ACQUISITION OF ARABIC AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDREN IN ISLAMIC KINDERGARTEN

Abdul Aziz¹, Siti Khoirun Niswah², Faisal Mahmuoud Adam Ibrahim³

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrhim Malang, Indonesia
Jl. Gajayana No. 50, Kec. Lowokwaru, Kota Malang, Jawa Timur, 65144, Indonesia
²Universitas Al-Qur’an Al-Karim Khortoum, Sudan
Al Mourada Street, Umm Durman, Sudan
Corresponding E-mail: khoirunniswah727@gmail.com

Abstract

It is believed that memorizing the Qur’an would be able to improve the acquisition of a second language, especially Arabic language, particularly for early childhood. This is because children have quite sharp hearing, so they quickly acquire Arabic language as their second language. The language acquisition is done by listening and kinesthetic methods. For this purpose, the study aims to describe the process of acquiring Arabic in early childhood at Daarut Tahfidz lil Athfal Malang. Researchers applied descriptive qualitative research and case study methods. Data obtained by observation and interviews. The results showed that learning activities to memorize the Qur’an can accelerate language acquisition in early childhood who previously had not been able to pronounce sentences perfectly. At the opening and closing of the lesson, the teacher in the class always reminds the mufradât (vocabulary) that has been delivered, so that it will strengthen their memory in Arabic language. The research is expected to provide an overview of the importance of providing Arabic language learning from an early age in order to strengthen Islamic teachings from an early age.

Keywords: Arabic acquisition, second language acquisition, kinesthetic, early childhood

Introduction

The acquisition of a second language is certainly different from that of the first language. To acquire a second language, there are several factors, including psychological factors, social factors and several other variable factors.¹ Psychology is

closely related to the process of intellectual development in the individual analysis of grammatical structures and rules. Intellectualism is related to important memory in aspects of language, then motor related to the pronunciation of sounds involved in the second language is also related to psychological factors. Furthermore, social factors in the form of situations, where, and with whom humans interact can also influence humans in acquiring a second language. In addition, other variable factors are influenced by motivation, attitudes, interests, and so on. In this study, the research includes several problem formulations, including, how do early childhood children at the Daarut Tahfidz institution acquire a second language, through what media the children acquire a second language, and what languages they obtained.

The development of communication and language in humans has started since they were still in the womb. The first communication in children can be seen when they cry. When a child feels uncomfortable, the language they use is crying, and this is evidence of the first language that a person has, commonly referred to as the mother tongue. At this golden age, language develop most rapidly as experienced by the students in the Daarut Tahfidz institution which was formed by the Baiturrahman’s Mosque Malang. Aspects developed in early childhood education in Daarut Tahfidz are behavior development and habitation which are moral and religious values, as well as basic skills, one of which is language. Teaching foreign languages, in this case, Arabic, to students at an early age through memorizing the Qur’an at Daarut Tahfidz as one of the proofs of introducing foreign languages to early childhood.

Learning at an early age will provide optimal results. Because children's memory at an early age is still very sharp, they can receive memory stimuli more easily than adults and the elderly. In addition, learning at an early age has a very long time span, giving more time to repeat and explore what is learned. Like the students who are in the Daarut Tahfidz lil Ahfal Malang institution, where the institution provides learning about a foreign language, namely Arabic, between them memorizing the Qur’an. By memorizing the Qur’an is what makes them more quickly accept the Arabic language. Basically the learning process at Daarut Tahfidz has been carried out as much as possible, this can be seen when the teacher provides various methods to

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support success in memorizing the Qur’an as well as teaching Arabic for the students. However, some problems occur when the students are not consistent in attending class. This can reduce their time in listening to and speaking Arabic language whereas listening and speaking the language repeatedly can be embedded in memory and in turn they can also pronounce the language well.\(^9\)

Several studies show that children acquire a mother tongue through several things, such as frequently asked questions, verbal and non-verbal responses, and also their interactions.\(^10\) In subsequent developments, most children at an early age are able to enrich vocabulary independently in the form of good communication. When these young children learn language through interaction with adults, they not only learn the redaction of words and sentences but also learn the actions and behavior of adults. This research is also reinforced by the results of research conducted by Siti Miftachur Rochmah\(^11\)

