


## Problems of Arabic Language Learning in Class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah: Causal Factors and Solution Strategies

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<b>Keywords:</b> Problematics, Learning, Arabic language	The Arabic language , with its rich grammatical structure , is often considered difficult by most students who learn it . In addition , several others factors make Arabic even harder to learn , whether from the environment , learning methods , or even from the students themselves . This is the issue face by seventh grade students at SMP IT Al-Hijrah in learning Arabic . This research uses a qualitative approach where the researcher presents data in descriptive form ( written ) rather than numerical figures . Data collection was conducted through observation , documentation , and in- depth interviews related to information about the subjects and objects of the research , focus on the issues of learning Arabic in the seventh grade at SMP IT Al-Hijrah. The research findings indicate that the learning problems in the seventh grade at Al-Hijrah IT Middle School stem from factors such as students ' lack of abilities to read the Qur'an , which is closely related to the Arabic language , students ' educational background , insufficient class hours , lack of learning media, and the school environment that is not fully supportive . The efforts made by the teacher to address these learning issues include collaboration between Arabic language teachers and memorization teachers to synchronize students ' Quran reading skills with their Arabic learning , changing teaching strategies by grouping students based on their educational background , constantly motivating students , and striving to create an Arabic speaking environment in the school , starting with the teachers at SMP IT Al-Hijrah.
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### INTRODUCTION

Arabic is the 6th language of the International language that is officialized by the UN. It is possible that Arabic subjects must be at every level of education, both at Elementary School (SD), Middle School (SMP), High School (SMA) or even at the College level. As a follower of Islam, Arabic is one of the most important aspects that must be learned, this is because Arabic is the language used when praying and is the language of the Al- Qur'an .

Arabic language subjects are taught to students so that they can understand the contents of the Qur'an and hadith and apply these values in their lives. Without mastery of Arabic, the meaning contained in the Qur'an and Hadith will be difficult for them to learn (Fajriyah, 2021) . Of course, studying Arabic cannot be separated from problems that hinder the process of learning Arabic itself.

Arabic language learning problems can be faced at various levels of education. Both linguistic and non - linguistic problems . This is because Arabic is a foreign language that is widely studied in Indonesia. In the scope of learning a foreign language, of course there are many differences and challenges for learners to learn it. Some can learn the foreign language quickly, but some are slow and have difficulty learning it (Sehra, 2022) .

Along with the fact that Arabic is a foreign language that is widely studied in Indonesia, it is not uncommon for learners to face major challenges in learning it. Differences in speed and difficulty in learning Arabic are greatly influenced by individual factors, such as educational background, motivation, linguistic ability, and learning environment. This adds complexity to the learning process, where for some students, learning Arabic can be quite a challenge, while for others it may be easier.

As has been done in recent years, various studies have revealed problems in Arabic language learning. One of them is a study conducted by (Defiani, 2019) . This article discusses the problems that occurred at SMP IT Insan Mulia Batanghari, where even though the Arabic language learning process at the school had been implemented optimally, the results of student learning scores still did not meet the minimum standards. This study states that several factors that influence student learning outcomes include the abilities of the students themselves, as well as factors from the school environment, family, and society.

Another study that raised a similar theme was a study entitled " Problems in Learning Arabic for Grade VII Students of SMP Nu Kajen Pekalongan Regency" by Wirani Atqia and Febriana Ulil Fajriyah. The study aims to determine the problems of Class VII Students of SMP Nu Kajen Pekalongan Regency in learning Arabic and solutions to these problems . The results of the study stated that there were several problems faced by students such as an unsupportive environmental background, the slow ability of students to understand Arabic language material and the lack of students' ability to read Arabic (Fajriyah, 2021) .

Learning Arabic at the junior high school level, especially in Islamic-based schools such as SMP IT Al-Hijrah, has its own challenges. Arabic is not only taught as a foreign language, but also as a tool to understand Islamic religious texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, it is important for students to master Arabic in these schools. However, despite its strategic position in the curriculum, the Arabic learning process often faces various problems that hinder its effectiveness.

The results of the researcher's observations of class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah showed that the students' Arabic language skills were still ineffective both in terms of writing and speaking skills. Students still find it difficult to understand the context in learning Arabic. Therefore, the problems that occur during the Arabic language learning process must be found and solved, both from the teacher and from the students themselves. Although Arabic language learning is not the only factor in forming a student's personality, Arabic language learning greatly contributes to students being able to understand the Qur'an and Hadith (Amirudin & Fatmawati, 2018) . Where both contain various knowledge and examples that will make students have good morals towards society, nation and state.

