

Exploring the Impact of Contextual Arabic Language Learning in Pesantren: A Case Study of Madrasah Aliyah Students

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of contextual Arabic language learning within the pesantren environment, focusing on the development of reading (maharah qirā'ah) and speaking (maharah kalām) skills at the Madrasah Aliyah level. Using a qualitative research approach, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and students' reflective journals. The findings indicate that the implementation of contextual teaching strategies such as the use of pesantren-based daily themes, situational dialogues, and visual media significantly enhanced students' engagement, comprehension, and vocabulary retention. Students demonstrated improved ability to connect vocabulary to lived experiences and increasingly used Arabic in everyday social contexts. These results support constructivist language teaching frameworks and highlight the importance of cultural relevance and experiential learning in Arabic education. The study recommends integrating contextual approaches into pesantren curricula to foster more meaningful, effective, and sustainable Arabic language learning.

Keywords : *contextual learning; Arabic language; pesantren; maharah qirā'ah; maharah kalām.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dampak pembelajaran bahasa Arab berbasis kontekstual di lingkungan pesantren, dengan fokus pada peningkatan keterampilan membaca (maharah qirā'ah) dan berbicara (maharah kalām) di tingkat Madrasah Aliyah. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis jurnal reflektif siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan strategi pembelajaran kontekstual seperti penggunaan tema kehidupan sehari-hari di pesantren, dialog situasional, dan media visual secara signifikan meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, pemahaman, dan retensi kosakata. Selain itu, siswa menunjukkan kemampuan yang lebih baik dalam menghubungkan kosakata dengan pengalaman hidup mereka, serta munculnya penggunaan bahasa Arab dalam konteks sosial sehari-hari. Temuan ini mendukung pendekatan konstruktivis dalam pengajaran bahasa dan menekankan pentingnya relevansi budaya dan pengalaman dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Studi ini merekomendasikan integrasi pendekatan kontekstual dalam kurikulum pesantren untuk menciptakan pembelajaran yang lebih bermakna, efektif, dan berkelanjutan.

Kata kunci : *pembelajaran kontekstual; bahasa Arab; pesantren; maharah qirā'ah; maharah kalām.*

مستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة أثر تعلم اللغة العربية القائم على السياق في بيئة المعهد، مع التركيز على تنمية مهارتي القراءة (مهاراة القراءة) والكلام (مهاراة الكلام) لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية الإسلامية. اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج النوعي، حيث جُمعت البيانات من خلال الملاحظة الصفية، والمقابلات شبه المهيكلة، وتحليل اليوميات التأملية للطلاب. أظهرت النتائج أن تطبيق استراتيجيات التعليم السياقي، مثل استخدام موضوعات الحياة اليومية في المعهد، والحوار السياقي، والوسائط البصرية، ساهم

بشكل كبير في تعزيز تفاعل الطلاب، وفهمهم، وتنشيتهم للمفردات. كما أظهر الطلاب قدرة أعلى على ربط المفردات بتجاربهم الحياتية، وبدأوا في استخدام اللغة العربية بشكل طبيعي في السياقات الاجتماعية اليومية. تدعم هذه النتائج نظرية التعلم البنائي، وتبرز أهمية الملاءمة الثقافية والتجريبية في تعليم اللغة العربية. توصي الدراسة بدمج الأساليب السياقية في مناهج المعهد لتحقيق تعلم أكثر فاعلية واستدامة ومعنى.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التعلم السياقي؛ اللغة العربية؛ بيسنترن؛ مهارة القراءة؛ مهارة الكلام.

INTRODUCTION

The mastery of Arabic language remains a cornerstone in Islamic educational institutions, especially pesantren, where Arabic functions not only as a linguistic tool but also as a medium for accessing religious texts such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship¹. However, despite its importance, the teaching of Arabic in many pesantren still relies heavily on traditional grammar-based methods that prioritize memorization and teacher-centered delivery². This often leads to low student engagement and limited practical language use, especially in speaking and comprehension skills.

