Development of Linguistic Intelligence Through Ilqo' al-Mufrodat Activities for Students of Mubtadi'in and Mubtadi'at Modern Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT

Students living in Islamic boarding schools are required to develop foreign language competence as part of daily communication practices. However, elementary-level students often demonstrate limited motivation and confidence in using Arabic and English. This study aims to analyze the development of students' linguistic intelligence through *ilqo' al-mufrodat* (vocabulary delivery activities) implemented at Arrisalah Modern Islamic Boarding School, Ponorogo. This research employed a qualitative field research design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the school principal, language supervisors, and mubtadi'in students. Data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques. The findings indicate that: (1) *ilqo' al-mufrodat* activities are conducted daily from Friday to Wednesday with weekly vocabulary evaluation; (2) vocabulary materials begin with basic and functional lexical items using the audiolingual method supported by picture card media; (3) formative and summative evaluation systems effectively monitor linguistic development; and (4) follow-up learning strategies are adjusted according to students' linguistic intelligence levels. The study concludes that structured vocabulary habituation contributes significantly to improving students' speaking confidence, vocabulary mastery, and linguistic intelligence development within an Islamic boarding school environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental human capacity that enables individuals to communicate, interact socially, and develop cognitively throughout their lives. As a primary medium of human expression, language functions not only as a tool for conveying ideas but also as a mechanism through which knowledge, culture, and values are transmitted across generations. Linguistic competence allows individuals to participate actively in social environments and supports intellectual growth through processes of reasoning, interpretation, and meaning construction. Linguists and educational theorists argue that every individual possesses an innate linguistic potential; however, the level of mastery achieved varies significantly depending on environmental exposure, learning experiences, and motivational factors (Chomsky, 1965; Vygotsky, 1978). Within educational settings, language learning therefore occupies a central role, serving not merely as an academic subject but as a foundation for broader cognitive and social development.

In Muslim societies, Arabic holds a distinctive position among foreign languages due to its multifaceted role as a religious, academic, and communicative language. Arabic is used by more than 300 million speakers worldwide and serves as the primary language of Islamic sacred texts, including the Qur'an and Hadith, making it inseparable from religious learning and intellectual traditions within Islam (Al-Faruqi, 1986; Arsyad, 2003). Consequently, Arabic language instruction has become an integral component of Islamic education systems, particularly in countries with strong Islamic educational traditions such as Indonesia. Arabic is taught not only in Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs but also in formal educational institutions, from early childhood education to higher education (Azra, 2015). This widespread inclusion reflects the perception that Arabic proficiency supports both religious understanding and global academic engagement.

Despite its recognized importance, Arabic language learning among Indonesian students continues to face several pedagogical challenges. One of the most prominent issues is limited mastery of vocabulary, which often leads to low communicative confidence and reduced participation in language interactions. Many students possess theoretical knowledge of grammatical structures but struggle to apply language skills in authentic communication contexts (Muin, 2004; Wahab, 2016). Vocabulary knowledge is widely acknowledged as the foundation of language proficiency because effective communication cannot occur without sufficient lexical resources. Learners who lack vocabulary encounter difficulties in expressing ideas, understanding spoken discourse, and comprehending written texts (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010). As a result, vocabulary acquisition has become a critical focus in foreign language education, particularly for beginner learners who require structured exposure and consistent practice.

From an educational psychology perspective, language ability is closely associated with linguistic intelligence, one of the multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner. Linguistic intelligence refers to the capacity to use language effectively for communication, expression, persuasion, and meaning construction (Gardner, 1983). Individuals with well-developed linguistic intelligence demonstrate sensitivity to sounds, word meanings, language structures, and communicative contexts. Importantly, linguistic intelligence does not develop automatically; rather, it emerges through continuous interaction, meaningful practice, and active engagement with language in authentic environments (Armstrong, 2009). Educational environments that provide opportunities for repeated language use and social interaction are, therefore, essential in fostering linguistic intelligence development among learners.

