

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT (ICONSIDE)

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## ARABIC LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AMONG STUDENTS OF UIN MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG

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### Abstract

In the last few decades, students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang have been faced with demands to understand and master Arabic as a second language. Some parties argue that this is a natural thing, given the important role of Arabic in religious and academic contexts, there are also views that state that the acquisition of Arabic as a second language for students of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is largely the result of the efforts of the learning environment. This study aims to determine the opportunities and challenges of Arabic language acquisition at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. This study also reflects the efforts made by students to overcome the limitations of their Arabic knowledge and skills. This research uses field method with descriptive-qualitative approach, data collected through observation and interview. The results showed that there are three opportunities that can be utilized by students in the process of acquiring Arabic as a second language, namely: (1) enrichment of curriculum materials, (2) utilization of the learning environment, (3) academic support. The challenges faced by students involve: (1) language interference, (2) significant differences between the first language and the second language, (3) the diversity of students' educational backgrounds. The findings of this study illustrate three steps taken by students to overcome the lag in Arabic language knowledge and skills, namely: (1) actively participating in Arabic group study activities, (2) participating in the activities of the BSO on campus, and (3) seeking additional support through private Arabic tests outside the environment..

**Keywords:** Arabic Language Acquisition, Opportunities and Challenges, Language Errors

### INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of Arabic in students of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is a natural occurrence or more as a result of the learning environment. Some argue that students should experience and master Arabic as an integral part of their religious identity. Meanwhile, there are also views

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that highlight the significant role of teaching methods and institutional support in facilitating this language acquisition..

In addition, questions arise about the relevance of Arabic as a second language in the context of students' daily lives and professional careers. Some doubt the practicality and the real need for students to master Arabic, while others consider it a valuable investment in the understanding of intellectual and cultural wealth..

The process of language acquisition in a long journey involves two elements, namely the process of language acquisition and the process of language learning (Mufidah, 2017). The process of language acquisition usually occurs individually and naturally. Where a person is exposed to the language used in their environment and gradually begins to develop language skills. This process takes place over many years and is the main way individuals acquire their first language. Whereas the language learning process involves a deliberate attempt to understand and master a particular language. This often happens in an educational setting. Such as in higher education where individuals learn grammar, vocabulary, and speaking skills in the target language. Especially in a college environment such as UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Arabic language acquisition in college, such as UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, is influenced by internal (cognitive ability and genetic predisposition) and external (learning environment and social interaction) factors..

A concept of Arabic language acquisition that involves a complex interaction between internal and external factors is the theory proposed by Noam Chomsky. Chomsky, a leading linguist, developed a generative theory of language. One of the main concepts in his theory is 'Universal Grammar'. According to Chomsky, humans are born with an innate predisposition to learn language, and this is reflected in brain structure and cognitive abilities. This theory emphasises the role of internal factors and genetic predisposition in language acquisition.

Research on Arabic language processing has been explored with various foci. Some of the previous research that can be described involves the following considerations: communication skills through the suitability of the language system are considered a difficult challenge to develop. The results of research conducted by Huda related to the Arabic language acquisition model are still generally considered as a foreign language, not as a second language (Huda, 2017). However, research conducted by Faiqoh on

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phonolinguistic acquisition shows that the process of Arabic language acquisition often occurs in language classes, not only in social interactions in the neighbourhood where communication learning takes place (Adiluhung et al., 2022).

The similarity in previous research is that Arabic language acquisition is still considered as a challenge that is difficult to develop. while the difference is that in this study, Arabic language acquisition is more specified for students of UIN Maulana malik ibrahim Malang which, the focus of this research is to find out the opportunities and challenges of Arabic language acquisition at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. This research also reflects the efforts made by students to overcome the limitations of their Arabic knowledge and skills.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the opportunities and challenges faced by students in acquiring Arabic as a second language in the university environment. In addition, this study will discuss the efforts made by students who have no knowledge of Arabic to catch up with their peers. The similarity in previous studies is that Arabic language acquisition is still considered a challenge that is difficult to develop. while the difference is that in this study Arabic language acquisition is more specific to students of UIN Maulana malik ibrahim Malang which, the focus of this study is to find out the opportunities and challenges of Arabic language acquisition at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. This research also reflects the efforts made by students to overcome the limitations of their Arabic knowledge and skills.

