



Analysis of the Difficulties Faced by Seventh Grade Students of Mts Al-Haq Margahayu in Mastering Listening (Maharah Istima') and Speaking Skills (Maharah Kalam) in Arabic Language Learning

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Abstract: The focus of this study was to evaluate the problems faced by the seventh grade students of MTs Al-Haq Margahayu in mastering the skills in Arabic language learning, (*maharah istima*) listening and (*maharah kalam*) speaking. Data were collected through direct observation and survey using a qualitative descriptive case study approach. The findings of this study showed students' difficulties such as limited vocabulary, accent variations, low self-confidence and lack of speaking practice were also the main challenges. The use of the book "Al-Mumtaz fi Al- Hiwarat Al- Yaumiyah " from BISA institute helps to improve students' ability in speaking, although challenges such as vocabulary limitations and accent understanding still have to be overcome. This study suggests the need for more interactive and diverse learning approaches to improve students' Arabic language skills..

Analisa membantu Siswa Kelas V II Mts Al-Haq Margahayu Dalam Menguasai Maharah Istima ' Dan Maharah Kalam dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab

Abstrak: Fokus penelitian ini adalah untuk mengevaluasi masalah yang dihadapi oleh siswa kelas VII MTs Al-Haq Margahayu dalam menguasai keterampilan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab, (*maharah istima*) mendengar dan (*maharah kalam*) berbicara. Data dikumpulkan melalui pengamatan langsung dan survei menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus deskriptif kualitatif. Penemuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan kesulitan siswa seperti keterbatasan kosakata, variasi aksen, rendahnya rasa percaya diri dan kurangnya praktik berbicara juga menjadi tantangan utama. Penggunaan buku "Al-Mumtaz fi Al-Hiwarat Al-Yaumiyah" dari lembaga BISA



membantu meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam berbicara, meskipun tantangan seperti keterbatasan kosakata dan pemahaman aksen masih harus diatasi. Penelitian ini menyarankan perlunya pendekatan pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif dan beragam untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa Arab siswa

INTRODUCTION

Since Islam arrived in Indonesia around the 13th century CE, Arabic has been taught there. In the past, learning Arabic was crucial for understanding the teachings of Islam contained in the holy Qur'an and Hadith, both of which were written in Arabic (Nuha, 2016).

Arabic language learning became essential for everyone studying in schools, particularly in Islamic schools (Fitrawati, 2020). The challenges of teaching Arabic frequently arise and remain unresolved, making it a pressing issue to address (Pamessangi, 2019). The goal of Arabic language instruction is for students to master the four language skills: listening (*maharah istima'*), reading (*maharah qiraah*), speaking (*maharah kalam*), and writing (*maharah kitabah*) (Nisa', 2015).

Proficiency in Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an and a source of knowledge, is particularly important for students, especially at the Madrasah level. The objective of Arabic language instruction at MTs Al-Haq Margahayu

is to equip students with sufficient language skills, particularly in *maharah istima'* (listening skills) and *maharah kalam* (speaking skills).

Related Studies Several studies relevant to this research are as follows:

1. Fahrurrazi's Study (2016): Titled "*Analysis of Students' Learning Difficulties in Arabic Language Instruction for Grade VII at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Darussalam Bermi Gerung for the 2015/2016 Academic Year*", this research highlighted that language learning difficulties include pronunciation, communication, and reading. Additionally, issues in writing such as sentence structure, connecting letters, forming letters, and vocabulary (*mufradat*) were identified (Fahrurrozi, 2016).
2. **Fakhrur Rahman's Study (2019):** In his research titled "*Problems in Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Langsa City*", it was noted that one of the challenges faced by students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah was the

unequal role of management within the organization, teachers' inability to manage their classrooms and students, and students' lack of understanding of the material taught by their teachers (Rahman, 2019).

3. **Veti Nur Fatimah's Study (2018):**

Titled "*Analysis of Arabic Language Learning Difficulties Among Grade IX Students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Sleman Yogyakarta*", this research identified several factors causing students' difficulties in learning Arabic: low student interest and motivation to learn, difficulties in reading and understanding vocabulary, lack of parental involvement in students' learning outside school, and teaching methods that were too monotonous, relying only on lectures (Veti Nur Fatimah, 2018).

These studies reveal several causes behind students' struggles in learning Arabic at Madrasah Tsanawiyah, including pronunciation problems (reading, communication, and phonology), writing issues (letters, sentences, and vocabulary), lack of understanding of the material, and

ineffective classroom and school management.

These three studies identified several causes of students' difficulties in learning Arabic at Madrasah Tsanawiyah. These include pronunciation issues such as reading, communication, and phonetics; writing challenges such as letters, sentences, and vocabulary; students' lack of understanding of the material; and errors in classroom and school management. One difference in the research the author intends to conduct is that this study will focus more on students facing difficulties in learning Arabic. Instead, the goal of this study is to examine every component that contributes to the challenges in learning Arabic. Therefore, this research is being carried out at MTs Al-Haq Margahayu by the researcher.

