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The Dynamics of Language Immersion Models in the I'dad Lughah Program: Analysis of Strategies and Challenges at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang

ديناميّات نموذج الانغماس اللغوي في إعداد اللغة: تحليل الاستراتيجيات والتحدّيات في جامعة السنة الإسلامية ديلي سردنج

Ade Muhammad Ritonga[1*], Tulus Musthofa[2], Ahmad Zaky[3]
[1,3] Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam As-Sunnah Deli Serdang, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Indonesia
*Corresponding E-mail: ade.mritonga28@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Research on Arabic language immersion has predominantly focused on learning effectiveness within classroom contexts, while studies that integrate social, institutional, and implementation dynamics in residential-based educational settings remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the dynamics of the language immersion model in the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang, as well as to identify its implementation strategies and the challenges encountered in practice. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical approach.The findings reveal that the language immersion model is not merely implemented as a pedagogical approach but as an ecological system that integrates formal learning and social practice through a language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*). The implementation strategies include the use of Arabic as the medium of instruction, an immersion-based curriculum, the presence of native speakers, and structured language activities. However, its effectiveness is influenced by several challenges, such as limited use of technology, restrictions on digital access, inconsistent use of Arabic among students, and the heterogeneity of students' initial language proficiency.These findings offer a conceptual contribution by extending the language immersion model from a classroom-based approach to an ecosystem-based model that emphasizes the interaction between environment, institutional regulation, and social practice. Theoretically, this study enriches the global discourse on language immersion by highlighting the importance of integrating social and institutional dimensions in second language acquisition. Practically, it recommends strengthening adaptive immersion strategies, including the optimization of technology use and differentiated instruction, in order to enhance the effectiveness of Arabic language learning in residential higher education contexts.

Keywords: Dynamics, I'dad Lughah, Language Immersion.

مستخلص البحث

تشير الدراسات حول الانغماس اللغوي في تعليم اللغة العربية إلى أنها ركّزت في الغالب على فاعلية التعلم داخل الفصول الدراسية، في حين لا تزال الدراسات التي تدمج الأبعاد الاجتماعية والمؤسسية وديناميكيات التطبيق في سياق التعليم القائم على السكن محدودة. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل ديناميات نموذج الانغماس اللغوي في إعداد اللغة بجامعة السنة الإسلامية (STAI As-Sunnah) في ديلي سردانج، وكذلك تحديد استراتيجيات التنفيذ والتحديات التي تواجه تطبيقه. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على المنهج النوعي باستخدام أسلوب دراسة الحالة، حيث تم جمع البيانات من خلال الملاحظة والمقابلات والتوثيق، ثم تحليلها تحليلاً وصفياً تحليلياً.وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن نموذج الانغماس اللغوي لا يُطبَّق بوصفه مجرد منهج تربوي فحسب، بل كنظام بيئي يدمج بين التعلم الرسمي والممارسة الاجتماعية من خلال بيئة لغوية (البيئة اللغوية). وتشمل استراتيجيات التنفيذ استخدام اللغة العربية كلغة للتدريس، ومنهجاً قائماً على الانغماس، ووجود متحدثين أصليين، إضافة إلى أنشطة لغوية منظمة. ومع ذلك، تتأثر فعاليته بعدة تحديات، من بينها محدودية توظيف التكنولوجيا، وتقييد الوصول إلى الوسائط الرقمية، وعدم اتساق استخدام اللغة العربية لدى الطلاب، فضلاً عن تباين

