in basic Arabic language skills, learning habits, and students' academic motivation. There are those who are fluent in reading Arabic texts from an early age, but there are also those who are only familiar with hijaiyah letters when they enter the madrasah. This situation makes MTsN 4 Sidoarjo a multicultural education laboratory that is both challenging and inspiring for the development of Arabic language teaching strategies.

Arabic teachers at this madrasah show high awareness of the importance of learning strategies that are adaptive to students' characters. It no longer makes learning limited to mastering language structures, but also as a means of meaningful communication. One of the main approaches used is a communicative approach based on the local cultural context. The subject matter is connected to the students' real lives, such as conversations in the market, worship activities, or interactions in the home environment. In this way, students feel that Arabic is not just a language of books or memorization, but a language that is alive and relevant to their daily lives. This approach makes the classroom a space of expression, not just a space for memorization.

In addition, teachers apply a cooperative learning strategy that fosters a spirit of togetherness among students. Each class is divided into small groups of students with diverse

abilities. They work together to understand texts, translate dialogues (*hiwar*), or present the results of discussions in front of the class. These group activities not only strengthen linguistic understanding, but also train empathy, tolerance, and the ability to work together. More advanced students become peer tutors for their peers, while others learn without feeling left behind. This cooperative learning atmosphere creates warm social interaction and fosters multicultural awareness among students.

In increasing learning motivation, teachers also integrate interactive digital media such as *Quizizz*, *Kahoot*, and Arabic-language learning videos from YouTube. Online quiz activities create a healthy and fun competitive atmosphere. Students look excited when their names appear on the scoreboard, and the moment is often met with applause from classmates. Technology is no longer a distraction, but a bridge that enriches the learning process. The integration of digital media helps teachers monitor students' level of understanding in real time while making learning more interesting for Generation Z who are attached to the digital world.

In addition to the communicative and collaborative approach, teachers also implement differentiated learning (differentiated instruction) as a strategy to accommodate differences in abilities between students. Students who quickly grasp the material are given creative projects such as creating Arabic vlogs or writing descriptions of their daily activities. (Muh. Asriadi et al., 2023) Meanwhile, students who are still facing difficulties receive additional guidance in the form of vocabulary exercises and simple sentence structure. This strategy makes the class inclusive for all, without anyone feeling left out. The differentiation approach affirms that each child has the right to grow at his or her own pace and potential—an important principle in multicultural education.

Even so, the implementation of learning is not completely without obstacles. The large number of students in each class makes teachers face challenges in giving individual attention. In addition, not all students have digital devices to participate in technology-based learning. The limited time of face-to-face time also limits teachers' opportunities to explore more varied methods. However, this limitation actually gives rise to new creativity. Teachers combine conventional methods such as *drills* and *muhadatsah* with simple technology so that all students can remain actively involved. This effort shows that the success of learning does not only depend on the means, but also on the creativity and commitment of teachers.

From the results of observations and interviews, it appears that students respond positively to innovative and contextual learning. They consider Arabic lessons to be easier, fun, and meaningful. Role *play* activities, group discussions, and digital quizzes make them dare to speak in Arabic without fear of being wrong. Students also become more open to the differences in abilities of their peers. Social values such as cooperation, mutual respect, and empathy grow

naturally in the classroom. This shows that learning Arabic at MTsN 4 Sidoarjo not only hone linguistic skills, but also shapes the social and moral character of students.

Overall, the implementation of multicultural-based Arabic teaching strategies in grade VIII MTsN 4 Sidoarjo has a significant impact on improving the quality of learning. The combination of communicative, collaborative, differentiated, and technology approaches creates a living, participatory, and inclusive learning environment. Students not only learn to speak Arabic, but also learn to appreciate differences and interact positively with others. This student-centered learning illustrates the transformation of madrasah education towards a more modern and humanistic direction, without losing the roots of Islamic values that are the foundation.

The findings of this study confirm that effective Arabic language learning in a multicultural environment must be designed contextually, reflectively, and oriented towards character building. The experience at MTsN 4 Sidoarjo shows that Arabic teachers can be agents of change who foster a tolerant, collaborative, and loving attitude through creative and meaningful teaching strategies. This learning model can be used as an inspiration for other madrasahs in developing an Arabic language learning system that is more adaptive to the challenges of the times while still being based on the values of togetherness, humanity, and spirituality.