In addition, Nur Annisa Fajriyani who found that linguistic processes and activities in learning Arabic as a second language can be done by multiplying memorizing and repeating Arabic readings, in the form of the Qur’an, or a novel, or a magazine written in Arabic.\(^12\) Other study by Reni Fauziyah et al, revealed that memorizing the Qur’an has a major influence on understanding Arabic. Memorizing the Qur’an can improve listening and speaking skills in Arabic.\(^13\) In addition, the quality of memorizing the Qur’an as the ability to acquire Arabic is strengthened by a research conducted by Yuniarti which resulted in he relationship between the ability to memorize the Qur’an with Arabic language skills that are influenced by time and istiqomah in learning both.\(^14\)

As stated in the statement, in the Daarut Tahfidz institution the teachers teach children to memorize the Qur’an as well as Arabic by listening to murattal to them because the Qur’an uses Arabic. The Arabic language taught is not only Arabic used for everyday language, but also Arabic texts which contains elements of knowledge about Islam, such as al-Asmā‘ al-Husnā, prayers humming the Qur’an, shalawat and some popular prayers. When the readings are taught along with their meaning, children can better understand what the prayers mean. The Arabic language taught includes greetings, naming objects, getting ready to pray, and so on. Although Arabic is considered a foreign language and is a second language for early childhood children

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at the Daarut Tahfidz lil Athfal institution, it does not become an obstacle for them in acquiring Arabic. This is because if foreign language is taught to early childhood, it will be easier for them to accept the language, namely Arabic. In addition to an age, another important factor is families with Islamic roots, who will forever struggle to learn Arabic, because it is the language of the Qur’an and hadith. This makes it easier for Arabic to absorb in the brains of those who are still at an early age.\footnote{Anindza Aslakha Zulfa, “Metode Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Pada Anak Usia Dini di TPA (Taman Penitipan Anak) Ar-Reefart Islamic School Purwekerto”, Thesis, 2015.}

Children as figures with all their behavior including the processes that occur to them when acquiring language cannot be understood by mere linguistics as material. It can also be understood through other sciences related to it, namely psychology. On that basis, the researchers also link this research with psycholinguistic theory as an intermediary in the development of research conducted at the Daarut Tahfidz lil Athfal institution.\footnote{Crain and Lilo-Martin, An Introduction to Linguistic Theory and Language Acquisition, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 244.} This research contributes to the field of Arabic language teaching both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it can increase knowledge about the acquisition of Arabic in early childhood. In addition, parents can understand how children acquire Arabic through the Qur’an, so that there will be good psychology in terms of morals and behavior for those who follow the Daarut Tahfidz lil Athfal Baiturrahman’s program – Malang.\footnote{Indah Permatasari Suwardi, “Pemerolehan Bahasa Pertama Pada Anak Usia Dini”, Thesis, Padang : Pascasarjana Universitas Negeri Padang, 2019.}

Method

This study used a qualitative approach, a research method that measures and relates social phenomena objectively and aims to prove a theory with valid measurements. The researchers used a qualitative approach because it aims to describe the form of acquiring a second language in early childhood through memorizing the Qur’an, the factors that influence it and the psychology of children in accepting language. This is reinforced by Jonshon, that qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of written words or words from observed behavior.\footnote{Jonshon, Burke dan Larry Chistensen, Educational Research Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches, (America: SAG, 2014).} This is in line with the opinion of Bogdan and Taylor that qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the behavior of the people being observed.\footnote{Lexy J. Moleong, Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2002), 4.}

Participants of this study were students with a total of 20 participants, 3 teachers, and the head of the Daarut Tahfidz institution lil Athfal. The data collection technique in this study was an information gathering strategy where the researchers obtain a general theory, abstract from a process and action, or an interaction based on the view of the researchers.\footnote{John Creswell, dan J. David Creswell. “Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches” (London : SAGE, 2018), Hal. 30.} In data collection techniques, researchers conducted
interviews, observations, and documentation to students and teachers. The researchers interviewed teachers of early childhood classes in teaching and heads of institutions in using learning methods to acquire Arabic through memorizing the Qur’an. Observations were made in class when learning is taking place. While documentation is used to obtain information about Arabic pronunciation sounds in early childhood.

