



## Informal Methods for Improving Students' Senior High School Arabic Language Skills

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### Abstract

This study aims to improve the Arabic speaking skill of students in class XI MIA 4 MA Al-Ittihad Belung, Poncokusumo. This study is an experiment of an informal method used in Arabic to improve students' Arabic speaking skills. This research is quantitative. This type of research is a pre-experiment with a one-group pre-test and post-test design method. The research instruments used were observation and interviews. Data collection techniques used interview tests in the form of pre-tests and posttests. The paired sample t test was used to analyze the research data. The result of the t test statistic is  $0.001 < 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is accepted. So, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test conducted. In this case, it can be said that learning Arabic with informal methods can help students improve their ability to speak Arabic at MA Al-Ittihad Belung, Poncokusumo, Malang.

**Keywords:** *Arabic skill, informal methods, Arabic teaching and learning*

### Introduction

The Arabic language learning method has attracted the attention of language learning experts by conducting various studies and investigations to determine the effectiveness and success of the method. The method used in learning should be to facilitate the acquisition of language knowledge. However, people sometimes get into trouble if their learning does not follow the feature method or is not on target. So, the right way to learn Arabic must pay attention to learning methods in Arabic.

The method is one of the objective factors of the student's condition, and the teacher's personality can also affect the success or failure of teaching. Learning teaching methods is a must for a teacher where teachers must have in-depth knowledge and mastery of theory and subjects. The learning method can make it easy for students to learn valuable and useful things, how to combine the content and values contained in learning, and must help students improve their skills per the educational goals to be achieved (Sam, 2016).

The learning method is likened to that of a servant whom students appreciate. So, that good and creative learning methods will be more imprinted on students (Uliyah & Isnawati, 2019). Arabic learning consists of four skills that Arabic learners must possess: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Muzaiyidah, 2020). Madrasah Aliyah is one of the Islamic secondary education levels in Indonesia. Arabic learning in *madrasas* is taught as one of the subjects that supports the mastery of Islamic study material. As an essential subject, Arabic should be given good attention and handling (Hizbullah & Mardiah, 2015).

In its implementation in madrasas, Arabic was one lesson that faced several problems. As an illustration, one study by the Ministry of Religion stated that even in essential competencies in the form of speaking skills, which are the core of learning at Madrasah Aliyah, students' abilities in this aspect are quite low. It is related to the various factors that influence it (Hizbullah & Mardiah, 2015). Several factors that influence Arabic learning include, for example, linguistic elements such as phonology, grammar, morphology, and vocabulary. Non-verbal factors such as teaching materials, teaching methods, age, and environment also affect Arabic teaching and learning process. One crucial factor is the teaching method in an Arabic class (Fahrurrozi, 2014). It is confirmed by interviews with Arabic students in class XI MIA 4 MA Al-Ittihad. It was found that there were still many students who were not fluent in speaking Arabic. According to them, this is based on the methods used by teachers who still use conventional methods in their learning.

Madrasah Aliyah Al-Ittihad Belung Poncokusumo is one of the educational institutions under the Ministry of Religion that has the specialty to produce competitive excellence following global needs and demands. Education and learning at MA Al-Ittihad have a different educational pattern from other schools. This peculiarity can be seen in applying scientific disciplines, which they will later implement in society following religious knowledge.

According to Hizbullah & Mardiah (2015), the linguistic environment is essential to encourage students' abilities. This method needs to be created consciously and with clear goals so that the benefits can be felt by students and teachers optimally. Masyitah explained in her research using communicative methods as a solution to improve Arabic speaking skills (Syamaun, 2016). The communicative method is an exercise that prioritizes the creativity of students in doing exercises. At this stage, the direct involvement of educators begins to be reduced to allow them to develop their abilities. Students at this stage are encouraged to talk more than the teacher. Learning methods play an essential role in facilitating teaching and learning activities (Amirudin, 2014). So, in this case, the teacher's task is to choose the right way to create an effective learning process.