The contemporary challenges in teaching Arabic within pesantren environments are deeply rooted in both pedagogical traditions and evolving learner expectations³. These traditional methods, although time-tested, tend to overlook the communicative and affective dimensions of language learning, resulting in a gap between theoretical mastery and practical language use⁴. This gap becomes particularly evident in students' limited ability to express themselves fluently in Arabic or to comprehend texts beyond rote memorization. The challenge lies not in the lack of exposure to Arabic, but rather in the lack of relevance, authenticity, and contextual depth within the teaching process.

In response to this issue, educational theorists and language pedagogues have increasingly advocated for contextual and student-centered teaching approaches. Contextual language teaching emphasizes the integration of learning materials with students' real-life experiences, cultural background, and daily environment. According

¹ Segaf Baharun et al., 'Peran Kecakapan Berbahasa Arab Sebagai Penguat Literasi Keilmuan Islam di Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah, Bangil, Pasuruan', *Edukasi Islam, Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (21 August 2023), <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v12i02.3973>.

² Masnun, Segaf Baharun, and Sultan Abdus Syakur, 'Interactive Whiteboard as a Medium for Nahwu Learning: Bridging Technology and Arabic Grammar Education', *International Journal of Arabic Language Teaching* 7, no. 01 (7 January 2025): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.32332/ijalt.v7i01.9977>.

³ Menik Mahmudah, Nurhanifansyah Nurhanifansyah, and Syarif Muhammad Syaheed bin Khalid, 'Psycholinguistic Approaches to Enhancing Arabic Speaking Proficiency through Comic Strips', *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (November 2024): 804–26, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.11349>.

⁴ Nur Hanifansyah and Menik Mahmudah, 'Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Through Communicative Strategies: Evidence from Malaysia.', *Al-Ta'rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN* 12, no. (2) (2024): 263–78, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i2.9082>.

to the constructivist learning theory, particularly the work of Vygotsky and Bruner⁵, knowledge is constructed more effectively when learners can relate new information to what they already know and when the learning process is meaningful, interactive, and social⁶. This theoretical stance is especially relevant for pesantren students, whose daily lives are immersed in religious practices, communal routines, and structured learning environments. Aligning language instruction with these lived realities can unlock greater motivation, deeper comprehension, and long-term retention.

Prior research highlights the importance of contextual and student-centered approaches in Arabic language instruction. Daud et al. (2025) emphasized that contextual strategies such as real-life scenarios and visual aids improve engagement and comprehension⁷. Luthfi et al. (2025) added that idiomatic expressions in Arabic textbooks demand pragmatic and contextual understanding⁸, deepening grammatical awareness. In the digital realm, Jamil et al. (2024) underscored the relevance of tailored instruction and interactive methods in online Arabic learning⁹. Amin and Gottardo (2022) further showed that contextual factors like morphology and orthographic processing influence reading comprehension differently depending on learners' environments¹⁰. Extending this, Soyooft et al. (2024) demonstrated that serious games facilitate incidental vocabulary acquisition and content learning through multimodal, repeated exposure in meaningful contexts¹¹. Together, these studies affirm that integrating contextual input whether textual¹², visual, or interactive can significantly enhance Arabic language learning, particularly in pesantren settings where traditional instruction is evolving toward more adaptive and engaging pedagogies.

⁵ L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, ed. Michael Cole et al. (Harvard University Press, 1980), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4>.

⁶ Yun Yue et al., 'Collaborative Cell Groups: Bridging Separation in the Community of Inquiry in a Context of Internationalization at a Distance', *British Journal of Educational Technology* 56, no. 2 (March 2025): 967–87, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13561>.

⁷ Ab Aziz Wan Wan Daud et al., 'Exploring the Challenges and Strategies of Learning Arabic Language among Primary School Teachers', *Forum for Linguistic Studies* 7, no. 2 (20 January 2025), <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i2.8002>.

⁸ Khabibi Muhammad Luthfi et al., 'Modern Arabic Language Idioms in the Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning Textbook', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 15, no. 3 (6 March 2025): 776–85, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1503.12>.

⁹ Nursuriati Jamil et al., 'Bridging Gaps in Online Arabic Language Instruction: Addressing Key Challenges in Higher Education Institutions', *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.7187/gjatsi122024-8>.