Observations show that seventh-grade students face various difficulties in mastering these two skills. Many of them still lack confidence when speaking in Arabic and struggle to understand the material being taught. Factors suspected of causing students' difficulties include feelings of shyness or anxiety when speaking in public and

a lack of Arabic vocabulary among students.

This problem undoubtedly has a negative impact not only on the development of students' language skills but also on their learning motivation. Therefore, it is essential to conduct an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by seventh-grade students at MTs Al-Haq Margahayu in mastering *maharah istima'* (listening skills) and *maharah kalam* (speaking skills). It is hoped that this research will identify the primary causes of these issues and suggest ways to improve students' Arabic language skills.

This study not only aims to identify the challenges faced in learning but also to provide recommendations for educators to develop better teaching strategies. By doing so, it is expected that students will find it easier to master *maharah istima'* and *maharah kalam*, ultimately leading to an improvement in their ability to speak Arabic fluently and prepare them to face further challenges in language learning.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. From the perspective of the research location, it

utilizes field research, as the study is based on a case study approach focusing on students' difficulties in *maharah istima'* (listening skills) and *maharah kalam* (speaking skills). The research subjects are seventh-grade students at MTs Al-Haq Margahayu, selected through purposive sampling. Data collection techniques include surveys on students' difficulties in learning Arabic, observing student interactions, gathering teaching materials, and analyzing students' assignments. This method is expected to uncover the factors causing students' difficulties and provide recommendations for improving the learning process.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The main goal of language teaching is to develop and master the four essential communication skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Magdalena et al., 2021). Language teaching aims to provide students with a strong foundation so that they can understand orally received information (listening) well, and express their ideas and thoughts effectively through oral communication (speaking) (Richard I. Arends, 2008). This entire process is

carried out to equip students with the linguistic competencies needed in various everyday situations, whether academic, social, or professional, so that they can communicate accurately, effectively, and efficiently in various contexts. The main objective of language teaching is to enhance language proficiency (Kosbandhono, 2013).

The results of this study indicate that seventh-grade students at MTs Al-Haq Margahayu face various challenges in mastering listening skills (*maharah istima'*) and speaking skills (*maharah kalam*) in Arabic language learning. In terms of *maharah istima'*, 57.1% of students struggle to understand conversations played by the teacher. This issue is worsened by the limited vocabulary students possess, which makes it difficult for them to comprehend and memorize new words they hear. Additionally, students also face challenges in distinguishing accents and dialects in Arabic, due to variations they are rarely exposed to, which is also experienced by 57.1% of students.

In the area of *maharah kalam*, the primary challenge students face is a lack of confidence, with 71.4% of students

admitting to fear of making pronunciation mistakes when speaking. This is caused by the limited vocabulary, which makes it difficult for students to construct correct sentences, and the lack of opportunities to practice speaking actively in class. The factors contributing to these difficulties stem from internal aspects, such as limited vocabulary, shyness, and low learning motivation, as well as external factors, such as confusing accent variations, ineffective teaching methods, and a lack of relevant learning media.

This study discusses that the main objective of learning Arabic is to develop communication skills through mastery of four main aspects, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Listening skills are considered important because they are the basis for understanding spoken language (M. Soenardi Djiwandono, 1996), while speaking skills are needed to convey ideas and concepts effectively. Although the use of the book "Al-Mumtaz fi Al-Hiwarat Al-Yaumiyah" from the BISA institution has been proven to help students improve their speaking skills, obstacles such as limited vocabulary and accent

variations are still major challenges. To overcome these difficulties, researchers recommend a more interactive and diverse teaching approach. Teachers are advised to utilize relevant audio media, introduce accent variations, and integrate theory and practice in each learning session. In addition, strategies such as simulations, games, and project-based learning, such as making videos in Arabic or conducting dialogues, can also be used to increase student motivation and abilities.

There are several challenges faced in understanding Arabic conversations, including Accent and Dialect. Namely, the many variations of dialects make it difficult for students to follow the conversation, Limited vocabulary makes it difficult for students to understand vocabulary that is not known enough, Speaking speed for native speakers often speaks quickly, which can make it difficult to capture information, the use of Idioms or special expressions that are not familiar can be confusing. Cultural context which, without an understanding of the cultural context, the meaning of the conversation can be difficult to understand and Pronunciation also

makes it difficult for students to recognize the correct pronunciation can hinder understanding.

The survey conducted by researchers with the Hiwar Arabi team aims to evaluate the level of understanding and ability of students to understand the information provided. This survey may be useful in order to identify student difficulties, the effectiveness of teaching methods, and find aspects that need to be improved in the learning process. Based on the results of interviews with researchers to 25 students out of 100 students in grade VII MTs Al-Haq that conducted a Survey on student learning outcomes in learning Arabic, especially in listening skills and speaking skills, there are several factors that cause difficulties for students to learn Arabic.