Islamic boarding schools, commonly known as pesantrens, offer a unique educational environment that supports language acquisition through immersive learning. Unlike conventional schooling systems, pesantren integrate academic learning with daily social and religious activities, creating a holistic educational ecosystem in which language becomes part of students' everyday lives. Students live together in structured communities governed by institutional norms that encourage discipline, collaboration, and habitual learning practices (Dhofier, 2011). Within such environments, language learning extends beyond classroom instruction and becomes embedded in daily communication routines. Programs such as vocabulary memorization, daily conversation exercises, speech training, and language discipline policies

are frequently implemented to strengthen communicative competence and promote active language use (Madkur, 2018).

The immersive nature of pesantren education aligns with sociocultural learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive and linguistic development. When learners engage in communication within meaningful social contexts, language acquisition occurs naturally through participation and interaction rather than through isolated memorization. Continuous exposure to language input combined with opportunities for practice enables students to internalize linguistic structures more effectively. Consequently, structured language habituation programs are considered highly relevant strategies for improving foreign language competence among young learners.

At Arrisalah Modern Islamic Boarding School, students are encouraged to use Arabic and English in daily communication. Language policies are implemented to create a bilingual environment that supports students' communicative development. However, preliminary observations revealed that mubtadi'in students—elementary-level learners residing in the boarding school—demonstrated limited interest and confidence in using Arabic for communication. Many students relied primarily on their native language despite institutional expectations that encouraged the use of foreign languages. This condition indicates that language exposure alone is insufficient without structured pedagogical interventions that actively support vocabulary acquisition and communicative practice.

In response to this challenge, teachers introduced ilqo' al-mufrodat, a structured vocabulary delivery activity designed to increase students' vocabulary mastery and linguistic confidence. Through this activity, students receive daily vocabulary input followed by guided repetition and application in communicative contexts. The program aims to transform vocabulary learning from passive memorization into active language use, enabling students to gradually develop speaking ability and communicative competence. Such structured vocabulary habituation aligns with pedagogical principles that emphasize repetition, reinforcement, and contextual practice as essential components of language acquisition.

Previous studies have demonstrated that systematic vocabulary exposure combined with repeated practice significantly enhances language learning outcomes. Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes that language acquisition occurs when learners receive comprehensible input within meaningful contexts that slightly exceed their current competence level (Krashen, 1982). Similarly, communicative language teaching approaches highlight the importance of interaction and contextual language use in promoting fluency and confidence (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The audiolingual method, which emphasizes listening and speaking repetition, has also been identified as particularly effective for beginner learners because it helps develop pronunciation accuracy and automatic language responses through structured drills (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Although various studies have examined vocabulary instruction and Arabic learning in Islamic educational contexts, limited research has examined how structured vocabulary habituation specifically contributes to the development of linguistic intelligence among elementary-level boarding school students. Most existing research focuses primarily on instructional techniques or curriculum implementation rather than examining broader cognitive and communicative outcomes. Therefore, investigating the implementation of ilqo' al-mufrodat provides an important opportunity to understand how daily vocabulary practices function as a pedagogical strategy for fostering the development of linguistic intelligence within an immersive Islamic educational environment.

By examining the implementation processes, instructional approaches, evaluation mechanisms, and learning outcomes associated with ilqo' al-mufrodat, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on foreign language education in pesantren settings. The findings are expected to provide theoretical and practical insights into how structured language habituation programs can support linguistic development, enhance communicative confidence, and strengthen language learning practices in Islamic education contexts.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative field research design to explore the development of students' linguistic intelligence through ilqo' al-mufrodat activities in a natural educational setting. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of learning processes, participant experiences, and instructional practices implemented within the Islamic boarding school environment. The research was conducted at Arrisalah Modern Islamic Boarding School, Slahung, Ponorogo, Indonesia, where Arabic and English are integrated into students' daily communication through structured language habituation programs.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the implementation of the ilqo' al-mufrodat program. Informants included the school principal, language supervisors, and mubtadi'in students who actively participated in the vocabulary learning activities. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis. Observations focused on learning procedures, student participation, and interaction patterns during vocabulary activities, while interviews explored participants' perceptions regarding instructional strategies and learning outcomes. Documentation such as activity schedules, learning materials, and evaluation records was used to support and validate the collected data.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consisted of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing conducted continuously throughout the research process. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, triangulation of sources and data collection techniques was applied by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. Ethical considerations were maintained by informing participants about the purpose of the research and ensuring confidentiality throughout the study.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of this study reveal that implementing ilqo' al-mufrodat activities plays a significant role in supporting students' vocabulary acquisition and language habituation within the Islamic boarding school environment. The activity is conducted regularly from Friday to Wednesday at 17:00 WIB in the mubtadi'in and mubtadi'at hall, while Thursday is allocated for vocabulary evaluation. During each session, students receive a minimum of three new vocabulary items delivered by language supervisors through guided repetition and pronunciation practice. The learning atmosphere is structured yet interactive, allowing students to repeat vocabulary collectively and practice using new words in simple sentences. This routine provides consistent exposure to foreign-language input and encourages students to gradually integrate Arabic and English vocabulary into their daily communication.