مستوياتهم اللغوية الأولية.وتقدم هذه النتائج إسهاماً مفاهيمياً يتمثل في توسيع نموذج الانغماس اللغوي من كونه نهجاً قائماً على الفصل الدراسي إلى نموذج قائم على النظام البيئي، يركز على التفاعل بين البيئة والتنظيم المؤسسي والممارسة الاجتماعية. وعلى المستوى النظري، تثري هذه الدراسة النقاش العالمي حول الانغماس اللغوي من خلال التأكيد على أهمية دمج الأبعاد الاجتماعية والمؤسسية في اكتساب اللغة الثانية. أما على المستوى العملي، فتوصي الدراسة بتعزيز استراتيجيات الانغماس التكيفية، بما في ذلك توظيف التكنولوجيا بشكل أمثل وتطبيق التعلم التفريقي، من أجل تحسين فاعلية تعلم اللغة العربية في سياق التعليم العالي القائم على السكن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ديناميات، إعداد اللغة، الانغماس اللغوي.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction In the current era of globalization, mastery of foreign languages has become one of the key competencies required for effective communication at the international level. One of the most essential foreign languages to master is Arabic. Arabic ranks among the top five most widely spoken languages in the world, holding a highly significant role. Arabic is an important language within the religious context and has developed alongside the advancement of religion.(Wintle, 2019) Arabic serves as an official language in several Middle Eastern countries, such as Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Iraq.(Caron & Markusen, 2016) Furthermore, Arabic is also a fundamental competency that students in Malaysia,(Majdi & Akmal, 2018) Brunei,(Abdalla & Abas, 2020) and Indonesia must acquire, thereby implementing language learning systems similar to those in Arab countries.(Abdalla & Abas, 2020)

In Indonesia, Arabic has long been studied in various educational institutions. However, compared to the development of other foreign languages such as English, the advancement of Arabic remains relatively behind.(Nadwi, 2001) One contributing factor is the lack of integration of Arabic in daily life and the limited opportunities for direct practice outside academic contexts.

In Indonesia, Arabic constitutes a foreign language (*foreign language*) for its speakers. Therefore, the acquisition of this language requires a different approach compared to the mother tongue. Linguists and psychologists have elaborated upon the acquisition of language by non-native speakers. Among the numerous theories and studies on this subject, the majority posit that the environment plays a significant and essential role in language acquisition. The environment constitutes the primary factor in foreign language mastery, as the fundamental objective is for non-native speakers to attain the proficiency of native speakers.(Abdurrahin, 2018)

An approach that focuses on the creation of a language environment is language immersion, wherein the use of the target language occurs consistently and comprehensively. This aligns with the definition of language immersion itself. Etymologically, immersion denotes the act of submerging, immersing, merging, blending, and embedding.(M. A. Mustofa, 2018) Terminologically, immersion is defined as a natural approach to learning the target language that naturally habituates and motivates learners to communicate socially.(Bailey, 2016)

Language immersion constitutes one of the effective strategies for enhancing learners' language proficiency, both receptively and productively. Language immersion is a classroom learning method that employs the second language as the medium of instruction for presenting and explaining lessons, thereby enabling learners to benefit from enhanced second language proficiency.(Krashen, 1982)

Language immersion has been extensively implemented in European countries, serving as one of the effective alternatives and approaches in foreign language learning. In Canada, for instance, language immersion has been in practice for over 60 years and has effectively enhanced students' language proficiency. Through intensive and in-depth immersion programs, Canadian students have significantly improved their French and Spanish language skills while maintaining their mother tongue proficiency.(Fortune & Tedick, 2003) Meanwhile, in Estonia, language immersion programs have been in operation for over 20 years.(Anna, 2018)

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of language immersion programs, particularly in Arabic language learning, is directed toward addressing the limitations in students' communicative competence, which has traditionally been stronger in receptive aspects (reading and text comprehension) compared to productive aspects (speaking and writing). According to Hermawan, the low communicative competence of Arabic language students in Indonesia is attributable to learning approaches that remain textual in nature and fail to position language as a communicative tool.(Hermawan, 2013)

Within the research literature on Arabic language immersion, various international studies affirm that sustained exposure has a significant impact on enhancing linguistic competence. Nasirudin's research demonstrates that immersion

programs are effective in developing the four Arabic language skills among non-native learners, with the most notable improvements observed in speaking and listening skills, influenced by adaptation to the linguistic environment and learning motivation.(Nasirudeen, 2024) These findings are corroborated by Al-Mudaifar, whose study of the full immersion program at the University of Middlebury found that comprehensive use of the target language across various linguistic activities was capable of significantly accelerating Arabic language mastery. Additionally, John Bailey's research also demonstrates that an "Arabic-only" environment contributes substantially to improving speaking fluency, vocabulary mastery, and students' self-confidence, while simultaneously accelerating the process of language automatization. Overall, these three studies affirm that a consistent and intensive immersion environment constitutes a key factor in the development of Arabic communicative competence.(Bailey, 2016)

The aforementioned findings align with the results of conceptual and qualitative research at the Islamic higher education level in Indonesia. For instance, the study conducted by Tulus Musthofa, Faiq Ilham Rosyadi, and Muhammad Yusuf entitled *Portrait of Arabic Language Immersion Program in Indonesian Islamic Colleges* depicts immersion programs at several Islamic universities in Yogyakarta employing an "artificial immersion" model, which creates situations wherein students are encouraged to use Arabic intensively despite being in a non-native speaker environment.(Musthofa et al., 2025) This study affirms that although the immersion context is not natural (i.e., not in an Arab country), the quality and quantity of interaction in Arabic are sufficient to develop communicative competence comparable to that of native speakers.