From the information above, the researchers formulated the following questions: (1) what are the opportunities and challenges of Arabic language acquisition for students of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, (2) how do students who have never studied Arabic catch up with other friends?

### **METHOD**

This research is a qualitative field research, where the researcher is directly involved in small-scale research and conducts observation and participation in the local culture. The approach used is a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, because the purpose of this study is to describe the opportunities and challenges of Arabic language acquisition as a second language, as well as to reveal how the Arabic language learning programme policy at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang overcomes these challenges.

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The data collection technique involves observations, interviews, and documentation..

The data sources in this research are divided into two categories; primary and secondary. Primary data was obtained through observations and interviews with Arabic Language Education students in the third semester and programme leaders, while secondary data was in the form of documentation, books and journals relevant to this research. Data analysis techniques follow the miles and huberman model, carried out in three stages, namely: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Language acquisition is a natural process by which individuals, especially in childhood, subconsciously develop the ability to understand and use their native language (Nur Annisa et al., 2023). This process takes place without the need for formal lessons or conscious effort. During language acquisition, individuals intuitively understand grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and other aspects of their language, and they can communicate fluently in their mother tongue without difficulty. Meanwhile, a second language is a language learnt after individuals have acquired their mother tongue (Nova et al., 2021). This can happen in various contexts, such as learning a foreign language at school, when one moves to a country with a different language, or when interacting in a work environment with a different language. Second language acquisition often requires conscious effort including learning grammar, vocabulary, as well as speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in the second language..

It is important to understand the difference between language acquisition and language learning, where the former takes place without conscious effort, while the latter involves formalised effort and explanation. Both processes play an important role in the development of an individual's language skills, and understanding them will provide a better insight into how humans learn and use language. The difference between language acquisition and second language acquisition is fundamental and affects the way individuals learn and master language, language acquisition refers to the natural process by which individuals, especially in childhood, intuitively and subconsciously develop the ability to understand and use their mother tongue (Balqis et al., 2024). This process takes place in the absence of formal

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learning or instruction. During language acquisition, individuals automatically understand grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and other aspects of language, so that they can communicate in their native language fluently (Kurniati, 2017).

On the other hand, second language acquisition is the process of learning an additional language after individuals have acquired their mother tongue, second language acquisition often occurs in formal contexts, such as schools or language courses, and involves a conscious effort in understanding grammar, vocabulary, and speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in a second language (Hidayah, 2019). This process focuses more on the technical aspects and rules of the language, and often involves structured learning. The main difference between the two is that language acquisition occurs without any conscious effort in learning an additional language. During second language acquisition, individuals need to learn a second language with the help of formal instruction and teaching. Understanding this difference is important in the context of language education and second language learning, as it can influence the teaching methods and approaches used in the teaching and learning process.

### **Opportunities for Arabic Language Acquisition as a Second Language**

Indonesia is currently not considered capable of making Arabic a second language. Nevertheless, efforts to develop Arabic to continue to be recognised in this country will always exist. Arabic language learning can enter the realm of language acquisition if the learning process is able to optimise interactions in students' daily environment (Makinuddin, 2021). In this context, it is referred to as the language environment. In the era of globalisation and increasingly close international relations, understanding Arabic has significant value. Therefore, in order to facilitate more effective Arabic language learning, a stronger integrity between the language learning and the students' daily environment is needed. This concept is known as the language environment, where Arabic learning can occur in the context of students' daily lives, enabling them to more easily understand and use Arabic as a daily community language in addition to Indonesian.

The language environment is a multifunctional platform that allows learners to directly practice the language they have learnt in the classroom. A child who is used to communicating in Arabic on a daily basis tends to remember and understand the meaning of previously learnt material more easily (Arsyad, 2019). Thus, the language environment has a very important

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role in the language acquisition process. This is because the language environment not only facilitates language learning, but also helps to encourage stronger practical application of what is learnt, which in turn will help language acquisition and improve their Arabic language competence.