Based on the method mentioned only discusses improving speaking skills, not maintaining a learning atmosphere. Learning activities will run optimally when the learning atmosphere is supported by a pleasant learning atmosphere. The learning atmosphere is essential because it sees students as learning objects. Thus, to overcome these problems, is to use informal methods for learning Arabic. The informal method is a method that focuses on creating and maintaining an optimal learning environment

and teaching skills related to controlling optimal learning conditions through habituation (Rahayu, 2020).

Informal methods are essential in improving communication, skills, teamwork, and decision-making. Based on previous relevant research by Rahayu, in her research on the acquisition and learning of EFL non-formal English education in Indonesia. Rahman & Panda (2012) in they research on Teaching English Through Open non-Formal Education (ONFE) in Bangladesh with Effective Integration of ICT to Support Learning. Faujiah (2018) in her research to build a "Smart Village" through the implementation of non-formal education to improve English language skills in Geluran Taman Sidoarjo Village. Nirmala (2019) in her research on the Informal Learning Model of Basic English Conversation for Young People. Griffiths & García-Peñalvo (2016) in they research on Informal Learning Recognition and Management. Attractive learning methods will significantly affect student success.

Until now, no research has examined the use of informal methods in learning Arabic. Researchers use informal methods for learning Arabic. The most crucial benefit of this research is that it can improve students' ability to speak Arabic. This research has its characteristics and uniqueness compared to previous studies. This research is focused on improving students' ability to speak Arabic. The aims of this research are: (1) to describe the implementation of informal methods in Arabic learning activities; and (2) to determine the effectiveness of informal methods in Arabic learning activities. This research is expected to contribute to overcoming the problems associated with learning, which was initially boring and turned into an impressive learning experience for students. The informal method is an alternative to learn Arabic that can be used in all *madrasas* in Indonesia.

## Method

This study uses a quantitative approach sourced from the field to strengthen research data. The instruments used in this study were observations and interviews. The object of the research is the students of class XI MIA 4 MA Al-Ittihad Belung Poncokusumo, with a total sample of 28 students. This type of research is a pre-experiment with a one-group pretest and post-test design method (Dewantara, 2019). The data collection process in this study was carried out in four stages. The first stage is to select one class sample to be studied, and a pre-test is held. In the second stage, using a pre-test in the form of an interview with the Arabic language material for class XI, In the third stage, the sample class will take part in Arabic learning using informal methods. The fourth stage, a post-test, was held to measure Arabic speaking ability after participating in Arabic learning activities using informal methods. The normality test was conducted to determine whether the pre-test and post-test results were normally distributed. The data that has been collected will be analyzed using the normality test (Nasrum, 2018). The following are the normality test results using SPSS 26 with Shapiro Wilk, which can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Normality Test

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre Test	.150	28	.107	.976	28	.745
Post Test	.136	28	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.965	28	.451

According to Santoso (2014), the data is said to be normally distributed in the Shapiro-Wilk test if the value of Sig. is more significant than 0.05. Based on the results of the normality test from table 1, it is determined that the significance value for the pre-test results is 0.745, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore,  $H_0$  is accepted. It can be concluded that the data from the pre-test sample is normally distributed. In the case of a post-test significance value of 0.451 or greater than 0.05,  $H_0$  is accepted. It can be concluded that the post-test scores are normally distributed. Because the two datasets are normally distributed, further testing can be conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in the effect of using informal methods to improve speaking Arabic at MA Al-Ittihad Belung, Poncokusumo. To test the research hypothesis by using the t test (Latuconsina, 2018). The t test used is the paired sample t test. The purpose of this test is to see if there is a difference in the average of the two samples that are interconnected.

