

Breaking Language Barriers: Amplifying Arabic Proficiency in Bilingual Environment through Immersive Learning

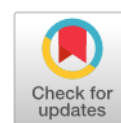
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ABSTRACT

Arabic language teaching in Indonesia continues to face persistent challenges, particularly in fostering student's practical and communicative competencies. One promising approach to address this issue is language immersion, which places learners in environments that simulate native Arabic usage. This article delves into explores the implementation of language immersion in Arabic learning within bilingual environment settings. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis, including syllabi and records of learning activities. The analysis followed the *BJOG Perspectives on Qualitative Research* framework, encompassing stages of initial coding, thematic categorization, and reflective narrative interpretation. Results demonstrate that language immersion significantly enhances students' Arabic proficiency, particularly in speaking, listening, and active participation. Student exhibited increased confidence in using Arabic not only in formal classroom contexts but also in everyday interactions. These outcomes underscore the importance of sustained language exposure, authentic social interaction, and context-rich learning in second language acquisition. This study offers a novelty contribution by highlighting how language immersion is applied in the distinctive environment of bilingual *pesantren*, where classroom instruction is integrated with students' daily routines. The synergy between structured academic activities and natural language use in dormitory life fosters a comprehensive and continuous learning experience. This model, blending formal instruction with informal immersion, remains underexplored in prior research and presents a valuable framework for Arabic language education in similar contexts.

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1. Introduction

Learning environment is the key to acquiring Arabic, particularly in cultivating natural and communicative language habits (Halim & Qomaruddin, [2025](#)). Consistent exposure to the target language in authentic and context-rich settings is a key factor in developing learners' practical language competencies. Active engagement in Arabic communication within immersive and supportive environments not only accelerates the learning process but also enhances learners' contextual understanding and confidence in using the language (Pikri, [2022](#)).

One instructional strategy that encapsulates these principles is language immersion (*inghimas al-lughawiyah*), which situates learners in Arabic-speaking environments that closely resemble real-life interactions of native speakers (Mustofa, [2023](#)). This approach facilitates not only vocabulary acquisition but also encourages the spontaneous use of Arabic in meaningful communicative situations. The foundation of this strategy lies in behaviorist theory, which emphasizes the role of structured and repetitive exposure in language acquisition (Taufiq, [2020](#)).

Language immersion has been widely acknowledged in the field of second language acquisition for its effectiveness in fostering contextualized learning, enhancing linguistic proficiency, and promoting intercultural competence (Botezatu et al., [2022](#)). According to Hamad Al-Kheresh ([2020](#)) asserts, that immersion enables learners to engage directly in authentic language use, thereby expediting their overall language development. Similarly, Almelhes ([2024](#)) found that sustained immersion within a supportive environment significantly improves learners' communicative skills. Despite its proven benefits, much of the existing research has predominantly emphasized grammatical and structural components, with relatively limited focus on the communicative and authentic dimensions of Arabic use in immersive contexts (Farrouh, [2022](#); El Seoud, [2024](#)).

Despite its proven potential the implementation of the language immersion strategy continues to face several critical challenges. Among the foremost barriers are the shortage of educators trained in immersion-based pedagogy and the limited availability of supportive resources, such as language laboratories, audiovisual Arabic content, and environments conducive to communicative interaction (Alfa, [2024](#)). These deficiencies often hinder the creation of learning contexts that foster consistent, authentic, and spontaneous language use. Moreover, many Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia still rely heavily on traditional, grammar-translation approaches that emphasize textual analysis over communicative competence (Abdullah et al., [2020](#)). This disconnect highlights the urgent need for research that contextualizes and adapts immersion strategies within Islamic education frameworks.

While various studies conducted in formal academic settings have affirmed the effectiveness of immersion in enhancing both linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness (Nasirin et al., [2023](#)),

its application in Indonesian *pesantren* and Islamic higher education remains underdeveloped. Almelhes (2024) asserts that immersion promotes interactive, learner-centered environments that foster deeper engagement with the language. Nevertheless, the strategy has yet to be widely adopted in *pesantren*, suggesting the need for further exploration and adaptation of immersion-based models in these unique educational settings.

Research in comparable contexts has repeatedly identified the lack of trained educators as a major impediment to successful immersion implementation (Hassan & Anbreen, 2024). This reinforces the importance of establishing a well-structured instructional framework, supported by robust teacher training programs, to build educator capacity and ensure the long-term viability of immersion practices. Without adequately prepared instructors, learners are unlikely to fully benefit from the immersive experiences designed to promote real-world language use.