Language environments that can support language acquisition can be classified into at least two types, namely formal language environments and non-formal language environments (Hidayah, 2019). In formal language environments, learners are consciously introduced to the nature and form of words, as well as how they are used in everyday life. This provides a deeper understanding of the structure and systematic use of language, which provides a solid foundation for understanding the rules and structures of Arabic. In addition to the formal environment, language learning also needs to experience the informal environment in which learners can use Arabic in totality with peers, and the teachers who are there provide practical opportunities for learners to apply what they have learnt in real-world situations, the combination of both allows learners to reach higher levels of language proficiency and achieve higher levels of language proficiency and accelerate their language acquisition process (Promadi et al., 2022)..

With the Arabic environment in the second language classroom, second language learning can actually be a process of Arabic language acquisition. Similar to the acquisition of a first language that the learner has already mastered. It is therefore important for educational institutions and individuals to ensure that both formal and informal language environments are available and well integrated in Arabic language learning (Promadi et al., 2022).

In addition to the language environment, reviewing the environment of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, especially in the aspect of academic culture, will reveal significant differences when compared to general campuses. This is due to the status of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang as an Islamic university that carries out religious principles and values in various aspects of campus life, in this context there are very strong religious nuances in the learning process, which creates opportunities for strong Arabic language processing. Some of the opportunities that can be identified in this context include:

### **1. Enrichment of Curriculum Materials**

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, with its vision of excellence and international reputation, has successfully distinguished itself among other



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public Islamic universities. One of the keys to its achievements is the excellent programmes that characterise the campus. Two exemplary programmes are Mahad and language development and international classes. The Mahad programme has provided students with a strong foundation in understanding Islam and Arabic language skills. Through the compulsory one-semester Mahad programme, students are given the opportunity to explore aspects of Islam and Arabic in greater depth, creating a solid foundation in understanding Islamic teachings.

In addition, UIN Malang also offers a Special Programme for Arabic Language Development (PKPBA), which provides students with opportunities to better understand and master Arabic. The results of interviews with five students indicate that the campus learning policies, including the PKPBA programme, have helped them acquire Arabic language skills. This proves that the UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang campus is able to create an effective language environment that supports Arabic language acquisition.

### **2. Learning Environment**

The environment is a very important factor in the development of language skills (Afrianti et al., 2022). In the context of language learning, it shows that environmental factors, such as teacher support and peer support, play a role in successful language acquisition. From the interviews and observations conducted, it is evident that a conducive language learning environment has a significant impact. When teachers provide the right support and facilities in the classroom, students tend to feel more motivated and comfortable in practising the language they are learning. In addition, support from peers is also invaluable. When peers are supportive, they can motivate each other to practice and speak Arabic more actively. This creates a language environment that facilitates the language acquisition process (Dewey dkk., 2013).

### **3. Academic Support**

Success in education cannot be separated from the supporting factors. One of the key factors that play a major role is the quality of educators. The success of Arabic language learning at UIN Malang is highly dependent on the competence and quality of the existing teaching staff. Educators who are competent in teaching Arabic have a significant impact on students' acquisition of Arabic as a second language. They play a role in guiding, motivating, and inspiring students to develop their Arabic language skills.

With the support and guidance of qualified educators, students' chances of acquiring Arabic as a second language will increase, and this becomes an important factor in achieving the desired educational goals at UIN Malang..

### **Opportunities for Arabic Language Acquisition as a Second Language**

In the process of second language acquisition, which cannot always be equated with first language acquisition, learners often experience a phase known as “intermediate language”. This intermediate language refers to the second language used by learners, but has similarities with the first language system they have mastered before. This concept, as proposed by (Ainin, 2011), reflects a transitional stage in the second language learning process..