¹⁰ Asma Amin and Alexandra Gottardo, 'The Simple View of Reading: Language-Specific and Contextual Characteristics Related to Arabic Speakers in Saudi Arabia and Canada', *Learning and Individual Differences* 100 (December 2022): 102231, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2022.102231>.

¹¹ Ali Soyooft et al., 'A Mixed-Methods Study of the Incidental Acquisition of Foreign Language Vocabulary and Healthcare Knowledge through Serious Game Play', *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 37, no. 1–2 (2 January 2024): 27–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.2021242>.

¹² Nur Hanifansyah, 'Enhancing Maharah Kitabah in Arabic Language Education: Improving Arabic Typing Proficiency through Mnemonic Arabic Keyboard Techniques', *Lisanan Arabiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (10 January 2025): 272–91, <https://doi.org/10.32699/liar.v8i2.7959>.

While previous studies have explored contextual approaches in various dimensions, such as idiom comprehension, digital strategies, or vocabulary acquisition through media, they have largely overlooked the unique learning environments of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), particularly at the Madrasah Aliyah level. This context, rich in religious, social, and cultural dynamics, demands pedagogical strategies that are not only effective but also deeply relevant to students' lived experiences. This study addresses that gap by offering an empirical investigation into how contextual teaching can meaningfully enhance Arabic language learning within pesantren. By integrating real-life content, experiential activities, and culturally grounded instruction, this research contributes a more adaptive and authentic model of Arabic pedagogy, one that aligns with students' identities, fosters deeper engagement, and supports sustainable language development in faith-based educational settings.

This study focuses on addressing two main problems: To what extent does the contextual approach enhance students' Arabic language learning outcomes in Madrasah Aliyah within pesantren? What specific aspects of the contextual method are most effective and relevant to the pesantren learning environment?

The scope of this study is limited to a single Madrasah Aliyah in East Java, emphasizing students' learning outcomes in maharah qira'ah and maharah kalam. While the findings may not be generalized to all pesantren, the study offers valuable insights into pedagogical innovations suited to traditional Islamic boarding schools.

By critically examining the implementation of contextual Arabic language teaching in this setting, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on innovative methodologies for Arabic education. It also seeks to inform educators and policymakers about the potential of context-based pedagogy to balance religious authenticity and modern educational practices in Islamic schools.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with the aim of exploring how contextual teaching approaches enhance Arabic language learning in a pesantren-based Madrasah Aliyah. The study was underpinned by the principles of constructivist learning theory, which views knowledge as actively constructed by learners through meaningful interaction with their environment and experiences¹³.

The research was conducted at a well-established Islamic boarding school (pesantren) in East Java, Indonesia, which integrates traditional Islamic scholarship with

¹³ John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2020).

formal education. This location was chosen for its strong Arabic language foundation and commitment to pedagogical innovation. The study focused on 60 students from Class 3 Aliyah, divided between Class A and Class B. These students were purposively selected as they had already acquired basic proficiency in Arabic and were considered developmentally prepared to engage with reflective learning strategies and pedagogical processes.

The unit of analysis included the students' learning experiences within the Arabic language classroom, as well as their responses to contextual teaching methods such as real-life scenarios, thematic vocabulary instruction, and situational dialogue practice. The primary data sources included classroom observations, students' reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews with both students and Arabic teachers¹⁴. In addition, secondary sources such as instructional materials, school syllabi, and relevant pedagogical texts were analyzed to support the contextual framework of the study.

Data collection was conducted over a six-week period and involved direct observation of classroom activities, note-taking, audio recording of discussions, and collection of student-written reflections. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to allow both consistency and flexibility in responses. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by the framework of Miles and Huberman¹⁵, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Coding was applied to identify emerging patterns and themes related to language use, student engagement, contextual relevance, and pedagogical impact¹⁶.