Complementary findings from international research underscore the significance of expanding Arabic beyond classroom instruction. Soliman and Khalil (2024) advocate for positioning Arabic as a community language by embedding it into daily life activities to support natural language acquisition. However, this vision continues to face practical limitations, including the persistent reliance on conventional teaching methods that prioritize reading and writing over listening and speaking, as well as the lack of opportunities for students to engage in authentic communicative interactions.

The growing demand for Arabic language proficiency in bilingual educational settings underscores the increasing relevance of research on language immersion strategies. Immersion has been consistently recognized for its effectiveness in enhancing learners' communicative competence through sustained exposure to natural language environments (Nasaruddin, 2015). Empirical studies further indicate that students engaged in immersion programs achieve significantly higher levels of proficiency than those taught through conventional methods (Nasirin et al., 2023), while also highlighting the importance of integrating cultural dimensions into language instruction (Murtadho & Asyrof, 2023).

Despite these promising findings, substantial gaps persist in the literature, particularly concerning the implementation of language immersion within *pesantren* and Islamic educational institutions. Most existing studies have focused on formal educational contexts such as schools and universities, often overlooking the distinctive pedagogical traditions of *pesantren*, which are deeply rooted in classical texts (*kutub*) and teacher-centered instruction. This indicates a lack of contextual adaptation in applying modern language teaching strategies within Islamic educational frameworks. To address this gap, the present study investigates the implementation of the language immersion strategy in *pesantren* and other Islamic educational settings. By situating immersion within the socio-cultural and pedagogical context of Islamic institutions, this research

aims not only to expand current theoretical understandings of Arabic language pedagogy but also to offer a practical, context-sensitive model tailored to the unique dynamics of *pesantren* education. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to improving Arabic language competence among learners and to support the broader advancement of Arabic education in Indonesia.

2. Method

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the implementation of the language immersion strategy in Arabic instruction within a bilingual *pesantren* context. This approach enables an in-depth exploration of the immersion process in its natural setting. The research was conducted at the Integrated Bilingual Junior High School of *Pesantren* Modern Al-Amanah Junwangi, with participants comprising Arabic language teachers and students actively engaged in the immersion program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, allowing for the inclusion of individuals most relevant to the study's objectives. The number of participants evolved in response to the research process and data saturation.

Data were collected through a combination of in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with three Arabic language teachers and audio-recorded to capture nuanced insights. Observations were carried out across four immersion sessions, during which the researcher participated directly in the planning and implementation of classroom activities. Relevant documents, such as syllabi, lesson plans, and learning activity records, were also gathered to support and contextualize the primary data. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed triangulation, member checking, and follow-up observations. These techniques served to validate the data and strengthen the interpretive accuracy of the research.

Data analysis followed a structured qualitative methodology in line with the framework proposed in *BJOG Perspectives on Qualitative Research: Analyzing Data and Rigor* (Weckesser & Denny, [2022](#)). The analysis proceeded through three stages: initial coding, thematic organization, and narrative interpretation. In the first stage, data were segmented and coded based on emerging patterns. Thematic organization involved identifying relationships among codes to construct coherent themes. Finally, findings were synthesized through narrative interpretation, supported by triangulated data and critical reflection. The outcomes of this analysis are intended to inform the development of context-sensitive pedagogical models and enhance the application of language immersion in *pesantren* and other Islamic educational environments.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Improvement in Speaking Skills

The implementation of the language immersion strategy has led to a marked improvement in students' Arabic speaking abilities. Evidence gathered from classroom observations and in-depth interviews indicates that participants in the immersion program demonstrate enhanced fluency, confidence, and spontaneity in Arabic communication, both within formal academic contexts and in informal daily interactions at the *pesantren*.

Table 1. Interview Quotations Related to the Improvement of Speaking Skills

Description	Informant	Quotation
Interview-01	Arabic Language Teacher	"In the immersion class, the students are more active in speaking. They have started to respond in Arabic without hesitation."
Interview-02	Arabic Language Teacher	"I see an improvement in spontaneity, students often greet and have casual discussions in Arabic outside the classroom."
Interview-03	Grade VIII Student	"Because I'm used to speaking Arabic every day in the dormitory, I feel more confident when speaking in class."