The findings of the researchers suggest that the Arabic language skills of grade VII students of SMP IT Al-Hijrah are still less than optimal. In addition, the lack of development

of learning media used by teachers during the learning process can also be a factor in the lack of success in learning, especially Arabic (Nasution et al., 2024) . Another factor that researchers found was that the failure to create an Arabic language environment by teachers and school administrators was one of the problems for students in acquiring Arabic as a second language.

Based on the background of the problem above , the researcher will reveal the problems faced in the Arabic language learning process in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah and efforts to overcome and find solutions to these problems which are written in an article entitled: Problems of Arabic Language Learning in Class VII Junior high school It Al-Hijrah: Causal Factors and Solution Strategies.

## RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method, where this approach focuses mainly on natural problems and symptoms. For. Qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of written words that describe people or events observed (Waruwu, 2023) .

This study also uses descriptive research. This descriptive research will describe in detail the problems of Arabic language learning in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah, identify the factors causing the problems that arise, and propose solution strategies that can be applied to overcome these problems. The data in this study were obtained through various techniques, including:

1. In-depth interviews: Conducted with Arabic language teachers at SMP IT Al-Hijrah to obtain views and information regarding Arabic language learning problems.
2. Observation: The researcher conducted direct observation of teaching and learning activities in class VII to see directly the obstacles and challenges faced during the Arabic language learning process.
3. Documentation: Collecting relevant documents such as RPP (Learning Implementation Plan) and learning evaluation results records to analyze the strategies used in teaching Arabic.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Problems of Learning Arabic in Class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah .

Based on the results of observations and in-depth interviews with Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I as an Arabic teacher in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah, she said that in the process of providing Arabic language teaching at SMP IT Al-Hijrah the biggest challenge is teaching in class VII, this is because students in class VII have just experienced a phase transition from Elementary School (SD) to Junior High School (SMP), of course not all students are graduates of Islamic-based schools, some of them are graduates of state schools in which Arabic is not taught, even students who are graduates of elementary schools that are not taught Arabic still have difficulty reading Arabic texts. So how are we going to teach Arabic, reading it is still difficult. Plus several other factors that are less supportive in learning Arabic which is a fairly big problem in learning Arabic, she said.

Problems are a collection of problems faced by a person individually or a group of people. What is called a problem is anything that hinders, hinders, complicates a person's efforts to achieve what they want to achieve. A problem is a gap between expectations and reality (Sehra, 2022) .

Problems refer to elements and patterns that show differences in structure between one language and another. In the context of learning Arabic, the problems that arise can be obstacles that slow down or hinder the smoothness of the teaching and learning process. These obstacles can originate from within the Arabic language itself (linguistic problems) or from non-linguistic factors, such as problems involving teachers and students (Amirudin, 1947) .

Problems in learning Arabic are not only limited to the technical aspects of the language, but also involve external factors that can influence the effectiveness of learning. The following are the problems faced by students in learning Arabic:

### **Problematics Linguistics**

Problems are obstacles faced by students when learning Arabic which come from the structure of the Arabic language itself. As expressed by an Arabic teacher at SMP IT Al-Hijrah that learning Arabic in grade VII has one problem caused by the difficulty in understanding the structure of the Arabic language to be learned where Arabic has letter sounds that are not found in Indonesian, so that grade VII students sometimes still find it difficult to read Arabic texts, especially those who have never studied Arabic at all. There are other problems which are included in the problems linguistics are as follows:

a. Sound System/Phonetics

The sound system in Arabic has different and varied characteristics in its pronunciation, each has its own special characteristics. The problems faced include that in Indonesia there are several phonemes that do not exist in Arabic, such as the sounds G, P and NG which cause Arabs to pronounce the sound P as the sound B. (Amirudin, 1947) .

problem may often be experienced by students, where there are several phonemes that are not found in Arabic, which makes some students find Arabic quite difficult to learn.

b. Vocabulary

In the concept of language learning, there are things other than language that need to be considered that are related to vocabulary, namely the many loan words originating from Arabic that are used in Indonesian or regional language terms. On the one hand, this condition provides great advantages, but on the other hand, the process of transferring and absorbing Arabic words into Indonesian can also cause its own problems (Mulianto, 2023) . For example, when in Arabic *كلمة* in Arabic means "word", but in Indonesian the word "sentence" means a sentence.

c. Differences in Grammatical Structure

Arabic has a grammatical structure that is very different from Indonesian. One of them is the verb system that changes according to the subject, time, and sentence form, as well as the use of cases ( *i'raab* ) on nouns that do not exist in Indonesian. This causes difficulties for students to understand and use words in the right context, for example

in terms of the use of pronouns, the gender of nouns, and complex sentence patterns (Amirudin, 1947) .