Through this methodological approach, the study sought to provide rich, grounded insights into how contextual teaching practices can shape the Arabic language learning experience in a pesantren environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Deepening Engagement through Culturally-Rooted Themes

A recurring pattern in student reflections highlighted the importance of culturally

¹⁴ Tania Buys et al., 'A Reflexive Lens on Preparing and Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews with Academic Colleagues', *Qualitative Health Research* 32, no. 13 (November 2022): 2030–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323221130832>.

¹⁵ Lili Sururi Asipi, Utami Rosalina, and Dwi Nopiyadi, 'The Analysis of Reading Habits Using Miles and Huberman Interactive Model to Empower Students' Literacy at IPB Cirebon', *International Journal of Education and Humanities* 2, no. 3 (7 August 2022): 117–25, <https://doi.org/10.58557/ijeh.v2i3.98>.

¹⁶ Gökhan Hınız and Özgür Çelik, 'A Bibliometric and Content Analysis of Student Engagement Research in English Language Teaching', *Language Awareness* 34, no. 1 (2 January 2025): 43–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2024.2367970>.

embedded themes in enhancing engagement with Arabic language learning¹⁷. Lessons that incorporated daily pesantren life such as morning routines, prayer, dormitory discipline, or religious events helped students anchor new vocabulary and expressions in their lived experiences¹⁸. This sense of relevance translated into higher motivation and stronger memory retention. For instance, when students learned vocabulary related to daily cleanliness or dormitory activities, they found it easier to recall and use the terms because the language was directly tied to their routine. Several learners expressed that learning Arabic no longer felt like acquiring an abstract subject but rather narrating their own life. These findings resonate with Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)¹⁹, which underscores the importance of contextual input within learners' experiential realities to promote knowledge construction. Teachers who tailored their instruction around shared cultural and religious experiences observed not only better comprehension but also a stronger emotional connection to the language²⁰.

Reflection as a Pedagogical Instrument

The incorporation of reflective journaling provided students with a valuable tool to consolidate language input and articulate their internal learning processes. Students reported that writing reflections in Arabic encouraged them to practice inner speech and to gradually think in Arabic. Out of 60 participants, 43 explicitly stated that journaling helped them "speak with themselves" in Arabic, marking a significant psycholinguistic shift. These reflections also provided evidence of affective engagement. Students described feelings of joy, familiarity, and relevance when using Arabic to narrate everyday activities in the dormitory, such as praying, reading hadith, or interacting with peers. Rather than relying solely on rote memorization, the reflective process allowed students to personalize the language, enhancing both emotional and cognitive dimensions of language acquisition. These outcomes align with the theories of meaningful learning, which stress the importance of affective factors and learner autonomy in second language development²¹.

¹⁷ Phil Hiver et al., 'Engagement in Language Learning: A Systematic Review of 20 Years of Research Methods and Definitions', *Language Teaching Research* 28, no. 1 (January 2024): 201–30, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211001289>.

¹⁸ Rohmatulloh Rohmatulloh et al., 'Energy-Saving Triangle: Internalizing Islamic Ethical Values on Energy Saving in Integrative Learning', *Religions* 14, no. 10 (11 October 2023): 1284, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101284>.

¹⁹ Latifa Rahman, 'Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development of Teaching and Learning in STEM Education', *IJERT* 13, no. 8 (24 August 2024), <https://doi.org/10.17577/IJERTV13IS080042>.

²⁰ Geneva Gay, 'The What, Why, and How of Culturally Responsive Teaching: International Mandates, Challenges, and Opportunities', *Multicultural Education Review* 7, no. 3 (3 July 2015): 123–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2015.1072079>.

²¹ Chao Yang, Ming Wei, and Qi Liu, 'Intersections between Cognitive-emotion Regulation, Critical Thinking and Academic Resilience with Academic Motivation and Autonomy in EFL Learners: Contributions of AI-mediated Learning Environments', *British Educational Research Journal*, 24 February 2025, berj.4140, <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.4140>.