## Result and Discussion

The informal method combines three strategies, metacognitive, cognitive, and affective (Nirmala, 2019). Metacognition is a person's awareness of how students learn and the ability to assess the difficulty of a problem (Lestari et al, 2019). Cognitive power is the power to understand something (Sujiono, 2013). According to Nurbudiyani (2013), affective is related to values and attitudes. Informal methods can be run effectively and can be accepted in learning through presentations. According to de Moraes & Borges-Andrade (2014), a debate is one part of the informal method. In this study, researchers used debates and presentations to explore the implementation of informal methods. Using debate and presentation in metacognitive, cognitive, and affective abilities can be implemented. The realm of metacognitive abilities is proven by students' solving problems related to the debate material. The cognitive domain can be implemented by students' being able to think about the material and by conducting group discussions to present their work. For the affective domain, it is implemented with students responding to responses in a debate. The response is from the arguments presented during the debate activity.

The objectives of learning Arabic based on informal methods are: 1) creating and maintaining an optimal learning atmosphere, 2) skills related to controlling optimal learning conditions by teaching habituation, and 3) increasing good behavior through reinforcement. Researchers used two techniques in the informal method. At the second meeting, using the presentation method, and the third meeting, using the Arabic debate method, The following is a learning scenario that can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Learning Scenarios

No	Time	Activities
1	Meeting 1	Pre-Test
2	Meeting 2	Learning Arabic by using (Arabic Poster Presentation)
3	Meeting 3	Learning Arabic by using (Arabic Debate)
4	Meeting 4	Post-Test

The first meeting continued by holding pre-test activities for students and conducting interviews using Arabic questions. The material taken is *تكنولوجيا الإعلام والاتصال*. Then each student was asked to make an Arabic poster with the tools and materials the researcher had prepared. Each student presented the poster using Arabic. At the time of presenting the poster, students use the presentation method. It aims for students to be able to express an explanation of the material using Arabic. Each group comes forward to present the poster and explain the meaning contained within the poster using Arabic. In this case, it is hoped that students will get a fun learning sensation and new experiences in Arabic lessons.

For the third meeting, conduct learning activities using the Arabic debate method. The debate method begins with the researcher dividing the students into several groups. The pro and con teams were given material the researcher had previously distributed. One team from the debate team consisted of three people, including the first speaker, the second speaker, and the third speaker. The task of the first speaker is to state the ideas and arguments of the topics being discussed. The second speaker's task is to refute the opponent's argument and strengthen the team's argument. The task of the third speaker is to refute the opponent's argument, strengthen the opinion, summarize all the arguments, and provide conclusions. The task of the researcher is to be a jury during learning activities.

During the learning activities, students are required to use Arabic when expressing their opinions and rebuttals. After that, the researcher gave feedback on the learning activity. At the last meeting, the researcher held a post-test activity for students by conducting interviews using Arabic questions. The following is a learning scenario that can be seen in table 2. The following are the results of the pre-test of the students of MA Al-Ittihad Belung, Poncokusumo class XI MIA 4. The following is the frequency distribution data, which can be seen in table 2. The results of the pre-test scores can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. Distribution of Pre-Test & Post-Test Frequency

Pre-Test Value	Frequency	Post-Test Value	Frequency
41-50	3	41-50	1
51-60	6	51-60	4
61-70	5	61-70	5
71-80	12	71-80	14

81-90	1	81-90	2
91-100	1	91-100	2

Based on table 3, the pre-test scores show that the highest score is 92, which one student obtained, and the lowest score is 40, which another student obtained. For the second stage, after conducting the pre-test, Arabic language learning was carried out with

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre Test	67.2857	28	12.22280	2.30989
	Post Test	72.3214	28	11.78528	2.22721

informal methods to improve students' Arabic speaking skills. After the lesson, the researcher gave a post-test to measure the students' Arabic speaking ability. This test is carried out after students participate in Arabic learning activities using informal methods.

In table 3, the post-test scores can be seen. The highest score obtained by students is 96, obtained by one student, and the lowest score is 45, obtained by another student. Based on the results of this data, it can be seen that there is an increase in students' Arabic speaking skills after participating in Arabic learning activities using informal methods. To get more objective results and to test the effect of using informal methods in learning Arabic, students were further tested using the paired sample t test using the SPSS 26 application.