Table 2. Observation of Arabic Language Use in Daily Activities

Activity	Context	Description
Observation-01, Arabic Class	Group discussion in <i>Nahwu- Sharf</i> lessons	Most interactions in the class are conducted in Arabic, with students starting to respond spontaneously.
Observation-02, Dormitory	Casual evening discussions between students	Arabic is used in daily conversations without formal pressure.
Observation-03, Arabic Class	Educational role-play on new vocabulary	Interactions take place in Arabic, with increased participation due to the enjoyable context.

Interview data reveal a consistent pattern of linguistic growth. As presented in table 1, teachers reported increased student participation and reduced hesitation in using Arabic. One teacher noted that students now respond promptly in Arabic during immersion-based sessions, reflecting greater linguistic confidence and reduced dependency on translation (Interview-01). Another teacher observed that students have begun to use Arabic naturally in everyday conversations outside the classroom, indicating the internalization of the language through habitual use (Interview-02). This was corroborated by a student who expressed feeling more confident speaking Arabic in class, attributing this to the consistent use of the language in the dormitory environment (Interview-03).

Observational data, summarized in table 2, further support these findings. During formal learning activities, such as group discussions on *nahwu* and *şarf*, students actively engaged in Arabic dialogue without prompting (Observation-01). Informal settings, such as dormitory

conversations, revealed spontaneous Arabic use among peers, suggesting that the language immersion extended beyond academic requirements into authentic communicative behavior (Observation-02). Moreover, role-play exercises incorporating new vocabulary contributed to increased participation and enjoyment, fostering a dynamic and supportive context for speaking practice (Observation-03).

Taken together, these findings affirm the effectiveness of the immersion strategy in cultivating communicative competence. Regular and immersive exposure to Arabic not only improves technical speaking skills but also fosters behavioral transformation, encouraging students to adopt Arabic as a functional medium of communication in both structured and informal settings. The development of confidence, spontaneity, and habitual language use highlights the broader impact of immersion on language acquisition and learner autonomy.

3.2. Improvement in Listening Skills

The application of the language immersion strategy in Arabic instruction within the bilingual *pesantren* setting has significantly enhanced students' listening comprehension abilities. Evidence from interviews and classroom observations consistently indicates that sustained exposure to authentic Arabic in varied communicative contexts has enabled learners to process spoken language more effectively, without relying on translation into their native tongue.

This improvement stems from students' engagement with Arabic across multiple auditory channels. Teachers consistently deliver instructions, explanations, and classroom discourse entirely in Arabic, fostering a rich linguistic environment. Interactive activities such as discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and collaborative tasks are also conducted exclusively in Arabic, reinforcing students' ability to comprehend meaning through contextual cues. Additionally, the integration of audiovisual materials, such as educational videos, Arabic songs, and cultural documentaries, further familiarizes learners with diverse speech patterns, accents, and vocabulary, accelerating their listening development.

Beyond the formal classroom, the *pesantren* setting offers a dynamic language-rich environment where incidental learning occurs naturally through daily interactions. Students routinely use Arabic in functional and social exchanges, including greetings, peer conversations, and classroom routines. These repetitive, context-embedded encounters reinforce language acquisition by enabling learners to internalize common structures and respond accurately in spontaneous situations. As a result, students show measurable improvement in identifying key ideas, interpreting speaker intent, and following instructions in real time.

Table 3 presents thematic insights derived from teacher and student interviews, highlighting perceived improvements in learners' ability to comprehend spoken Arabic. Table 4 illustrates observational data that document immersive listening experiences during classroom and non-

classroom activities.

Table 3. Ways to Improve Listening Skills from Interview Quotes

Description	Aspect	Summary Points
Interview-04	Arabic Teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use verbal instructions exclusively in Arabic to increase student responsiveness. 2. Encourage answering questions in Arabic to reduce reliance on translation.
Interview-05	8 th Grade Student	Provide frequent listening practice with Arabic audio during breaks or free time to build familiarity
Interview 06	8 th Grade Student	Consistent use of Arabic by teachers helps students quickly understand meanings without confusion

Table 4. Ways to Improve Listening Skills from Learning Observations

Description	Learning Activity	Details
Observation-04	Verbal Instructions in Arabic Class	Deliver classroom instructions fully in Arabic to enhance auditory perception.
Observation-05	Listening Practice with Simple Dialogues	Use simple dialogues repeatedly so students can imitate intonation and pronunciation naturally in context.
Observation-06	Listening to Arabic Video	Integrate audiovisual materials like videos to encourage verbal responses based on content comprehension.