This interlanguage phenomenon often occurs because learners do not have a perfect understanding of the second language they are learning, so they combine elements from their first language with the second language (Guo, 2022). The reasons behind this can be various, including their limited knowledge of the second language, limited opportunities to use the second language in daily communication, and a sense of comfort in using their first language. The challenges that a learner has to face while in a language class are:

#### **1. Different Language Interference Processes**

Language interference is the process by which second language learners tend to influence the target language they are learning with elements of their first language (Krashen, 1982). This can happen in varying degrees, and the intensity of language interference can differ depending on the learning environment. In formal language environments, such as classrooms with teachers who provide clear grammar guidelines, language interference may be more controllable and less frequent. On the other hand, in non-formal language environments, such as daily interactions with peers outside the classroom, language interference tends to be more dominant and may be more difficult to avoid. Thus, the degree of language interference may vary according to the learning context, and educators need to understand the role of these different factors in the second language acquisition process (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015)

As a result of these symptoms (although in the context of formal and non-formal language environments), some phrases and sentences were



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collected by the researcher through observation and then analyzed on the language patterns that emerged in the Arabic language process..

**Tabel 1: perubahan kata, frase, dan proses berbahasa**

Jenis perubahan	Bentuk perubahan	Perubahan
Kata	Perubahan isim maf'ul menjadi isim fa'il	هو ذلك غير مفهوم
Frasa	Frasa nomina	انا فقط
Kalimat	Penggunaan unsur asing	لاتكن مثل ذلك لا!

When viewed from the patterns found, the researcher concludes that the language used by UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim students still contains errors in the language process. This error, like Brown, comes from three elements, one of which is intralingual transfer in the context of learning..

The first error is the excessive use of words, especially the repetition of Muftada and Khobar in one sentence. There should only be one Muftada and Khobar in one sentence. In addition, there is a lack of clarity in the word "huwa," which should refer to the previous word. By correcting the sentence, the correct sentence is simply "huwa ghoiru mafhum," which eliminates the unnecessary repetition in the sentence.

In addition, the sentence "هو ذلك غير مفهوم" lies in the change of form of isim maf'ul to Isim fa'il. Isim maf'ul is the noun that gets the action of the verb, while isim fa'il is the noun that performs the action or acts as the subject in the sentence. In the sentence, the word "مفهوم" is the isim maf'ul of the verb "" which means "to understand." However, in the context of this sentence, it should have used isim fa'il, which - would have made the sentence into "هو ذلك غير مفهوم", is "هو" (ia/itu) is the subject performing the action, and "مفهوم" is an isim fa'il which means "understood" or "understandable." So, the mistake lies in changing isim maf'ul to isim fa'il in the sentence. The correct sentence should use isim fa'il, not isim maf'ul. to convey the right meaning.

The second error in the sentence "Ana faqot" is its ungrammaticality, where the word "faqot" should not be needed in the sentence. The correct and sufficient sentence is "Ana," without the need to combine it with the word "faqot."

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The third error in Arabic language acquisition can be caused by various factors related to the Arabic language learning process itself, including materials, methods, and other aspects related to learning. For example in the sentence "la takun mitsla dzalik laah," there is the word "lah" There are Arabic words that originally came from Indonesian. The word "lah" This word is often uttered by some Arabic language teachers unintentionally, and this can result in the word being embedded in the learners' minds. As a result, learners may consciously use the word when speaking in Arabic. This shows that errors in Arabic learning are not only related to language comprehension, but also to learning factors that can affect the language patterns used by learners.

### 2. Significant differences between first and second language

The difference between the first language (Indonesian) and the second language (Arabic) is quite significant. Indonesian is an agglutinative language, which means that words in Indonesian consist of roots and affixes, and the relationship between roots and affixes is clear and structured. In contrast, Arabic is a flexional language, where a single word can have many different meanings, but cannot be used to distinguish parts of speech from other words, meaning that in Arabic, changes within words are often used to express meaning, whereas in Indonesian, word structure is more tied to root words and affixes. This difference creates its own challenges in understanding and mastering Arabic as a second language, because the structure and grammar of Arabic is different from Indonesian..