In Indonesia, language immersion programs have increasingly garnered attention as an effective method in foreign language instruction, particularly Arabic. Numerous academics have attempted to implement such programs in educational institutions, ranging from primary schools to higher education. Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in developing capabilities, broadening perspectives, and enhancing the quality of human resources. In this regard, the demand for in-depth Arabic language learning as a second language continues to increase within higher education environments, thus encouraging institutions to prepare and provide Arabic language programs focused on enhancing language proficiency(Ernawati, 2018); one such

program that has attracted considerable attention is the language immersion program.

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) As-Sunnah is an Islamic higher education institution that positions Arabic language mastery as an integral component of the educational process. One of the distinctive policies of this campus is the mandatory dormitory residence for all students, designed as a language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*) to support intensive Arabic language competence development. As an institution focused on nurturing prospective educators and Islamic scholars (*ulama*), STAI As-Sunnah recognizes that Arabic language mastery is the primary key to comprehensively understanding Islamic literature. Accordingly, various learning approaches are implemented, including language immersion programs that encourage students to use Arabic in both academic and daily social activities.

STAI As-Sunnah comprises six study programs, five of which are at the undergraduate level, along with one specialized program, namely the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah). This program is designed for prospective students who do not yet possess adequate Arabic language proficiency, with language immersion as its primary approach. Through this approach, students are actively engaged in a comprehensive Arabic-speaking environment, encompassing both learning activities and daily interactions. The objective of this program is to accelerate comprehensive Arabic language mastery, enabling students not only to understand theoretical aspects but also to communicate actively and academically. Consequently, the I'dad Lughah Program serves as one of the flagship programs supporting STAI As-Sunnah's vision of producing a generation that excels in Arabic language and Islamic sciences.

Nevertheless, field conditions indicate that immersion implementation has not yet been fully effective. Although an "Arabic-speaking environment" policy has been enforced, various challenges persist, including inconsistency in Arabic language use within the campus environment, limitations in supervision for the establishment of *bi'ah lughawiyah*, and variations in students' linguistic backgrounds that affect program effectiveness.

Various studies demonstrate that the language immersion approach has made significant contributions to enhancing linguistic competence, particularly in oral

communication and contextual comprehension. Previous studies affirm that an intensive language environment is capable of encouraging learners to use the target language more naturally and sustainably.

Within the context of Arabic language learning, several studies also highlight the importance of establishing *bi'ah lughawiyah* as a key factor in learning success. This approach emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also linguistic habituation through daily interaction within the educational environment. However, the majority of research remains focused on the effectiveness of classroom-based teaching methods. It has not extensively examined the integration between formal learning and the language environment in a comprehensive manner. Meanwhile, research related to the I'dad Lughah program generally highlights its role as a preparatory program for enhancing students' foundational Arabic language proficiency. Several studies indicate that this program is effective in improving basic comprehension; however, it remains limited to learning outcome evaluation and has not yet addressed in depth the aspects of immersion-based learning implementation models.

Furthermore, studies on the implementation of language immersion within the context of I'dad Lughah remain relatively limited, particularly those that systematically examine the model, implementation strategies, and challenges encountered in practice. Existing research tends to be partial, failing to provide a comprehensive picture of how language immersion is operationalized within a structured learning system.