This output summarizes the descriptive statistical results of the two samples studied, namely the pre-test and post-test scores. for the average value of the pre-test or the mean of 67.2. Meanwhile, the post-test value was obtained with a mean of 72.3. because the average value of the pre-test is 67.2 and the post-test is 72.3. The number of respondents used in the research sample was 28. For the Standard valueThe pre-test deviation was 12.22, and the post-test deviation was 11.7. For the standard, the mean value error in the pre-test is 2.30 and for the post-test is 2.22. Because the average value on the pre-test is 67.2 and the post-test is 72.3, there is a difference in the average results. Then, to prove whether the difference is significant or not, it is necessary to do a correlation sample test results.

Table 4. Paired Samples Correlations

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre Test & Post Test	28	.793	.000

The output of table 4 shows the results of the correlation test between the two data, or the relationship between the pre-test and post-test variables. The output result is the correlation coefficient value of 0.793 with a Sig value of 0. Because the value of Sig.  $0 < \text{probability } 0.05$ , there is a relationship between the pre-test and post-test variables.

Table 5. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre Test - Post Test	-5.03571	7.74349	1.46338	-8.03833	-2.03310	-3.441	27	.002

Based on table 5, it is known that the mean (average) is 5.03 from the pre-test and post-test. Then Std. Deviation shows the standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test difference scores of 7.74. Standard error mean shows the standard error of the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of 1.46. For t the test statistic is -3.441. The df data shows the degrees of freedom of the pre-test and post-test spreads at 27. Sig. (2-tailed), the significance of the statistical results of the t test is  $0.002 < 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is accepted. So, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test conducted.

In this study, students improved in speaking Arabic and could pronounce some words well, accompanied by the proper intonation. It is following the observations made by researchers in using informal methods in Arabic debates and presentations in learning activities. According to Agung (2020), a debate is one aspect that must be mastered by students who learn Arabic, namely the ability to speak critically (in debate) using Arabic. Students' debating skills can be improved by using informal methods that provide a comfortable learning environment for students to think critically and express their ideas using good Arabic. It encourages students to train their thinking skills to be more active in learning activities.

The material discussed using informal methods becomes more exciting and interactive for students. According to Arya Wahyu, before students present their arguments in a debate, they must read the material using Arabic and deliver it well with their speaking skills (Pratama, 2021). This speaking ability makes students' principal capital in arguing and becomes a positive value for students in Arabic learning activities. The influence of the informal method makes Arabic more lively and enjoyable, supported by active learning students. As a result of observations using the informal method of presentation in Arabic, students define the posters that have been made using Arabic. Some students expressed themselves using Arabic according to what was on their minds. In the material discussed by the students in the poster, students begin to learn new vocabulary about technology and then recite it using Arabic.

Some students were helped by the posters they had made because it made it easier for them to present in front of their friends. Students who made presentations began to be more active in speaking Arabic. It could be seen by their explaining one by one the materials, uses, and benefits of the posters they had made. It is different from the previous learning, where they only recorded the *mufradât* given by the teacher, which they then recorded in their respective books. This situation makes students passive in

expressing new *mufradât*. The presentation method not only focuses on the ability to understand the contents of the reading but also the ability to re-express what has been heard in their language. The talents of the students' abilities with what has been explained by the teacher and the deepening of the material formulated during the learning activities make objective evidence that these students can speak Arabic well. Situations such as making a new color in learning activities for all Arabic language teachers in all *madrasas* in Indonesia to demand that their students can speak and think Arabic well and fluently.

