



Arabic Language Learning in Majelis Taklim: Approaches and Methods

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ABSTRACT

Background: Majelis taklim holds significant potential for Arabic language education through the application of varied and adaptive methods. The combination of traditional and modern methods can enhance teaching effectiveness if accompanied by appropriate strategies to overcome challenges. Thus, majelis taklim can continue to serve as a relevant and high-quality center for Arabic language learning for the Muslim community.

Purpose: This article examines the methods and approaches to teaching Arabic in majelis taklim.

Design and methods: A qualitative paradigm using literature reviews was chosen to understand how aspects of Arabic language teaching methods can be formulated to meet the needs of majelis taklim.

Results: In majelis taklim, various teaching approaches are employed, both traditional and modern. The combination of these approaches, along with the development of teaching methods and content, aims to support Islamic education, including Arabic language instruction. The preparation of teaching materials considers participants' backgrounds, particularly their age, and integrates traditional and modern methods. Commonly used Arabic teaching methods in majelis taklim include lectures and discussions, the grammar-translation method, as well as repetition and memorization techniques. The implementation of these methods must be adapted to address challenges such as limited time, diverse participant backgrounds, and restricted access to modern learning resources.

Keywords: Arabic language, majelis taklim, teaching methods, communicative approach, educational strategies.

Introduction

The Arabic language holds a special status in Islam as it is the language of the Qur'an and Hadith. The Qur'an, as the holy scripture of Muslims, was revealed in Arabic, making mastery of the language crucial for those seeking a profound understanding of Islamic teachings. According to Surah Yusuf, verse 2, Allah SWT states, "Innaa anzalnaahu Qur'aanan 'araabiyalla'allakum ta'qiluun," which translates as: "Indeed, we have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand."

Understanding Arabic is also essential for comprehending Hadith, which serves as the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an. Proficiency in Arabic is a primary necessity for Muslims wishing to deeply study their religion. A solid grasp of Arabic enables individuals to understand religious texts directly, without relying on translations that can sometimes be inaccurate. This is vital since many Islamic teachings and laws are derived

from the Qur'an and Hadith. As Syihab has stated, Arabic is the key to comprehensively understanding Islam (Shihab, 2013).

Islamic and Arabic language education can be pursued through formal and non-formal educational institutions. Formal institutions include schools spanning from early childhood education to higher education. In contrast, non-formal institutions include entities such as majelis taklim, which are officially recognized in Indonesia. Dahlan explains that the term majelis taklim originates from the Arabic phrase consisting of majelis, meaning a gathering place or council, and ta'lim, meaning teaching (Dahlan, 2019). Azzahro describes majelis taklim as a place for teaching and learning or a venue for seeking knowledge (Azzahro & Salamah, 2024a). As a non-formal religious education platform, majelis taklim serves as a primary venue for the community to study Arabic without the constraints of formal regulations.

In Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, majelis taklim plays a vital role in disseminating religious knowledge and Arabic. These gatherings are typically held in mosques or homes and attended by various community members, including children, teenagers, and adults. Additionally, majelis taklim fosters social bonds by facilitating the sharing of experiences and knowledge among participants. This creates a sense of community and strengthens social ties. As noted by Jadidah and Muffarohah, one of the functions of majelis taklim is to serve as a center for social harmony (Jadidah & Muffarohah, 2016). In the context of education, teaching Arabic in majelis taklim contributes to the understanding of the Qur'an and Islamic studies. Thus, the topic of Islamic and Arabic education in majelis taklim is a fascinating subject for discussion.

Research focusing on majelis taklim has been conducted extensively. For example, Azzahro and Salamah explored the organizational management of majelis taklim, concluding that although it is a non-formal institution, it exhibits effective organizational management (Azzahro & Salamah, 2024a). Another study by Munawaroh and Zaman highlighted the role of majelis taklim in fostering religious understanding within communities (Munawaroh & Zaman, 2020). Research on majelis taklim in West Java by Susanti et al. examined its learning management processes (Saodah Susanti et al., 2021). Azzahro and Salamah also investigated Quranic teaching methods in majelis taklim, finding that innovative teaching approaches are often employed (Azzahro & Salamah, 2024b).