The analysis reveals four instructional practices that significantly support the development of listening skills. First, the consistent use of Arabic for all verbal communication in class heightens student attentiveness and facilitates full immersion. Second, regular engagement with Arabic audio outside class time familiarizes learners with the rhythm, intonation, and phonological features of the language. Third, the use of audiovisual media offers rich contextual input, supporting natural language acquisition and vocabulary expansion. Fourth, repeated exposure to routine dialogues sharpens pronunciation and enhances fluency. Together, these practices establish a comprehensive and immersive auditory experience that effectively strengthens students' Arabic listening proficiency.

3.3. Active Participation in Learning Activities

The implementation of the language immersion strategy in Arabic instruction at bilingual *pesantren* has proven highly effective in enhancing students' active engagement throughout the learning process. Immersed in an environment where Arabic is consistently used as the medium of communication, students demonstrate increased enthusiasm in interacting with learning materials, articulating their ideas, and collaborating with peers.

To cultivate active participation, teachers employ three interactive learning models: group

discussions, role-playing, and presentations. Group discussions allow students to exchange ideas and build thematic vocabulary on topics such as Arab culture, daily routines, and travel experiences. These peer interactions not only strengthen comprehension but also promote the functional use of Arabic in communicative contexts. Role-playing simulations further reinforce this by replicating everyday scenarios, such as shopping, making appointments, or asking for directions, encouraging students to use Arabic spontaneously and contextually. Meanwhile, individual or group presentations challenge students to structure their thoughts, articulate arguments, and speak publicly on various subjects such as Arab history, Islamic values, or personal interests, thereby enhancing their fluency and self-expression.

Observational data confirm that students consistently exhibit active involvement during these activities. They participate meaningfully in discussions, perform role-play tasks with enthusiasm, and approach presentations with thorough preparation and a sense of responsibility. This engagement extends beyond the classroom, as students increasingly use Arabic in informal settings such as dormitory conversations, signaling a growing sense of linguistic confidence and communicative autonomy.

By integrating these interactive and meaningful learning experiences, the immersion strategy fosters a dynamic educational atmosphere in which students take greater ownership of their language learning. Rather than passively absorbing information, they become active constructors of knowledge, engaging Arabic through multiple modes of interaction. This comprehensive approach promotes not only spontaneous language use but also long-term motivation to communicate effectively.

Table 5. Arabic Language Teaching through Language Immersion

Learning Model	Learning Activity	Description
Discussion	Group Discussion	Students actively discuss topics such as Arab culture, daily activities, and travel experiences to practice vocabulary and speaking skills.
Role-Playing	Scenario Based Role Playing	Students act out everyday situations (e.g., shopping, asking for directions) using Arabic to practice real-life communication.
Presentation	Individual or Group Presentation	Students prepare and deliver presentations on specific topics, such as Arab history or favorite hobbies, to improve fluency and public speaking confidence.

In conclusion, students’ active participation plays a pivotal role in the success of the language immersion strategy. Through sustained involvement in discussions, role-plays, and presentations, learners engage with Arabic in authentic and meaningful contexts, which in turn strengthens their communicative competence and nurtures their development as autonomous, confident speakers.

This reinforces the value of immersion-based pedagogy in cultivating holistic language proficiency within Islamic educational environments.

3.4. Student Confidence

The application of the language immersion method has notably enhanced students' Arabic language skills, with a particularly strong impact on building their confidence. Initially, many students were hesitant and reluctant to express themselves in Arabic. However, through consistent practice in the supportive bilingual *pesantren* environment, they have grown more courageous and actively engage in class discussions and presentations. One student remarked, "I used to speak rarely, but now I feel more confident" (Interview-07), illustrating this positive transformation.

In terms of reading skills, students interact with contextual texts related to daily life and cultural themes, which broadens their vocabulary and deepens their understanding of word meanings and practical usage. This approach not only improves comprehension but also boosts motivation, as reflected in the comment, "We are encouraged to read texts relevant to real-life situations" (Interview-08).

Listening skills have similarly shown marked improvement. Students regularly engage with Arabic audio materials such as songs, stories, and conversations, and participate in live dialogues and role-plays that simulate everyday interactions. This frequent exposure helps them grasp meaning more quickly and develop a better sense of Arabic intonation and pronunciation. As one student noted, "Listening practice helps me catch the meaning of what the speaker says more quickly" (Interview-09).