After collecting the data, the researchers performed a validation technique, namely describing and explaining the context of the meaning of various events and considering that the resulting data contained in the study. Among them are the credibility test, triangulation, and discussion. Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis technique carried out by the researchers is to work on, manage, and organize and sort out a data. In this technique, the researchers reduce the data, presents the data to the reader by describing the problem and then draws conclusions based on the source of the report data that contains the information in the study.

**Result and Discussion**

The first language in early childhood is mother tongue, meaning that the language they get comes from the language that is often used by people around the family environment. In contrast to a second language, early childhood acquires a second language through social interaction. Early childhood children who memorized the Qur’an at Daarut Tahfidz lil Athfal at first were not fully able to speak, but still stammered and only followed the end of the word in the spoken sentence. After almost two-three months of studying at Daarut Tahfidz in an istiqāmah manner, it is easier for them to accept a second language, including the Indonesian language they use everyday. At first, they used Indonesian by taking the last word from a sentence. Over time, because of intense interaction with peers and teachers, they are increasingly able to speak in a coherent, clear and easy manner, understanding each other between their peers.

The acquisition of a second language is a process that takes place in a person’s brain. Second language learning is related to the processes that occur when they acquire their first language. The Daarut Tahfidz Lil Athfal-Malang institution was attended by children of various ages, from 3 to 12 years old or equivalent to elementary school age. The institution is managed to accommodate children who want to memorize and improve the reading of the Qur’an, which starts from juz 30 of Surah an-Naba’.

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of each verse, thus making it easier for students to understand and remember every given verse of the Qur’an. The purpose of using the Kinesthetic method is to introduce the sounds of Arabic letters to early childhood. Because in the early age category, the students have not been equipped to recognize letters and verses in the Qur’an. This means that those in that age class cannot read Arabic letters yet. Their strength lies in the concentration of listening and imitating the movements demonstrated by the teacher. In fact, early childhood can acquire a second language because they follow what is conveyed by the people around them such as their parents, peers, and teachers.

There are three factors in the acquisition of a second language, namely psychological factors, social factors and several psychological variation factors. Psychological factors are very influential on learning to memorize the Qur’an to acquire a second language in early childhood. This is in accordance with what was experienced by the students at Daarut Tahfidz Malang. Here, teacher demonstrates the movement according to the meaning of the verse 5-10 times. Finally they can follow the verse sounded by the teacher. The response of children in receiving a foreign language is also related to the their psychological experience. If the child's psychological state is good, then the acquisition of language can also be received well. Psycholinguistics tries to unravel the psychological processes that take place when a person pronounces the sentences he hears when communicating, and how these language skills are acquired when communicating.

The language process that occurs in a child's brain, both when speaking or listening, makes psycholinguistics produce descriptive language processes for those involved in communication. In the Daarut Tahfidz institution therefore the acquisition of foreign languages is taught through the method of listening, imitating, repeatedly. This is evidence of the psychological factor of children who are emotionally unstable. To encourage them to be able to produce foreign language sounds, they must do something interesting to facilitate, the brain in receiving language stimuli. To acquire a second language, the Daarut Tahfidz institution does not only cultivate a second language in classroom learning, but also invites the guardians of students to work together in helping students receive language stimulation in the family environment. Every Monday-Friday at 06.00 am the teacher consistently sends messages via WhatsApp in the form of reminding the guardians of students to always listen to

murattal every morning after waking up. Because after waking up, young children's brains are still fresh and it is easier to remember the things they listen to. Several guardians of the students have followed the message, and as a result, students who are often heard at home and in class can get the language well and maximally. The proof is that many surahs in the Qur’an have been memorized, compared to those who only get the language in class and are not listened to at home.