The instructional materials used in ilqo' al-mufrodat begin with basic, frequently used vocabulary tailored to students' developmental levels. Teachers prioritize simple, contextually relevant words that are easily applied in everyday interactions, enabling students to understand meaning through use rather than memorization alone. The learning process applies the audiolingual method, emphasizing listening and speaking activities through repetition, imitation, and oral drills. Picture card media are used to support students' comprehension by connecting visual representations to vocabulary meanings. Observational data indicate that combining oral practice with visual media helps students remember vocabulary more effectively and increases their confidence when participating in speaking activities.

Evaluation of the ilqo' al-mufrodat program is conducted through both oral and written assessments. Oral evaluations assess students' pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary recall, and ability to construct simple sentences, while written tests measure understanding of vocabulary meaning and usage. Evaluation results are used not only to assess student achievement but also to determine follow-

up instructional strategies. Students who demonstrate strong vocabulary mastery show increased participation and communication confidence, whereas those experiencing difficulties receive additional mentoring sessions from language supervisors. Overall, the findings indicate observable improvements in students' vocabulary mastery, speaking participation, and communicative confidence, suggesting that structured vocabulary habituation contributes positively to the development of students' linguistic abilities within the boarding school context.

Discussion

The findings indicate that ilqo' al-mufrodat functions as an effective language habituation strategy that supports students' linguistic development through systematic vocabulary exposure. Regular vocabulary practice enables learners to gradually internalize language patterns, confirming that repeated lexical exposure significantly contributes to second-language acquisition. Research in vocabulary learning demonstrates that frequent encounters with new words improve retention and communicative competence because learners develop automatic retrieval processes during communication (Webb & Nation, 2017; Schmitt, 2008). The structured repetition observed in this study therefore facilitates vocabulary consolidation and strengthens students' readiness to use language actively.

The gradual improvement in students' participation and speaking confidence supports the concept of comprehensible input in language acquisition theory. Studies show that beginner learners benefit from incremental language input delivered within meaningful contexts, allowing them to construct understanding without excessive cognitive burden (Krashen, 1985; Shintani, 2012). Empirical research conducted in foreign language classrooms also confirms that structured vocabulary input increases learners' willingness to communicate and reduces language anxiety (Lee & Hsieh, 2019). Similarly, students involved in ilqo' al-mufrodat demonstrated increased engagement as vocabulary exposure became part of daily routines rather than isolated classroom instruction.

The use of repetition-based oral drills in the program aligns with research on speaking development among early language learners. Although communicative approaches are widely promoted, controlled repetition remains effective in the early stages of language learning because it helps learners build foundations for pronunciation accuracy and fluency (Derakhshan, Salehi, & Rahimzadeh, 2015). Studies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts show that oral repetition activities significantly improve learners' confidence and speaking performance when combined with meaningful interaction (Sato & Ballinger, 2016). This explains why students in the present study became more confident in using Arabic vocabulary during peer interaction.

Visual media integration through picture cards also contributed to vocabulary comprehension and memory retention. Research in multimedia learning environments indicates that combining visual and verbal information enhances cognitive processing and facilitates long-term memory formation (Mayer, 2014). Experimental studies further demonstrate that visual-supported vocabulary instruction significantly improves young learners' vocabulary acquisition compared to text-only instruction (Çakir & Erçetin, 2018). The increased student engagement observed during vocabulary sessions suggests that multimodal instructional strategies effectively support elementary learners' language development.