Previous studies demonstrate that majelis taklim employs effective management and teaching methods, ultimately enhancing participants' knowledge. Unlike earlier research, this discussion focuses on Arabic language teaching methods within majelis taklim. This focus stems from the belief that majelis taklim can contribute to preserving Arabic as part of Islamic cultural heritage. By teaching Arabic, majelis taklim helps maintain the language's continuity amid modernization and globalization. Therefore, this paper aims to review various approaches to teaching Arabic in the context of majelis taklim as a foundation for developing effective teaching strategies.

Methods

The discussion in this paper employs a qualitative paradigm approach using a literature review method. The literature review method is a written summary of articles from journals, books, and documents that describe theories and information from both past and present, organizing the literature into relevant topics and documents (Widiarsa, 2019). This method is deemed appropriate as Gall explains that literature reviews enable us to identify problems, assist in selecting problem-solving procedures, understand the background, avoid duplication, and provide justification (Widiarsa, 2019).

In the context of this paper's discussion, the method is employed to understand how aspects of Arabic language teaching methods can be formulated to meet the needs of majelis taklim. The discussion using this approach is not based on a specific hypothesis but rather on several fundamental issues, which are then analyzed and presented descriptively (Siddiq et al., 2020).

Findings & Discussion

Learning methods in Majelis Taklim

In the *majelis taklim context*, various learning approaches are generally employed. These are commonly known as traditional and modern approaches. The traditional approach emphasizes lectures, memorization, and translation. As explained by Azzahro and Salama, *majelis taklim* usually places the *ustadz/ustadzah* as the central figure, who then delivers the material, helps correct memorization, or assists with translation, and participants follow (Azzahro & Salamah, 2024b). This situation often becomes one-way. Over time, *majelis taklim* has begun to adopt communicative and competency-based approaches. Susanti, et al., in their research findings, show that *majelis taklim* has evolved into a modern institution, both in terms of management and learning models (Saodah Susanti et al., 2021). Below are the learning methods in *majelis taklim* according to Susanti, et al. See Figure 1.

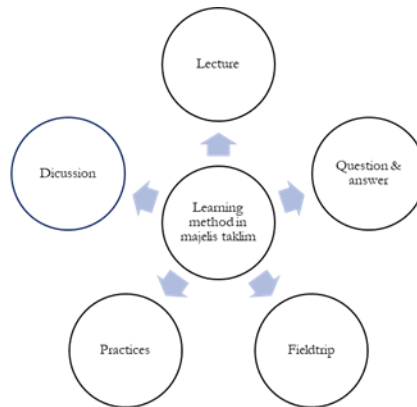


Figure 1. Teaching Methods in *Majelis Taklim* (Saodah Susanti et al., 2021)

The development of learning approaches does not stop at the methods or models used but also includes the content provided. *Majelis taklim*, which generally only discusses or studies Islamic or contextual topics, has also started to implement supporting materials such as language. Susanti, et al. explain the model of topic discussion in *majelis taklim* as follows, (see Figure 2).

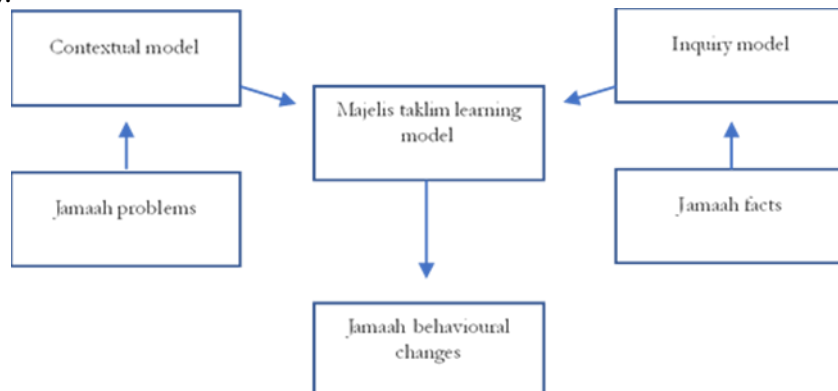


Figure 2. Learning Model in *Majelis Taklim* (Saodah Susanti et al., 2021)