Discussion

The Latest Transformation of the Arabic Language Curriculum and Its Relevance

The Arabic language curriculum in Indonesia has undergone a paradigm evolution from a traditional grammar-oriented approach to a communicative and contextual model (Latifah et al., 2025)(Latifah, 2025) This change is in line with the demands of the Independent Curriculum, where schools and teachers are given flexibility in designing materials and methods according to the characteristics of students and the local context. In the implementation at MTs Negeri 4 Sidoarjo, teachers have the space to adjust Arabic material to be relevant to students' lives (e.g. daily dialogues, socio-religious activities), as seen in this study.

In the latest framework, the Arabic language curriculum should pay attention to three aspects: linguistic competence, communicative competence, and diversity/cultural value competencies. This means that students are not only expected to master the rules of nahwu and sharaf, but also be able to understand, use, and respond to Arabic in the context of their lives (at school, home, community) and have an attitude of intercultural tolerance. This transformation has colored changes in the syllabus, approach, and teaching materials that are more flexible and adaptive.

In this study, teachers took advantage of the flexibility of the curriculum to insert local dialogue, the cultural background of Sidoarjo, and themes that are close to the students' experiences (for example, religious activities in the surrounding environment). Thus, the curriculum is not understood as a rigid guarantee, but rather as a dynamic framework that can be internalized in daily learning practices. (Lestari et al., 2025)

Multicultural-Based Learning Strategies

One of the important findings of the study is that the condition of students is very heterogeneous both from the background of elementary schools (general, Islamic boarding schools, madrasah ibtidaiyah), initial abilities, and learning habits. This diversity demands a learning strategy that is inclusive and sensitive to the cultural context of students (multicultural). The concept of inclusion in Arabic language teaching emphasizes that all students feel represented, not marginalized, and given equal access to the learning experience.

In research, teachers apply collaborative and differentiation strategies. Cooperative learning allows students to learn from each other across abilities students who are more proficient help those who are weaker, so that no student is drastically left behind. This supports the principle that in a multicultural classroom, differences are not barriers, but rather a source of wealth of interaction. Teachers as facilitators monitor to keep group discussions inclusive and provide contribution opportunities for all members. (Aziz et al., 2024)

Differentiated learning (differentiated instruction) is also the key so that materials and activities are in accordance with the level of student readiness. In the study, high-ability students were given creative tasks (e.g. making vlogs or Arabic dialogues), while students who were still struggling were assisted with basic exercises and intensive mentoring. This approach allows classes to maintain equal learning opportunities amid diversity.

In addition, the multicultural approach is also reflected in the materials and themes raised for example, intercultural dialogue, tolerance, and social values. By incorporating elements of local culture and students' perspectives into the material, learning Arabic becomes inseparable from their social reality. The "Curriculum Bridge" study shows that the integration of inclusive values and multiculturalism into the curriculum provides a strong foundation for learning strategies to be sensitive to students' differences (Aziz et al., 2024)

Integration of 4Cs (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity) in Arabic Language Learning

One of the key challenges in 21st-century education is ensuring students not only memorize the material, but also develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (4C) skills. Recent Arabic curriculum innovations have sought to integrate the 4C approach to bridge linguistic competence and 21st century competence. Through this approach,

learning Arabic is directed not only to stop at the grammatical and vocabulary memorization aspects, but also to train students to think reflexively and productively in understanding and using language in a contextual and meaningful way. (Dirjen Dikti Kemendikbud, 2020).

In the context of critical thinking, students are trained to analyze simple Arabic texts, find implicit meanings, and compare two versions of translations to assess the accuracy and context of meaning. Activities such as debating the meaning of words in a dialogue or choosing the most appropriate sentence structure encourage students to argue logically. In the communication aspect, learning is directed through *muhadatsah*, dialogue simulations, or group presentations so that students are accustomed to using Arabic as a means of real interaction. The results showed that students tended to be more enthusiastic when they were given the opportunity to speak directly in Arabic rather than simply listening to or reading texts. (Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023)

Meanwhile, in the aspect of collaboration, heterogeneous group learning provides opportunities for students with different abilities to learn from each other and work together in completing tasks. Activities such as group discussions, peer-teaching, and collaborative projects reinforce the value of tolerance and shared responsibility. In the realm of creativity, teachers provide space for students to create linguistic works such as creative dialogues, short videos in Arabic, or mini-dramas. This kind of activity trains students to think originally and adaptively in language. Thus, the integration of the 4Cs in Arabic language learning not only improves language skills, but also forms high-level thinking abilities and collaborative characters that are highly relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