### 3. Diversity of Student Educational Backgrounds

Language acquisition problems can also arise due to differences in students' educational backgrounds, which is a universal problem in every study group and needs to be solved immediately. Differences in educational background can cause various problems or learning difficulties in students. Since students have varying levels of understanding of the material, some find some material easy or ordinary, while others may find it difficult, this gap in understanding becomes one of the challenges in learning. In a situation like this, a teacher is expected to be able to overcome differences in understanding so that the material taught can be well received by all learners. The results of observations and interviews with Arabic Language Education students who have diverse backgrounds, such as alumni of SMK / SMA or who have little knowledge and skills about Arabic, show that sometimes they have difficulty in following certain material, even if the

material is considered easy by their peers. This emphasizes the importance of learning approaches that can adapt to the diverse levels of understanding among students.

### **Students' Efforts in Catching Up with Language Acquisition**

Students who feel left behind in the acquisition of their Arabic language skills are very important to actively try to catch up with them. If not, they will be further left behind in the learning process compared to other friends. Indirectly, this condition is an encouragement for those who have limited knowledge and Arabic language skills to be more committed to learning. From the results of interviews conducted by researchers, it can be concluded that there are several ways that they do to catch up. Some of the activities or activities they do include:

#### **1. Joining an Arabic Language Study Group**

In an effort to catch up, students can plan joint activities that focus on understanding Arabic. This can be realized through class coordination or the formation of study groups. Students who already have a better understanding of Arabic can help friends who feel left behind. However, the success of this activity is highly dependent on the joint commitment of all group members. Activeness, cooperation, and high commitment are the keys to running this group learning activity effectively.

#### **2. Join the Language Development Program on Campus (BSO Al Kindy)**

In addition to studying in groups with classmates, to improve their knowledge and skills in Arabic, students can join the linguistic Semi-Autonomous Bodies (BSOs) available on campus. For example, Al Kindy, one of the Semi-Autonomous Bodies (BSO) managed by the Student Association of the Arabic Language Education Study Program at UIN Malang, provides a platform for Arabic language development. Joining BSO Al Kindy activities has several advantages, including gaining new knowledge and expanding social networks. The activities are usually guided by experienced colleagues and often involve a variety of interesting linguistic events. However, one possible drawback is that the majority of participants who join the BSO already have a good foundation of Arabic language knowledge, so the focus is more on developing skills rather than beginners. Nevertheless, this activity can also be utilized by those who have never studied Arabic at all, as long as they put in the effort to follow the learning flow.

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### **3. Participating in private lessons at an off-campus Arabic language learning institution**

Private tutoring or taking Arabic courses off-campus is one popular option for those who want to improve their Arabic language knowledge. Arabic language institutes usually offer programs that focus on basic understanding of Arabic grammar and the use of simple conversation in daily life. However, these tutoring programs are generally general in nature and not always specifically related to the course material taught on campus. Therefore, students need to consider whether the course program suits their Arabic language learning needs and goals.

### **CONCLUSION**

The development of Arabic as a second language in Indonesia is still not fully realized, but efforts to develop Arabic remain relevant. In the midst of the era of globalization and increasingly close international relations, understanding Arabic has a significant value. Therefore, a strong integration between Arabic language learning and students' daily lives in the concept of language environment is very important. Language environment plays a very crucial role in the process of language acquisition, especially if it can be realized in formal and non-formal environments. The formal environment provides an in-depth understanding of the structure and usage of Arabic, while the non-formal environment allows the practice of Arabic in real-world situations. The combination of both environments can accelerate Arabic language acquisition..

From the above, it can be concluded that Arabic language acquisition opportunities in second language classes include: 1) Improved curriculum materials, 2) Learning Environment, and 3) Academic Support. Some of the challenges that learners of Arabic as a second language may face include: 1) Language interference process, 2) Significant differences between First and Second Language, and 3) Diversity of students' educational background. Meanwhile, some steps that can be taken by students to catch up in Arabic knowledge and skills involve: (1) Participation in Arabic group learning activities, (2) Joining the linguistic Semi-Autonomous Body (BSO) on campus, and (3) Taking private Arabic lessons outside the campus environment.

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