Table 6. Achievements in the Implementation of the Language Immersion Method

Skill Area	Learning Activity	Description
Improvement in Maharah Kalam (Speaking Skills)	1. Active participation in group discussion. 2. Preparation and delivery of presentations.	Students who were previously reluctant to speak now express themselves confidently. Example: "I used to speak rarely, but now I feel more confident." (Interview-07)
Improvement in Maharah Qira'ah (Reading Skills)	Reading Contextual texts related to daily life and culture.	Students enhance vocabulary and comprehension through meaningful texts. Example: "We are encouraged to read texts relevant to real-life situations." (Interview-08)
Improvement in Maharah Istim'a' (Listening Skills)	1. Regular listening to Arabic audio materials. 2. Participation in live conversations and role-plays.	Listening practice improves comprehension speed and understanding of natural intonation. Example: "Listening practice helps me catch the meaning of what the speaker says more quickly." (Interview-09)

Overall, the data demonstrate that the language immersion method not only advances students' Arabic proficiency but also significantly strengthens their confidence. Regular practice

across speaking, reading, and listening in an immersive setting enables students to overcome initial hesitation, cultivate a positive attitude toward Arabic, and motivates them to use the language beyond the classroom in daily life. Building this confidence is a crucial step toward achieving fluency and deeper mastery in the bilingual *pesantren* context.

3.5. Challenges and Barriers Factors

Findings from observations and interviews indicate that the implementation of the language immersion method in Arabic learning is influenced by both facilitating and limiting factors. Supportive elements include a learning environment that actively encourages language use, the integration of diverse teaching media, and strong teacher involvement, all of which reinforce language internalization. Maintaining a consistent atmosphere that promotes Arabic use during formal lessons and informal interactions is crucial for fostering students’ habitual use of the language (Observation-03, 2025; Interview-06, 2025).

Conversely, several structural and cultural challenges hinder program effectiveness. Limited facilities, a shortage of teachers proficient in Arabic, and initial student resistance due to habituation to traditional teaching methods present significant obstacles. These challenges highlight the critical role of institutional readiness, including adequate infrastructure, skilled human resources, and adaptive strategies, to ensure a smooth transition and successful implementation (Interview-04, 2025; Observation-05, 2025). Table 7 summarizes these challenges from both students’ and teachers’ perspectives, offering valuable insights for program evaluation and future improvements.

Table 7. Challenges and Barriers in the Implementation of the Immersion Language Method

Challenge	Description	Solution
Use of Arabic Outside the Classroom	Students face difficulties in Practicing Arabic due to a lack of language interaction outside the classroom.	<i>Pesantren</i> can create Arabic-speaking cafeteria, library, and dormitories. Expanding student exchange programs to Arabic-speaking countries could also be considered.
Consistency in Using Arabic	Not all teachers consistently use Arabic in the learning process.	Special training for teachers to improve consistency in using Arabic and routine monitoring to ensure Arabic is maximally used in teaching.
Motivation and Support for Extra Activities	Support activities such as language clubs or Arabic discussion communities are still inactive.	Establishing more active Arabic language clubs with support from the <i>pesantren</i> . Regular activities like debates, drama, or presentations in Arabic can increase student motivation.

Moreover, challenges extend beyond the classroom into the broader *pesantren* language ecosystem. A major barrier is the restricted opportunity for practicing Arabic outside formal instruction. When the social environment does not fully support the target language, students struggle to internalize and sustain language use effectively. This underscores the urgent need for

pesantren to establish authentic interaction spaces where Arabic can be used meaningfully in daily life.

Teacher consistency in using Arabic also remains a critical but underdeveloped factor. Inconsistent Arabic use by teachers leads to uneven learning experiences, which can weaken the overall impact of the immersion approach. Addressing this requires ongoing professional development to embed consistent Arabic use as an integral pedagogical practice.

Finally, the low intensity of Arabic-based extracurricular activities poses another significant challenge. The limited availability of informal forums, such as language clubs or discussion groups, restricts students' chances to practice Arabic in functional and engaging contexts. Strengthening these activities is essential, not merely as a supplement but as a core component of the immersion strategy, enhancing students' linguistic experience holistically and sustainably.

3.6. Recommendations for Implementing Language Immersion

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are proposed to optimize the implementation of the language immersion method in Islamic boarding schools:

1. **Structured Development of Language Immersion Programs:** Design and implement language immersion programs within a systematic and comprehensive framework to ensure consistency, coherence, and long-term effectiveness throughout the learning process.
2. **Ongoing Teacher Training:** Provide intensive and continuous professional development for teachers focused on managing immersive classrooms, fostering active use of Arabic, and adapting pedagogical strategies to accommodate students' diverse needs.
3. **Enhancement of Supporting Facilities:** Invest in and integrate technological resources such as language learning applications, audiovisual media, and interactive tools to create more engaging, authentic, and context-rich learning environments.