The fundamental differences between Arabic and Indonesian, especially in grammatical structure, can indeed pose a challenge for students learning Arabic. The changes in verbs that are adjusted to the subject, time, and sentence form, as well as the use of cases ( *i'raab* ) on nouns, are aspects that are very different from the simpler Indonesian grammatical system. This requires a deep understanding so that students can master the sentence structure correctly.

d. Letter and Writing System

In Arabic, there is a discrepancy between writing and pronunciation. There are letters that are written but not pronounced, such as the letter alif after the letter waw , which may be difficult for students who are just starting to learn Arabic (Amirudin, 1947) .

Arabic uses a different alphabet than the Latin alphabet used in Indonesian. Arabic is also written from right to left, which can often be a challenge for students who are used to a left-to-right writing system. In addition, Arabic uses letters that merge and change shape depending on their position in the word, which adds to the difficulty of reading and writing.

### Non - Linguistic Problems

problems in Arabic language learning refer to obstacles or challenges that are not directly related to the language itself (such as phonology, grammar, or vocabulary), but rather to external factors that influence the teaching and learning process. These factors involve influences from social, psychological, environmental aspects, as well as the conditions of teachers and students.

Based on the results of the interview with Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I as an Arabic teacher at SMP IT Al-Hijrah, explained that the school's target in learning Arabic is not that high, the school only hopes that students are able to understand Arabic language rules according to their abilities, this is what causes several problems in learning Arabic that originate from non-linguistics. Such as the failure to create an Arabic language environment in schools which of course becomes a problem for students to not be able to apply their Arabic *kalam* (speaking) skills effectively. Some of the main issues that frequently arise in this context are:

a. Motivation and interest in learning

Motivation and interest in learning are non-linguistic problems that are often encountered in Arabic language learning, and learning outcomes are often influenced by both. Learning without strong motivation tends not to produce optimal achievement, especially if students feel uninterested in the subject matter or do not like the teacher who teaches it (Muliando, 2023) .

Motivation is an important factor in language learning. Many students feel that Arabic is a difficult subject or is not relevant to their daily lives, especially if they do not see any practical benefits in mastering it. This can reduce their interest in learning Arabic. Without strong motivation, students tend to be inactive in following lessons and are less enthusiastic about mastering the language.

b. Environment and Infrastructure

Social and physical environmental factors can also be barriers to learning Arabic. For example, if the learning environment is not supportive, such as uncomfortable classrooms or lack of access to modern learning resources, this can interfere with students' concentration and comfort in learning. In addition, the lack of opportunities to practice Arabic outside the classroom is also a limiting factor. Students may have difficulty applying Arabic in everyday life, especially if they live in areas where Arabic is not widely used.

c. Teacher Competence

Teachers who lack a deep understanding of effective teaching methods, both in theory and practice, can lead to a suboptimal learning process. For example, if a teacher is unable to explain the material in an interesting way or in accordance with the needs of the students, then the students' understanding of the material will be limited (Muliando, 2023) .

d. Time constraints

Limited time in learning Arabic is also often a problem. In many schools, Arabic may only be taught as an additional subject or with a limited time in one week. This leaves students with insufficient time to truly learn Arabic thoroughly. In addition, the dense curriculum load and the many subjects that students must take often cause them to be less focused on learning Arabic .

e. Learning methods

The aspect that plays an important role in the smooth running of learning is the learning method, meaning that a good learning process must use a variety of learning methods that are appropriate to the learning needs of students.

In learning Arabic, a teacher must choose an appropriate method. Inappropriate methods used in learning will make it more difficult for students to receive the material given and will affect success in learning (Amirudin, 1947) .