The Role of Digital Media and Technological Innovation in Arabic Language Learning

The transformation of Arabic language learning at MTs Negeri 4 Sidoarjo is also marked by the integration of digital technology and interactive media as an instrument to strengthen modern pedagogy. Teachers use *Quizizz*, *Kahoot*, and online learning videos as a means of quizzes, reflections, and text comprehension exercises. This innovation adapts learning to the characteristics of Generation Z, who are more responsive to visual and technology-based interactions. The use of digital media has been proven to increase motivation to learn and foster healthy competition in the classroom. In addition, technology allows teachers to quickly evaluate learning outcomes, identify student difficulties, and dynamically adjust strategies. This digital transformation is in line with the direction of the Independent Curriculum which encourages the use of technology to expand access and personalize learning. (Latifah, 2025)

In addition to media innovation, teachers also implement authentic assessments that assess students' abilities holistically, not just cognitive aspects. The form of assessment includes Arabic-language video projects, group dialogues (*muhadatsah*), presentations, and

performative assessments in class.(Weeke Alfulana et al., 2025) Teachers no longer only assess written answers, but also communication skills, creativity, and cooperation. Assessments are conducted in a formative and reflective manner, providing students with ongoing feedback to improve their performance. This approach reflects the principle *of assessment for learning* where assessment is not the end of learning, but rather an integral part of the learning process itself. With this model, students learn to evaluate themselves and take responsibility for their progress.

However, the application of learning innovations cannot be separated from challenges. The large number of students (about 38 per class) limits the teacher's opportunity to give individual attention. Limited access to digital devices among students and uneven technological literacy are also obstacles. In addition, the limited face-to-face time makes it difficult for teachers to apply all interactive strategies optimally. Even so, teachers adapt by combining conventional and digital methods, using simple media, and strengthening group activities. This adaptation demonstrates the ability of teachers to apply the principle of flexibility of the Independent Curriculum that learning should be contextual, not similar.(Muslih et al., 2025)

Conceptually, the results of this study confirm the importance of synergy between multicultural approaches, differentiated learning, and digital transformation as the foundation of modern Arabic language learning.(Singer, 2025) All three form a learning system that is humanistic and responsive to the challenges of the 21st century: students think critically, collaborate, communicate effectively, and create in their cultural contexts. The implications for education policy are the need to strengthen teacher training in digital literacy and multicultural pedagogy, provide equitable digital infrastructure, and develop contextual Arabic teaching materials that are appropriate to the local character.(Montes, 2025) With this strategy, madrassas such as MTs Negeri 4 Sidoarjo have the potential to become a national model for Arabic language learning that is innovative, inclusive, and globally competitive.

D. Conclusion

This study shows that Arabic language learning at MTs Negeri 4 Sidoarjo has undergone a significant transformation towards a more communicative, multicultural, and adaptive approach to the needs of 21st-century students. Teachers have successfully integrated a contextual approach with local cultural values and inclusive learning principles, enabling them to productively manage the diversity of students across eight classes (VIII A–H) with a total of 304 students. The collaborative and differentiated approach has proven effective in increasing student engagement, fostering tolerance, and strengthening their communicative skills in Arabic. Thus, student-centered and multicultural value-based learning strategies have become the main foundation for strengthening students' linguistic and social character competencies.

Beyond pedagogical aspects, this study emphasizes the importance of digital transformation and authentic assessment in modern Arabic language learning. The integration of digital media such as Quizizz, Kahoot, and online learning videos not only increases student motivation and participation but also helps teachers conduct formative evaluations efficiently. Project-based, performative, and reflective assessments enable students to develop critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills in accordance with the principles of assessment for learning. These findings are in line with the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum, which demands a flexible, contextual learning process and develops the Pancasila learner profile through meaningful learning experiences.

Conceptually and practically, the results of this study imply that effective Arabic language learning in a multicultural madrasah environment must be designed by combining a humanistic approach, digital technology, and values of diversity. Teachers not only play the role of language teachers but also as cultural facilitators and character mentors. Therefore, improving teacher competence through innovative pedagogy and digital literacy training is an urgent need. With the support of visionary madrasah policies and the provision of equitable digital infrastructure, the learning model at MTs Negeri 4 Sidoarjo has the potential to become a national reference in realizing innovative, inclusive, and globally competitive Arabic language learning. Further research is recommended to empirically assess the effectiveness of this model in the context of other madrasahs and to develop the integration of artificial intelligence-based digital media to enrich the Arabic language learning experience in the digital age.

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