The use of the kinesthetic method or the movement of verses can accelerate the memorization of the Qur’an in early childhood. The more verses they memorize, the more vocabulary they get. Thus, a second language such as Arabic is easier for them to pronounce than early childhood who do not follow the learning program. To acquire a second language, the teacher does not only provide the kinesthetic method or the *tasmī*’ method (listening) to the verses of the Qur’an, but also the Arabic language used in the classroom, for example counting using Arabic every time you start reading and memorizing the Qur’an. This is practiced so that the recitation of the Qur’an can be read simultaneously and compactly. The more they speak loudly, the easier it will be for them to acquire Arabic.

The students at Daarut Tahfidz Malang, record in their brains everything a teacher says. Like the teacher saying "bismillah birrâhmânir râbî"m", they can also follow even though it is still spelled "Bismiyah biyohmayi yoobiiim", "isti’dådan" then the students follow the utterance by saying "istiaaadåan", the teacher says "kaifâ bålukum", they follow by "kaifyabaayukum". Although with less clear pronunciation, they have understood little by little what the words mean. This is because they are used to being spoken and taught by the teacher in class. Everyday teachers use easy Arabic to make students familiar with Arabic as a second language. The use and replacement of certain words in the same position indicates that the child has successfully mastered the word class and is able to vary its function. At this stage, Daarut Tahfidz’s students have begun to understand the meaning and significance of the commands spoken by the teacher in class. Like the command "isti’dådan", they are getting ready to start learning. Simultaneously they are silent and pay attention to the teacher, and already understand that after the teacher says so, they will calm down and position themselves to be neat before learning the Qur’an and memorizing the Qur’an.

The next factor in language acquisition is social factor, specifically the environment, with whom humans communicate, where they are. At the Daarut Tahfidz institution, the environment is very supportive of the students to acquire a second language. Teachers here are experts in the field of learning Arabic, because they are graduated of the Arabic Language Education Department and they also memorize the Qur’an, enabling them to deal specifically with the problems obtained

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by students both in learning Arabic, and in memorizing the Qur’an. In addition, the teachers also teach PAUD children in the morning, so that in addition to being proficient in Arabic and memorizing the Qur’an, the teacher is experienced in dealing with problems faced by early childhood, such as feeling lazy, bored, sleepy, keep playing around. The teacher understands what to do when the mood of the students changes. The head of the institution is also a lecturer in Arabic language education, who are knowledgeable in managing learning in Daarut Tahfidz as good as possible. When the teacher is unable to attend, the head of the institution can replace the teacher’s position directly. This environment is very supportive of language acquisition in early childhood, because if the student's guardian consults the problems faced by the child, the teacher or the head of the institution can directly provide solutions.

Daarut Tahfidz is located next to the Baiturrahman Mosque in Malang, the environment close to the mosque is a factor in acquiring a second language, especially Arabic. Because the mosque contains religious values and related to the religion of Islam, and it is certain that the students also hear Islamic sounds that use Arabic such as azân, iqâmah, and murattal before the call to prayer begins, and this can support the acceleration of students in memorizing the Qur’an. Because the Qur’an is played in class, beside the mosque also often plays murotal, at home they are also played murotal by parents who are invited to cooperate by the teacher.

Another factor in language acquisition is psycholinguistic variables including attitudes, interests and motivation. Most of the students and their parents are balanced. The students have an interest in memorizing and improving the speed of reading the verses of the Qur’an, and parents also support the learning. It can be proven that most parents respond well to the message conveyed by the teacher, by doing the class teacher’s suggestions to often play murotal to facilitate children’s listening to Arabic sounds. In addition, the attitude of the students showed a good attitude, so that the teacher never seems lazy or complains in teaching in class.