If we refer to the model in Figure 2, it can be understood that what is studied in *majelis taklim* considers the needs of the participants, with the aim of changing the participants itself. In this context, although Arabic is not the main focus, it is also necessary to support other Islamic learning. Therefore, methods related to language learning are also important and relevant in the preparation of teaching materials in *majelis taklim*.

The preparation of teaching materials in *majelis taklim* will certainly consider the background of the audience or participants, especially their age. The more diverse the backgrounds, the more important it becomes to formulate learning methods in *majelis taklim*. This is because the strategies in the teaching and learning process also need to be adjusted. In the context of Arabic language learning, considering that this material tends to be secondary in the context of *majelis taklim*, the formulation of methods will likely involve a collaboration between traditional and modern approaches. Thus, the methods used will tend to employ language learning methods or their modifications. This is logical and acceptable, considering the needs and human resources available in *majelis taklim*.

Arabic Language Learning Methods for *Majelis Taklim*

Language learning recognizes many methods and strategies that can be applied and implemented. However, in the context of *majelis taklim*, there are at least three methods that can be used. The first is the lecture and discussion method. In the lecture method, the leader of the majelis or *asatidz* systematically delivers the Arabic language material. After the lecture session, participants are divided into small groups to discuss the material that has been presented. For example, in learning Arabic vocabulary, participants discuss the context of using the newly taught words. This session ends with a Q&A to deepen participants' understanding. This is considered effective, as the essence of learning is the interaction process between teachers, students, and other learning resources, with the teacher or *asatidz* guiding this interaction (Azzahro & Salamah, 2024b).

The second method is the grammar and translation method. This method emphasizes understanding grammar and translating texts. Arabic grammar means basic rules, guidelines, principles, and regulations. Dimiyati explains that the basis of the grammar and translation method is the concept of universal logic (*al-mathiq al-'alami*), which argues that all languages in the world have the same foundation, and grammar is a branch of logic (Dimiyati, 2022). In this context, the *majelis taklim* congregation is invited to understand the structure of Arabic sentences through grammatical analysis, which is then applied in translating religious texts. Usually, this method is also used in the approach to studying the *kitab kuning* as the main source of learning. Yanmar, et al., mention that the *kitab kuning* refers to the books inherited from scholars that have been used as a guide for learning Islamic religious knowledge for generations and are still used today, especially in Islamic boarding schools (Yanmar et al., 2023). The grammar and translation method also involves the third method, which is repetition and memorization, known as *murojaah*, where participants repeat previous lessons to ensure deep understanding.

The implementation of these methods certainly needs to adapt to the challenges that will arise in *majelis taklim*, such as time constraints, diverse participant backgrounds, and limited and uneven access to modern learning resources. Additionally, the lack of basic Arabic proficiency among participants also becomes an obstacle in the application of certain methods. Therefore, it is recommended to take strategic steps, including: (1) combining traditional and modern methods according to participants' needs; (2) providing special training for teachers to improve pedagogical skills; utilizing digital technology to present

interactive and easily accessible learning materials; and structuring a curriculum with clear achievement targets.

Conclusion

Majelis taklim has great potential in teaching Arabic, especially through the application of varied and adaptive methods. The combination of traditional and modern methods can enhance learning effectiveness, provided that appropriate strategies are in place to address various challenges. Thus, majelis taklim can continue to serve as a relevant and quality center for Arabic language learning for the Muslim community.

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