Based on the results of research conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation regarding the problems in Arabic language learning in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah, the researcher will provide a general description of the problems found and the efforts made by teachers to overcome these problems. Some of the problems in Arabic language learning in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah are as follows:

1. Qur'an Reading

Mastery of reading the Qur'an has a very close relationship with learning Arabic. There have been many studies that prove that proficiency in reading the Qur'an has a positive and significant relationship with proficiency in reading Arabic texts (Triyana et al., 2024) . This can be seen from the basic aspect where the entire Qur'an uses Arabic.

The problems faced by class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah related to this matter are as stated by the Arabic language teacher at SMP IT Al-Hijrah, Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I , many students are still not fluent or not fully proficient in reading the Qur'an , there are still some students who are still hesitant in reading the Qur'an which makes it difficult for them to follow Arabic language learning , while we both know that mastery

of reading the Qur'an is closely related to learning Arabic, where in language there are 4 skills that must be mastered, namely *Qiroah* (reading), *Kalam* (speaking), *Istima'* (listening) and *Kitabah* (writing) skills (Nasution, 2022) .

## 2. Student's educational background

Students of grade VII of SMP IT AI-Hijrah have different educational backgrounds. Some of them are graduates of Islamic-based Elementary Schools that allow them to have studied simple Arabic since Elementary School, but not for the others, who are graduates of Elementary Schools that do not have a *background* in studying Arabic. This is certainly a problem faced in the process of learning Arabic in grade VII of SMP IT AI-Hijrah.

Based on the results of the interview by Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I. She said that the difference in educational background is a serious problem that makes it quite difficult to teach Arabic language materials. Students who come from elementary schools (SD) that do not have Arabic language learning must start from how to read Arabic, how to write Arabic which of course will make it difficult to follow the materials and feel left behind with what is taught in Class VII. They have to study extra to be able to follow the learning well. As for students who have studied Arabic, they will feel bored with the material they have learned repeatedly.

This educational background problem is a problem that does not only occur at the Junior High School (SMP) level, but at every level of education this problem will be found in the Arabic language learning process. differences in students' educational backgrounds will affect the quality of their understanding of Arabic language learning. This is a common problem at various levels of education that should be given special attention to find solutions to this problem (Sehra, 2022) .

## 3. Time Limitation

The time given for learning Arabic at SMP IT AI-Hijrah is only 2 teaching hours for 1 week, with such time it is very difficult for teachers to make students understand the Arabic material being taught which makes it one of the problems faced in the process of learning Arabic at SMP IT AI-Hijrah.

Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I as an Arabic teacher at SMP IT AI-Hijrah said that limited time in Arabic language learning makes Arabic language learning less than optimal in its achievements. The limited time given in Arabic language learning, a teacher can only deliver the material and students do not have time to apply ( practice ) the material delivered due to time constraints, so that in Arabic language learning students only understand the material and find it difficult to practice his .

## 4. Limitations of Learning Media

Learning media is categorized as an important aspect in supporting the learning process so that the material delivered by the teacher can be received by students effectively. The existence of learning media will make the learning atmosphere not boring, so that it can improve students' understanding of Arabic language material and students will always be enthusiastic about learning because of this learning media. Choosing the right learning media will make students active in providing responses during Arabic

language learning and support students in being able to speak Arabic well (Gemilang Damar, 2020) .

Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I said that learning Arabic is a foreign language and will be more effective if students hear and see directly how to speak Arabic properly and correctly from qualified native speakers , this can be applied by giving students videos of Arabic conversations in the teaching and learning process. Something like this certainly requires *an infocus* as a learning medium, the problem is that the availability of *infocus* at SMP IT Al-Hijrah is still inadequate, with the condition of SMP IT Al-Hijrah which has 12 classes, while there are only 6 *infocus units* . Often when you want to use *an infocus* in Arabic language learning, but I didn't get a chance because it was already being used by other teachers.

#### 5. School environment

The school environment is a structured and well-organized educational environment. This environment includes all elements related to the learning process. When the school environment integrates the use of Arabic, students will be more encouraged to communicate using Arabic. (Zakiah, 2021) .

Based on the results of the researcher's observations of the school environment and the results of interviews with Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I , the school environment of SMP IT Al-Hijrah has not implemented communication using Arabic, either from the teachers or the students themselves. Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I said that this is a problem in teaching Arabic, where students do not have a place to apply Arabic directly, which makes the students' Arabic language skills ineffective. Even though during Arabic language learning the teacher and students use Arabic, when they leave the classroom they return to using Indonesian as the language used in the school environment.