The implementation of the language immersion method at SMP Bilingual Terpadu, *Pesantren Modern Al-Amanah Junwangi*, has demonstrated positive impacts, particularly in improving students' speaking and listening skills. It has also increased student engagement and strengthened their confidence in using Arabic. Although challenges such as limited facilities and varying levels of teacher preparedness remain, with adequate institutional support, the immersion approach holds strong potential to elevate the quality of Arabic language education in bilingual Islamic boarding schools.

3.7. Discussion

3.7.1 Improvement in Speaking Skills

The improvement in students' speaking skills was clearly evident across multiple data sources in this study. Classroom observations showed increased student engagement in speaking activities, with notable gains in both confidence and accuracy in using Arabic. These findings were corroborated by interviews with teachers and students, who reported significant progress in students' ability to communicate effectively in Arabic. Importantly, this progress was not limited to formal classroom settings but also extended to everyday interactions within the *pesantren*, indicating that the language immersion approach successfully fostered more natural and confident Arabic use across various contexts.

This outcome aligns with Merrill Swain's ([1993](#)) Output Hypothesis, which underscores the crucial role of language production in second language acquisition. Unlike passive learning through listening or reading, the immersion strategy encourages students to actively produce Arabic in diverse real-life situations. Such continuous practice enables them to enhance their speaking skills both in informal conversations and structured activities like presentations and discussions.

The results demonstrate that language immersion goes beyond teaching vocabulary and grammar; it prioritizes developing spontaneous and confident communication skills. This approach resonates with core second language acquisition principles that emphasize active interaction as essential for effective learning. Through sustained use of Arabic, students not only become more fluent speakers but also internalize the language as a practical tool for everyday communication.

A rich Arabic language environment provides abundant opportunities for speaking practice. Daily interactions with teachers and peers offer authentic contexts for meaningful language use, reinforcing skills naturally over time. This ongoing engagement helps learners steadily improve their speaking abilities in a way that is both effective and sustainable. These findings support Saigh and Schmitt's ([2012](#)) assertion that language-rich settings centered on real-world communication significantly enhance speaking proficiency.

Classroom observations further illustrate how students apply vocabulary and grammar during structured speaking tasks. Interviews highlight growing confidence and communication effectiveness across various settings. Additionally, informal observations of students using Arabic in routine *pesantren* activities demonstrate successful transfer of classroom learning into practical communication. Collectively, these findings confirm that the language immersion approach not only facilitates language acquisition but also empowers students to actively produce and use

Arabic, reinforcing Swain's (1993) Output Hypothesis on the vital role of language production in second language learning.

3.7.2 Improvement in Listening Skills

The improvement in listening skills observed in this study aligns closely with Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1992), which argues that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level. Through the language immersion approach, students consistently receive rich Arabic input from various sources, including lectures, conversations, and audiovisual media. This diverse and contextual exposure enhances their comprehension and supports the natural development of listening abilities.

Such varied input allows students to become familiar with Arabic sentence structures, vocabulary, and intonation within authentic communicative contexts. Instead of relying on rote memorization or repetitive drills, students engage with the language in meaningful, real-life situations. This immersion deepens their understanding and sharpens their ability to interpret messages by grasping subtle nuances and meanings.

Continuous access to comprehensible input enables gradual and natural absorption of the language. This progress is evident in students' improved capacity to follow instructions, answer questions, and respond accurately and promptly to spoken Arabic. These findings support Muhammad Rizqi's (2017) research, which highlights the positive impact of intensive and meaningful language exposure on listening skill development. Overall, the results demonstrate that sustained, varied input strengthens students' listening comprehension and enhances their overall communicative competence in Arabic.

3.7.3 Active Participation in Learning Activities

The observed increase in students' active participation through the language immersion method strongly aligns with constructivist learning theory, encompassing both cognitive and social dimensions. Piaget (2003) emphasized that learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through direct experiences, involving processes of assimilation and accommodation. Immersion-based learning provides authentic experiences, such as discussions, group work, and presentations, that encourage students to use Arabic actively in meaningful contexts. Through direct engagement in these activities, students not only assimilate new information but also integrate it into their existing cognitive frameworks, thereby deepening understanding and enhancing Arabic proficiency.