In learning to memorize the Qur’an the teachers also use media that supports according to the level of achievement of the surah (verse). For the level of early childhood, learning media is needed to stimulate the sound of the vocabulary they say. The Daarut Tahfidz Institute uses sound media, television, children's mucaffals, microphones, toys, story books, hand puppets, al-Qur’an Encyclopedia. Sound media is used every day to play mucaffal letters to be memorized. Before opening the lesson, the teacher always uses sound to play mucaffal, and the letters that are played are also not all chapter 30 letters. But per day only plays one letter which on that day becomes

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the target for memorizing. Television, is used as a medium of learning every Friday.\textsuperscript{38} According to Abdul Hamid, learning media is a vehicle for distributing or learning messages. Learning media are everything that teachers use to provide information and presentation of material so that it is easy to understand and be understood by students.\textsuperscript{39}

Every Friday, learning is only murojaah, and the addition of Arabic vocabulary. Like "isti’dâdan" then they get ready to pray, "kaifa hâlkum?" then they simultaneously answered "nabnu bi khaîr wal hamdulillâh". However, it is still spelled "nabnu, bi khoil wal hamdulillâh", and there are still some vocabularies that they can pronounce and understand. Murattal and toys are media that are used as media on the sidelines of learning. As a reinforcement and reminder of the language vocabulary they get in the class, after the teacher reads the verses of the Qur’an. Objects in class are counted using Arabic, pronounce some frequently used objects using Arabic.\textsuperscript{40}

Based on the observations, in addition to obtaining Arabic, the students obtained a more optimal Indonesian language. Before taking part in learning at Daarut Tahfidz, early childhood children were not able to speak and pronounce Indonesian fluently.\textsuperscript{41} After six months of interacting with their friends in class, they found more and more new vocabulary, and they become more fluent in speaking Indonesian. At home they talk to their families, and in Daarut Tahfidz they talk to their peers who use the language of early childhood. Commands and prohibitions conveyed by the teacher using Indonesian can be understood and applied at home. This is evident from the behavior that changes in their psychology. Previously at 14.00 they were still sleeping and playing at home, after being given an advice by the teacher, that at 14.00 they had to leave for Daruttahfidz and not be late. At home, they asked their parents to wake them up at the teacher's appointed time. Here the teacher's role is very important, therefore teachers must have academic qualifications and competence as learning agents. The success of language acquisition is also due to the activeness and intelligence of the teacher in managing emotions and strategies in helping children accept a second language.\textsuperscript{42}

Arabic is the language acquired by early childhood children in Daarut Tahfidz. due to intensive exposure to Arabic language, students acquire more Arabic vocabulary than before. According to observations, the verses obtained by early childhood children are faster than those of elementary school aged children. Within 6-


7 months, the young children who took part in Daarut Tahfidz had completed the memorization of chapter 30. Indeed, this did not work for all Daarut Tahfidz students. Because their family background as a whole does not come from a family capable of speaking Arabic. But, in observations, families consisting of families who are able to speak Arabic, or understand Arabic will accelerate the acquisition of Arabic for early childhood children.\textsuperscript{43}

**Conclusion**

Memorizing the Qur’an can accelerate the acquisition of Arabic as a second language, for early childhood in Daarut Tahfidz. This is influenced by several factors, including psycholinguistic factors, social factors and psycholinguistic variables. In childhood, children have quite sharp hearing, which can help them acquire Arabic quickly through psycholinguistic factors, social factors and other supporting variables. Among the applications of these factors can be concluded by listening and imitating the movements exemplified by the teacher. The results showed that learning activities to memorize the Qur’an can accelerate language acquisition in early childhood who previously had not been able to pronounce sentences perfectly.

In this learning, the teacher uses the \textit{tasmī’} and kinesthetic methods. At the opening and closing of the lesson, the teacher in the class always reminds the mufrodat that has been delivered to strengthen their memory in Arabic. The results of the study show that children aged 3-4 years in 6-one years have memorized juz 30. In addition, they are able to understand some commands in Arabic, such as commands to pray, how are you?, stand up everyone!, pray begins, ends learning, reads the specified surah together using Arabic.

The media used in learning include meet the standards in early childhood learning in accelerating Arabic language acquisition. Starting from media to listen, media to demonstrate, and other supporting media. However, it is suggested that it would be better if the use of media was not carried out simultaneously in the class as a whole, but could be used several times a week, or made a schedule. It aims to avoid confusion, and to optimize children’s language acquisition. In the process of acquiring a second language, teachers and parents work together as much as possible, making it easier to understand and increase vocabulary in children, thus character building to children goes in right direction.[4]

**REFERENCES**