Teacher Perspectives on Implementation

Teachers played a critical role in implementing contextual teaching strategies and provided valuable insights into how these methods impacted classroom dynamics²². Arabic instructors noted that the integration of real-life themes into the curriculum transformed the learning environment from one of passive reception to active participation. Thematic units such as “The Etiquette of Seeking Knowledge,” “Cleanliness in Islam,” and “Daily Dormitory Life” encouraged students to see Arabic not only as a subject but as a vehicle for expressing their Islamic identity. Teachers also reported that students were more confident in speaking tasks and displayed increased willingness to participate in class discussions²³. In particular, the use of situational dialogue based on pesantren experiences reduced anxiety and made oral interaction more natural and spontaneous. Thematic lesson planning, as observed by educators, also enhanced morphological awareness and facilitated better interpretation of texts, especially those containing religious terminology.

Lexical and Morphological Gains through Contextual Reading

Analysis of reading activities and student-produced texts revealed notable gains in vocabulary acquisition and morphological processing. When students engaged with passages related to their own experiences, such as preparing for congregational prayers or reading about the Prophet’s character, they demonstrated greater lexical retention and were able to identify word roots and derive multiple related forms. For instance, after studying a passage on ritual purification, students were able to generate words from the root ṭ-h-r (طهر), such as ṭahārah, maṭhar, and muṭahhir, and use them in appropriate contexts. These observations confirm that contextual reading not only aids comprehension but also promotes deeper grammatical understanding. Such findings echo previous research by Amin and Gottardo (2022), which emphasized the interaction between morphology and contextual exposure in supporting reading proficiency. In this study, the combination of familiar content and guided instruction enabled students to intuitively grasp word patterns and apply them more flexibly in both reading and writing tasks²⁴.

Observed Shift in Classroom Dynamics

²² Hong Hieu Hua and Thanh Thao Le, ‘Understanding the Representation of Intercultural Competence in EFL Education: Strategies among Vietnamese Teachers’, *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 12, no. 1 (31 December 2025): 2474819, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2025.2474819>.

²³ Nur Hanifansyah, Menik Mahmudah, and Sultan Abdus Syukur, ‘Peer Tutoring as a Collaborative Approach in Arabic Language Learning’, *Lahjatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 1 (20 October 2024): 26–43, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lahjatuna.v4i1.2181>.

²⁴ Menik Mahmudah and Nur Hanifansyah, ‘Implementation of the Jigsaw Learning Method for Maharah Qiro’ah Learning at MA As-Sholach, Kejeran Boyeman, Gondangwetan, Pasuruan’, *Lughawiyah: Journal of Arabic Education and Linguistics, Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Indonesia* Vol 6, no. No 2 (2024): 165–84, <http://dx.doi.org/10.31958/lughawiyah.v6i2.13456>.

Classroom observations documented a gradual but significant transformation in student behaviour over the course of the six-week intervention²⁵. In the initial weeks, participation during Arabic lessons was limited, and most students relied heavily on teacher prompts. However, by the fourth week, over 70% of the students actively engaged in group dialogues, peer teaching, and even casual Arabic interactions outside the classroom. Notably, students began to use Arabic phrases spontaneously during their daily activities, especially in dormitory settings. Common phrases such as “Did you wake up for Fajr today?” or “You are the team leader for room cleaning today” were heard among students in informal contexts. This spontaneous use of the target language signifies a transition from classroom dependency to communicative autonomy. It also indicates that contextual teaching not only enhances academic performance but also fosters natural language use in social domains, which is often a critical challenge in foreign language instruction within Islamic boarding schools.

Gendered Patterns of Engagement

While the overall findings point to increased engagement and language acquisition across the student body, closer analysis revealed nuanced gender-based differences in learning preferences and expressions. Female students tended to articulate deeper emotional and reflective responses in their journals, often linking Arabic learning to spiritual growth or personal experiences of self-discipline. For example, a female student reflected on how reading stories of female companions in Arabic made her feel connected to Islamic heritage and inspired her to express her thoughts more fluently. On the other hand, male students demonstrated a preference for performance-based learning, such as role-playing and dramatizations. Their journals reflected enthusiasm for group-based activities that combined humor, movement, and language production. These differences suggest that contextual strategies can be further optimized by incorporating gender-responsive pedagogical elements, ensuring that both expressive and performative learners are equally supported in their language development journey.