Complementing this cognitive perspective, Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) highlights the critical role of social interaction in learning (Shabani et al., 2010). The ZPD describes the difference between what learners can accomplish independently

and what they can achieve with support from more knowledgeable peers or instructors. Within the language immersion environment, this zone naturally emerges as students participate in conversations, collaborate on tasks, and learn through social exchanges. These supportive interactions provide scaffolding that helps learners progress beyond their current capabilities and achieve higher levels of language competence.

Classroom observations revealed that students actively engaged in group discussions, role-playing, and spontaneous Arabic conversations. These activities fostered direct use of the language and reinforced comprehension through collaborative, purposeful experiences. Discussions offered real-time practice that boosted fluency and confidence, while role-playing simulated practical scenarios, making language learning relevant and applicable. Meanwhile, spontaneous conversations, both formal and informal, enabled students to experiment with language use in varied contexts, promoting natural internalization of vocabulary and sentence structures. This dynamic, interactive environment cultivates deeper Arabic understanding by transforming students from passive recipients into active participants in their language learning journey.

3.7.4 Student Confidence

The increase in students' confidence in using Arabic aligns with Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis ([1982](#)), which underscores the significant influence of emotional factors, such as self-confidence, anxiety, and motivation, on successful language acquisition. According to this hypothesis, when affective barriers like fear or anxiety are lowered, learners become more receptive and open to acquiring the target language. In this study, the language immersion method fostered a supportive and encouraging learning environment that made students feel comfortable and motivated to actively engage, thereby enhancing their overall Arabic proficiency.

Within the immersion approach, the learning atmosphere is intentionally structured to create a safe and welcoming space for students to use Arabic without fear of judgment. This reduction of psychological pressure enables learners to overcome hesitation and become more willing to speak spontaneously. Such openness not only promotes active language use but also significantly boosts students' confidence in communicating effectively in Arabic.

Moreover, this environment normalizes errors as a natural and necessary component of the learning process rather than as failures. This positive emotional climate encourages students to take risks and actively participate, which in turn accelerates language development and builds self-assurance for real-world communication. Ultimately, fostering student confidence through emotional support is a vital element that complements linguistic instruction in the language immersion setting.

3.7.5 Challenges and Barriers

The implementation of the language immersion approach in Arabic learning is shaped by a complex interplay of both facilitating and constraining factors. This dynamic corresponds with Vygotsky and Lantolf's (2000) Sociocultural Theory, which posits that language acquisition is fundamentally mediated through social interaction within a supportive environment. Central to this framework is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which delineates the distance between what learners can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance from more knowledgeable peers or instructors.

In the context of *Pesantren* Modern Al-Amanah Junwangi, the ZPD is actively nurtured through interactions between students and teachers or peers possessing higher Arabic proficiency. Such interactions provide scaffolding that facilitates deeper learning by leveraging social support and collaborative engagement. This socially enriched environment plays a critical role in advancing students' Arabic skills, as it offers meaningful opportunities for authentic communication and shared knowledge construction.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the immersion method at the *pesantren* is reinforced by a thoughtfully designed linguistic landscape. Public spaces within the institution are adorned with a variety of language visuals, including vocabulary boards, educational posters in Arabic, and other visual aids presented in monolingual (Arabic), bilingual (Arabic-English), and multilingual formats. These materials serve to extend students' exposure to Arabic beyond formal instruction, reinforcing retention of vocabulary and syntactic structures encountered in everyday interactions. Such continuous visual input supports both implicit and explicit learning processes, fostering a dynamic and immersive language environment.

The integration of modern learning technologies, such as audiovisual media, digital language applications, and communicative teaching techniques facilitated by skilled educators—further enhances the richness of the learning experience. These resources stimulate student engagement and enable interactive participation. Classroom activities like discussions and presentations, alongside informal conversations outside formal sessions, provide authentic contexts for students to practice and internalize Arabic. This consistent practice is vital for the comprehensive development and sustainability of language competence (Sanulita et al., 2024).

Despite these strengths, several significant challenges must be addressed to optimize language immersion implementation. Among these are the shortage of teachers with advanced Arabic proficiency and initial student resistance rooted in familiarity with traditional instructional methods. These barriers underscore the necessity for institutional readiness, encompassing adequate infrastructure, adaptive pedagogical approaches, and ongoing efforts to habituate

students to immersive language use. Addressing these challenges is critical to ensuring the long-term success and effectiveness of the immersion program in the *pesantren* setting.

3.7.6 Theoretical Implications

The implementation of the language immersion approach in Arabic learning provides valuable theoretical insights, illuminated through several prominent second language acquisition (SLA) frameworks. These theories offer robust explanations for the observed improvements in students' speaking and listening skills, as well as their increased engagement and enhanced self-confidence in using Arabic.