### Efforts Made to Overcome Arabic Language Learning Problems in Class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah

The results of an interview with an Arabic language teacher at SMP IT Al-Hijrah stated that although there were several problems faced by grade VII students in learning Arabic, both from linguistic and non-linguistic factors, he as a teacher still tried his best to minimize the problems faced by students during Arabic language learning so that students could achieve their Arabic language learning goals optimally.

Based on several types of problems found in Arabic language learning at SMP IT Al-Hijrah, it is necessary to take action or make efforts to solve the problems of Arabic language learning in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah. As an Arabic language teacher, the efforts made by Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I is as follows:

#### 1. Collaborating With Teachers memorization

Based on the problem of the lack of mastery of reading the Qur'an among class VII students at SMP IT Al-Hijrah, the Arabic language teacher collaborated with the tahfidz teacher to include students who lacked in the skills of reading the Qur'an. into the Tahsin group . In this tahsin group , students are taught to read the Qur'an from the basic level, starting from the pronunciation of *makhrojul letters* , the length and shortness of the



pronunciation of letters until they are fluent in reading the Qur'an , which will also make it easier for students in learning Arabic.

## 2. Learning Grouping

As an Arabic teacher Ustadzah Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I in her learning process forms her class into several groups based on the educational background of her students, students who have a background of studying Arabic will be united with students who have the same educational background. This is so that teachers can use appropriate strategies in teaching materials to students, and make students able to follow learning effectively.

In addition, this strategy also allows Ustadzah Syarifah to be more flexible in using appropriate teaching methods and techniques according to the abilities and needs of each group of students. For example, for more advanced groups, Ustadzah can provide more challenging materials and use more interactive methods, while for groups that are just starting out, she can teach the material more gradually and provide more intensive support.

With this approach, it is expected that each student can feel more confident in following the learning and gain a better understanding of Arabic. This effective learning will also help students overcome the difficulties they may face based on their educational background, so that they can develop according to their respective abilities.

## 3. Giving Motivation

Teachers should motivate students as much as possible regarding the importance of learning Arabic. This is so that students become enthusiastic about learning Arabic and do not view Arabic as an additional lesson, but rather an important lesson and indeed mandatory to learn.

It is stated in one of the psychological studies in foreign language learning, that motivation plays a very important role during the foreign language learning process. Motivation is the core force to initiate foreign language learning which then becomes the driving force to persist when students feel bored in the learning (Rahman, 2018) .

Through strong motivation and explanation of the importance of Arabic, teachers can change the views of students who may consider Arabic as a difficult or unimportant subject. Teachers can use various methods, such as giving real examples of how mastery of Arabic opens up opportunities in the world of work or enriches students' intellectual insights. Thus, students will feel more motivated to learn enthusiastically and make Arabic an important subject in their lives, not just an obligation or additional lesson.

## 4. Implementing an Arabic Language School Environment

The school environment greatly contributes to the process of improving students' Arabic language skills. As with the pesantren environment that uses Arabic in everyday life, it will make it easier for its students to interact using Arabic. That is what Ustadzah will implement little by little Syarifah Nurhafdhiah , S.Pd.I as an Arabic teacher at SMP IT Al-Hijrah. Starting from the teachers who started interacting using Arabic which will

then be slowly applied by the students of SMP IT Al-Hijrah so that the students' Arabic language skills can improve effectively.

Furthermore, through a slow and gradual process, students are expected to improve their Arabic language skills, both in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. The application of this method, which is similar to the method applied in Islamic boarding schools, will give students the opportunity to practice Arabic in real life. Therefore, students' Arabic language skills will develop more effectively, because they not only learn theory, but also get used to using Arabic in a more natural and contextual context

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that several problems were found in Arabic language learning in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah, where most of the problems in Arabic language learning come from non-linguistic problems such as the lack of students' ability to read the Qur'an which is closely related to Arabic language learning, students' educational background, limited Arabic language lesson time, limited learning media and school environment problems. Efforts made to overcome the problems in class VII of SMP IT Al-Hijrah include, Arabic language teachers collaborate with Tahfidz teachers to group students who are lacking in reading the Qur'an into Tahsin groups in order to get more optimal Tahfidz learning, in addition, teachers also create learning strategies by grouping students based on their educational background so that students can follow learning more effectively, teachers must always motivate students about the importance of learning Arabic in order to foster students' enthusiasm for learning, and create an Arabic-language school environment to train students' skills in interacting using Arabic.

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