The following are factors of difficulty for grade VII students and how to overcome them:

1. Students find it difficult to understand conversations in Arabic. 57.1% of grade VII students find it difficult to understand conversations played by teachers when learning Maharah Istima'. One way to overcome students'

difficulties in understanding Arabic conversations is to increase students' exposure to relevant and diverse audio media, such as recordings of everyday dialogues, short stories, or Arabic songs. Teachers can start with simple audio materials that are appropriate to the students' level of understanding, and gradually introduce more complex audio recordings. In addition, teachers can provide accompanying texts from the conversations to help students understand the relationship between what they hear and what it means. To help them understand the content of the conversation, students can also be given key vocabulary that will appear in the recording before listening to the conversation. This method can help students improve *Maharah Istima* because they will be accustomed to hearing various intonation and pronunciation patterns in Arabic.

2. Some specific vocabulary or expressions that students find difficult to remember when speaking. Almost all students have difficulty understanding new

vocabulary that they hear or memorizing it when speaking. In this case, the teacher's approach to dealing with the problems of grade VII students is to ask students to answer *syafahiyah* exercises, memorize conversations, or answer questions related to the texts they have read (Kuswoyo & Hermawan, 2021).

3. Students also feel that their vocabulary is limited when listening to conversations. Around 85.7% of students admit that their vocabulary is limited, making it difficult to repeat the conversation. The teacher's strategy in dealing with students' difficulties in this case is that students are asked to practice speaking by giving them questions that they must answer. They are also asked to learn to pronounce and memorize words, construct sentences, and express their thoughts at the same time as students are asked to learn to pronounce words and memorize them, construct sentences and express their thoughts.
4. The difficulties faced by students are distinguishing between various

accents (dialogues/conversations) in Arabic. 57.1% of grade VII students find it difficult to distinguish Arabic accents during 'istima' because the dialogue is not usually heard with a foreign language, namely Arabic. Giving students the opportunity to understand the subject matter that has been heard is the teacher's strategy in dealing with this problem. Difficult words or unclear terms are explained by the teacher. In cases where the text is in the form of a conversation between several people, the teacher should write the names of the individuals on the board, so that students can see the names when they need them (Muhbib, 2015). 4. Students are not confident when speaking with people who speak Arabic. 71.4% of grade VII students lack confidence in speaking Arabic, the difficulty factor is the fear of pronouncing it wrong. In this case, the teacher's approach is to provide students with many opportunities to practice and participate in speaking activities in Arabic rather than just listening to what others say.

The internal factors in the problems of learning Arabic in maharah 'istima' and kalam related to teachers and schools are

1. Teacher Competence in Teaching.

Teachers do not master Arabic teaching methods and have limitations in speaking fluently, thus inhibiting students in listening and speaking Arabic well. In maharah 'istima', teachers do not utilize relevant audio media, thus making students not accustomed to hearing variations in Arabic dialects. While in maharah kalam, teachers do not provide examples of fluent speaking, reducing students' opportunities to imitate and practice speaking correctly. To overcome this problem, the Hiwar Arabi Team periodically focuses on Arabic teaching methodology, especially in listening ('istima') and speaking (kalam) skills, practicing together to be fluent in speaking Arabic.

2. Limited Learning Time

The limited time for Arabic subjects makes it difficult for teachers to divide time between teaching theory and practice. To overcome this problem,

teachers design efficient learning by combining theory and practice in one session. The first example, the teacher combines listening practice with speaking, students listen to a short recording and then are asked to imitate or respond to what they hear in the form of a conversation. The second example, the teacher gives a project-based task (Project Based Learning) to encourage students to practice maharah istima' and kalam outside the classroom, the project of making dubbing in Arabic: Students can make a short video where they speak in Arabic about a certain topic or Listening and responding tasks, when the teacher gives the task of listening to an Arabic recording or video, then students are asked to give a response or make a summary in oral form.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the difficulties faced by grade VII students at MTs Al-Haq Margahayu in learning Arabic, especially listening skills (maharah istima') and (maharah kalam), many grade VII students of MTs Al-Haq Margahayu face several difficulties in mastering listening skills (maharah istima') and speaking (maharah kalam) in Arabic. The factors causing these difficulties come from internal factors,

such as limited vocabulary, low self-confidence, and external factors such as accent variations and less varied teaching methods. Although the use of the book "Al-Mumtaz fi Al-Hiwarat Al-Yaumiyah" from the BISA institution has been proven to help improve students' speaking skills, challenges such as limited vocabulary and understanding of accents are still obstacles. Therefore, this study suggests a more interactive and diverse learning approach to improve students' Arabic language skills.

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