The Extent to Which Contextual Approaches Enhance Arabic Language Learning

The findings of this study indicate that the use of contextual teaching approaches significantly improved students' engagement, comprehension, and retention in both maharah qirā'ah (reading) and maharah kalām (speaking). Observational data showed increased student participation during class activities involving thematic discussions,

²⁵ Leovani Marcial Guimarães and Renato Da Silva Lima, ‘A Systematic Literature Review of Classroom Observation Protocols and Their Adequacy for Engineering Education in Active Learning Environments’, *European Journal of Engineering Education* 46, no. 6 (2 November 2021): 908–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2021.1937946>.

role-playing, and real-life dialogue scenarios²⁶. Compared to traditional teacher-centered instruction, contextual methods encouraged students to actively construct meaning and apply vocabulary in familiar and authentic situations.

One student from Class 3A stated during the interview:

“I used to memorize vocabulary without knowing how to use it, but when we practiced conversations about daily routines and school life, I started remembering words more easily. I felt like Arabic was part of my life, not just a subject.”

Another student from Class 3B added:

“Reading Arabic texts became more enjoyable because the topics were about things we experience in the pesantren, like morning activities and studying hadith. It helped me understand and feel closer to the content.”

These responses reflect the alignment of contextual learning with constructivist theory, which emphasizes the learner's active role in building knowledge based on meaningful and relevant experiences.

Effective Components of Contextual Teaching in the Pesantren Setting

The data suggest several contextual strategies that proved most effective in this pesantren environment: (1) Using real-life themes related to pesantren life (e.g., daily routines, prayer, and classroom interaction); (2) Visual media that link vocabulary with environmental cues; (3) Dialogues and group discussions that simulate social and religious practices.

Teachers noted that students showed more confidence in speaking activities and improved text interpretation skills when materials were tied to real-life pesantren experiences. Thematic lesson planning also facilitated better vocabulary recall and morphological understanding, particularly in interpreting texts related to Islamic values.

The results confirm and extend previous findings on the value of contextualized instruction. As noted in Daud et al. (2025), strategies rooted in real-life situations and visual scaffolding enhance learner engagement—an outcome clearly mirrored in this study. Similarly, the emphasis on idiomatic and pragmatic comprehension identified by Luthfi et al. (2025) is validated here, as students demonstrated improved grammatical application when exposed to language in use.

Moreover, the culturally responsive strategies adopted in this study resonate with Jamil et al. (2024), who advocate for adaptive and student-centered instruction in Arabic language learning. The findings also align with Amin and Gottardo's (2022) emphasis on the influence of context and morphology on reading comprehension, particularly in faith-based educational environments. In parallel, the positive student perception and incidental vocabulary gains echo the findings of Soyoof et al. (2024), who demonstrated

²⁶ Moh. Tohiri Habib et al., ‘Podcasts as an Innovative Solution for Teaching Arabic: Enhancing Speaking and Listening Skills.’, *Studi Arab, Universitas Yudharta Pasuruan* 15, no. 2 (2024): 87–105, <https://doi.org/10.35891/sa.v15i2.5784>.

how context-rich, multimodal experiences such as game-based learning foster both language acquisition and content retention.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the effectiveness of contextual teaching approaches in Arabic language instruction at a Madrasah Aliyah within a pesantren environment. Through a qualitative investigation involving 60 students from Class 3A and 3B, the findings revealed that contextual strategies such as real-life themes, situational dialogues, and culturally relevant materials significantly enhanced students' engagement and proficiency in both reading and speaking skills. The integration of learning experiences rooted in the students' everyday pesantren life proved to be a powerful pedagogical tool that aligned well with the principles of constructivist learning and reinforced language retention in meaningful ways.

While this study offers valuable insights into Arabic language pedagogy in Islamic educational institutions, it is limited by its focus on a single pesantren and a relatively short observation period. Future research could expand the scope by incorporating longitudinal data or comparative case studies across multiple pesantren to examine long-term impact and generalizability. Nonetheless, the findings highlight the importance of designing instructional models that connect Arabic language learning with students' lived experiences. These insights can inform curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers seeking to bridge traditional values with contemporary educational practices in faith-based learning contexts.

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