From a cognitive perspective, the findings reflect the development of linguistic intelligence through active language use and social interaction. Linguistic intelligence grows when learners engage in meaningful communication rather than passive memorization (Shearer, 2004). Studies on multiple intelligences in language education reveal that learning environments encouraging interaction, storytelling, and verbal participation significantly enhance linguistic competence (Bas & Beyhan, 2010). The boarding school environment provides continuous opportunities for interaction, allowing students to practice language naturally throughout daily activities.

The sociocultural dimension of learning also plays an essential role in explaining the effectiveness of ilqo' al-mufrodat. Sociocultural research emphasizes that language acquisition occurs through mediated social interaction where learners construct knowledge collaboratively (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Studies conducted in immersion-based educational settings indicate that consistent language exposure within social communities accelerates language development and communicative confidence (Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009). The pesantren environment, where communication extends beyond classroom boundaries, therefore creates authentic learning conditions supporting linguistic growth.

Assessment practices implemented in the program further reinforce learning outcomes. Research on formative assessment highlights that continuous feedback improves student motivation and learning achievement by helping learners recognize progress and learning needs (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In language education contexts, regular oral assessment has been shown to enhance vocabulary retention and speaking accuracy (Butler & Lee, 2010). The additional mentoring provided to students with lower achievement levels also reflects differentiated instruction, a research-identified approach effective for addressing diverse learner abilities (Tomlinson et al., 2003).

Overall, the findings extend previous studies on vocabulary instruction by demonstrating that structured vocabulary habituation embedded in an immersive educational environment can foster the development of linguistic intelligence. While earlier research often examines vocabulary teaching strategies in classroom settings, this study highlights the importance of integrating daily language routines with social interaction and continuous evaluation. Such integration transforms vocabulary learning into a lived communicative practice, enabling young learners to develop confidence, communicative competence, and sustained language engagement.

4.   CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that implementing ilqo' al-mufrodat is an effective pedagogical strategy for fostering the development of linguistic intelligence among elementary-level students in an Islamic boarding school context. The structured vocabulary habituation program enables students to acquire language gradually through consistent exposure, guided repetition, and contextual language practice integrated into daily routines. Rather than functioning solely as a vocabulary memorization activity, ilqo' al-mufrodat creates an immersive linguistic environment that encourages active communication and sustained engagement with foreign languages.

The findings indicate that systematic vocabulary instruction significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery, speaking participation, and communicative confidence. The combination of audiolingual practice, visual learning media, and continuous evaluation supports students' ability to internalize vocabulary and apply language meaningfully in social interaction. These results confirm that linguistic intelligence develops through active language use supported by interactional learning environments and repeated communicative experiences. The boarding school setting strengthens this process by providing authentic communication contexts beyond formal classroom instruction, allowing language learning to occur continuously in everyday life.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to language education research by demonstrating that the development of linguistic intelligence can be effectively supported through structured language habituation grounded in sociocultural and communicative learning principles. The findings extend previous research on vocabulary acquisition by emphasizing the importance of integrating repetition, interaction, and environmental immersion rather than relying solely on formal instruction. Linguistic intelligence emerges not only from cognitive learning processes but also from socially mediated communication practices embedded in educational culture.

Practically, the study provides implications for foreign language instruction in Islamic educational institutions and similar learning environments. Teachers are encouraged to implement routine vocabulary exposure supported by interactive speaking activities and multimodal instructional media to enhance learner engagement. Continuous formative assessment and differentiated follow-up

instruction are also essential to accommodate diverse learner abilities. Educational institutions may consider adopting structured language habituation programs as sustainable models for improving communicative competence among young language learners.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within a single institutional context and focused primarily on qualitative observations, limiting generalization across different educational settings. Future research is recommended to employ mixed-method or longitudinal designs to measure long-term development of linguistic intelligence and to compare outcomes across various Islamic educational institutions. Further studies may also explore integrating digital media and technology-enhanced vocabulary learning to expand language exposure opportunities.

In conclusion, ilqo' al-mufrodat represents a holistic and contextually relevant approach to foreign language learning that integrates habituation, interaction, and assessment within an immersive educational environment. The program demonstrates strong potential as a pedagogical model for fostering linguistic intelligence and communicative competence in Islamic education, contributing to broader discussions of effective language-learning practices in culturally grounded educational systems.

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