According to Hermawan (2011), speaking Arabic is an essential skill that students must possess. This ability is like expressing articulation sounds in the form of words to express ideas or opinions to the interlocutor. Based on the research conducted, the success rate of students in speaking Arabic at MA Al-Ittihad showed that students had started using personal pronouns, pointing words, and expressing words using Arabic. According to Jim Suchan, people can understand students' Arabic skills if they speak the language correctly (Suchan, 2014). In the field observations, the researchers used an informal strategy to improve students' Arabic speaking skills. Sueraya said that one strategy for improving language learning is frequently practicing Arabic language skills (Haron et al, 2010). Learning activities use informal methods like Arabic presentations and debates in the research conducted. They require students to speak Arabic to be more productive in expressing new words. An interview using Arabic is needed to find out the students' speaking ability in Arabic (Bitar & Oscarsson, 2020). This is based on interviews in Arabic that were done at MA Al-Ittihad class XI MIA 4 before and after the tests.

Language learning using informal methods can strengthen teacher-student relationships (Huang, 2021). It is intended that the use of informal methods can establish close relationships between teachers and students at MA Al-Ittihad. When informal teacher-student relationships became very interactive, students were previously passive in learning Arabic. Learning activities using informal methods can improve students' quality and learning experience (Wu et al, 2020). Students' experience of Arabic became closer at MA Al-Ittihad MIA 4th grade. Previously, students only listened and paid attention to the teacher's explanation. Using informal methods, students could directly interact with their friends using Arabic. The use of informal methods in language learning is a powerful way for teachers to maximize activities. Anat Shosani said that informal learning methods could make activities more efficient, become a powerful tool in learning activities, and make teachers more excited about their job (Shoshani and Eldor, 2016). Informal learning methods can affect student learning and academic performance. In addition, the effects of self-sustainability-oriented informal learning use on attractiveness and motivation (Baierl et al, 2021).

It is a concern for teachers to be able to maximize learning so that it is more attractive to students learning Arabic. Suresh, in his research, said that informal learning activities are carried out directly or indirectly by many schools and that learning is an important sector in education (Suresh & Balajee, 2021). Learning using informal methods has a positive impact on students (Yun et al, 2019). Learning activities using informal methods have a complementary relationship between students (Ferreira et al,



2018). According to Violeta, informal language learning is a way to understand the potential of education (Jurkovič, 2019). Informal learning activities can increase the enthusiasm of students for learning (Tews et al, 2017).

Informal learning is a prominent feature in the lifelong learning process carried out by teachers for students (Lee & sing, 2013). Researchers use the Informal Method for students' Arabic speaking skills to create one of its unique in learning Arabic at MA Al-Ittihad because the use of the informal method has never been practiced. According to Francisco, informal learning activities allow them to be carried out in heterogeneous classes (García-Peñalvo, 2014). According to Geoffrey, it is said that language learning using informal methods can be done in students' free time (Sockett and Toffoli, 2012). Learning using informal methods can affect the orientation of students' motivation in learning activities (Agung, 2020). The researcher found that when students used informal methods to learn Arabic, they were more confident when they used new vocabulary they learned during the process. Karen Miller said that learning activities that use informal methods could be more effective for students (Miller et al, 2018). The experience gained by students can create a new spirit in learning Arabic.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study illustrate the efforts made by researchers to improve students' proficiency in using Arabic. Prior to the publication of this study, research focusing on action on students to increase their passion for Arabic was highly uncommon, let alone the use of very supportive techniques that could support learning Arabic. In conclusion, the strategy employed by researchers on Madrasah Aliyah Al-Ittihad Belung Poncokusumo Malang students is a fantastic way to provide solutions to several problems related to some of the difficulties Arabic-speaking students face. Before employing this strategy, the researcher had also researched methods appropriate for this level of schooling. Based on the observations and actions of researchers, it can be concluded that Arabic at this level of education is generally successful and can serve as a reference for teachers at this level of education. Arabic is supported as one of the worldwide languages spoken by the majority of the world's population.

Learning using informal methods in learning Arabic runs effectively. The study results indicate that informal methods can influence learning Arabic. Improved speaking skills include new vocabulary, fluency, intonation, and morphology. It is confirmed by the results of the pre-test and post-test data that have been carried out. Of course, this research is still far from perfect, so researchers are very open to academics' constructive suggestions. Suggestions for further research include developing informal methods to improve speaking skills and other fields.

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