Firstly, Merrill Swain's (1993) Output Hypothesis underscores the critical role of language production in second language acquisition. The language immersion program facilitates frequent opportunities for students to actively produce Arabic in authentic contexts, such as classroom discussions, group collaborations, and informal peer interactions. This active use of language promotes fluency and accuracy, supporting Swain's assertion that output pushes learners to reflect on their language use, notice gaps, and refine their communicative competence.

Secondly, Stephen Krashen's (1992) Input Hypothesis emphasizes that language acquisition occurs most effectively when learners receive comprehensible input slightly beyond their current proficiency level, known as $i+1$. Within the immersion setting, students are continuously exposed to meaningful and contextualized Arabic input across spoken and written modalities. This rich and accessible input fosters natural and intuitive development of listening comprehension and overall language competence.

Thirdly, constructivist theories articulated by Jean Piaget (2003) and Lev Vygotsky highlight that learning is an active process constructed through direct experience and social interaction. The language immersion approach creates an engaging, learner-centered environment that encourages active participation in role-plays, thematic discussions, and cooperative projects. This aligns with the view that learners build knowledge by interacting with peers and teachers, applying language skills meaningfully within real-life communicative contexts, thereby deepening understanding and retention.

Lastly, Vygotsky and Lantolf's (2000) sociocultural theory draws attention to the importance of the linguistic environment and social mediation in language learning. At *Pesantren Modern Al-Amanah Junwangi*, this immersive environment is enriched by a well-curated linguistic landscape featuring vocabulary boards, visual media, and Arabic signage throughout the campus. These resources serve as scaffolds, aiding learners in connecting linguistic forms with their meanings and usage contexts, which strengthens vocabulary retention and supports enduring language acquisition.

3.7.7 Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings and theoretical insights presented, several practical recommendations are proposed to optimize the implementation of the language immersion method for Arabic learning within bilingual educational settings such as modern *pesantren*.

Firstly, enhancing teacher competency is fundamental. Teachers should possess not only strong Arabic language proficiency but also the pedagogical skills necessary to cultivate a communicative, contextualized, and motivating classroom atmosphere. This environment should actively encourage student engagement and provide ample opportunities for authentic language use. Secondly, the integration of educational technology should be maximized as a complementary resource. Digital tools, including language learning applications, interactive videos, podcasts, and online platforms, offer valuable opportunities for students to engage with Arabic beyond the classroom. Such resources allow learners to tailor their exposure to their individual preferences and learning styles, promoting flexible and autonomous language practice.

Thirdly, fostering a participatory and collaborative learning environment is essential. Structured activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and cooperative projects facilitate practical use of Arabic in meaningful contexts. These interactive experiences not only enhance linguistic proficiency but also develop students' social skills and boost their confidence in using the language. Fourthly, the linguistic landscape within the *pesantren* should be fully leveraged. Visual elements such as vocabulary boards, signage, and Arabic language displays throughout the campus provide continuous, meaningful exposure to the target language. This environmental scaffolding helps students internalize vocabulary and language structures naturally within authentic contexts.

By implementing these strategies, the language immersion approach can be highly effective in advancing Arabic language proficiency. Moreover, it aligns closely with the foundational values of Islamic education, integrating language learning with cultural awareness and Islamic principles, thereby creating a holistic and enriching educational experience.

4. Conclusion

The implementation of the language immersion approach in Arabic language learning at SMP Bilingual Terpadu, *Pesantren* Modern Al-Amanah Junwangi, has demonstrated a significant contribution to enhancing students' Arabic proficiency. The findings of this study reveal that the method effectively promotes improvements in both speaking and listening skills, while simultaneously boosting students' confidence in using Arabic across diverse real-life situations.

Furthermore, the approach fosters a participatory and communicative learning environment, which is consistent with prominent second language acquisition theories that underscore the crucial role of social interaction and practical language use. Although challenges such as limited

teaching resources and initial student resistance were identified, these can be addressed through strategic interventions, including focused teacher training, the incorporation of educational technologies, and the optimization of the *pesantren's* linguistic landscape.

In sum, the language immersion method emerges as a valuable and practical pedagogical model for bilingual education within modern *pesantren*. It not only supports mastery of Arabic but also cultivates authentic communicative competence in social contexts. This study positions the immersion approach as a promising and innovative strategy for language education in contemporary Islamic institutions, encouraging further exploration and refinement.

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