Based on the literature review, the novelty of this study lies in shifting the analytical framework from a language immersion approach that has predominantly focused on classroom learning effectiveness to a system- or ecosystem-based approach. This study explicitly positions language immersion as a practice shaped by the interaction between institutional regulations, the social language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*), and structured language activities, rather than merely as a pedagogical strategy within the classroom. In contrast to previous studies that generally examine a single aspect in isolation (such as program effectiveness or language environment), this research integrates the analysis of implementation strategies and challenges within a unified conceptual framework, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics sustaining language immersion practices. Methodologically, this study

also contributes through a contextual case study approach within a residential-based I'dad Lughah program, enabling an in-depth exploration of immersion practices in a socially and institutionally controlled setting. Therefore, this study not only extends the theoretical understanding of language immersion as an ecological system but also offers a contextualized and replicable implementation model for similar Islamic higher education environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a case study method with a qualitative approach. A case study is understood as an endeavor to describe and analyze in depth a bounded system that is mutually integrated.(Tisdell et al., 2025) According to Creswell, a case study constitutes research that examines a particular phenomenon within a specific temporal and activity context, such as a program, process, or institution, with detailed and in-depth data collection through various techniques over a designated period.(Creswell & Poth, 2016)

Observation, interviews, and documentation were employed to collect data on the implementation of Language Immersion in the Language Preparation Study Program (*I'dad Lughah*) at STAI As-Sunnah, which subsequently underwent triangulation to ensure its validity.(Bachri, 2010) Furthermore, data analysis was conducted interactively and continuously until saturation was achieved, ensuring that the obtained data were comprehensive. The analysis process encompassed three principal stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification of the reduced data, which was presented in a descriptive format.(Miles & Huberman, 1994)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This part The Language Immersion Model in the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang

Based on the research findings, the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang implements a language immersion model that integrates the use of Arabic in both academic and non-academic activities. This model is realized through the creation of a language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*) that requires students to actively use Arabic in their daily lives, particularly within the dormitory environment.

In academic activities, the learning process is conducted using Arabic as the primary medium of instruction. Students are habituated to comprehending materials,

engaging in discussions, and performing linguistic practices such as *muhadatsah* (conversation), *qira'ah* (reading), and *kitabah* (writing) in Arabic. Additionally, supporting programs such as daily *mufradat* (vocabulary) provision are implemented to progressively enrich students' vocabulary.

Meanwhile, in non-academic activities, students are required to use Arabic in their daily interactions within the dormitory environment. Language use encompasses communication among students, interactions with supervisors (*musyrif*), and engagement in various routine activities such as group discussions and dormitory programs. To support this implementation, regulations mandating comprehensive Arabic language use within the campus environment are enforced.

Furthermore, this program is supported by a language supervision system conducted by the Language Division (*Qismul Lughah*) of the Student Executive Board (BEM), lecturers, and *musyrif* or dormitory supervisors. This supervision aims to ensure consistency in Arabic language use and to provide corrections for linguistic errors committed by students. Additional activities, such as structured conversation practice and language proficiency assessments, also form part of this immersion model implementation.

Overall, the language immersion model within the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang demonstrates an integration between formal classroom learning and language habituation in the social environment, designed to promote active and sustainable Arabic language use.

Implementation Strategies of the Language Immersion Program in the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang

The strategies of the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah) in implementing language immersion are comprehensively designed to enhance students' Arabic language proficiency. One of the primary strategies employed is the application of *full immersion*, wherein Arabic is used as the medium of instruction in every aspect of learning, both inside and outside the classroom. The strategies implemented by the Language Preparation Study Program in the application of language immersion are as follows.

1. Designing an Immersion-Based Curriculum

In Greek, the term curriculum derives from the word *curere*, meaning a racecourse. The Oxford Dictionary defines *curriculum* as *subjects in a course of study or taught in a school or college*. According to Zais, curriculum may be understood as a program of subjects, such as English, algebra, history, economics, and others.(Zais, 1976) In other words, a curriculum encompasses a list of titles of subjects delivered by a school. Another perspective posits that curriculum refers to the content of subjects.

The curriculum of the Language Preparation Study Program (*I'dad Lughah*) mandates that nearly all courses employ Arabic as the medium of instruction. This approach aims to habituate students to active and contextual use of Arabic across the various disciplines they study. Consequently, students do not merely learn language structure and grammar but are also capable of applying Arabic in academic discussions, presentations, and daily activities. The use of Arabic as a medium of instruction is further supported by teaching materials specifically designed to promote comprehensive language skills, including *maharatul istima'* (listening skills), *maharatul kalam* (speaking skills), *maharatul qira'ah* (reading skills), and *maharatul kitabah* (writing skills). As stated by Rusydi Ahmad Tu'aimah, the objectives of Arabic language learning include enhancing students' language competence, namely: listening skills (مهارة الإستماع), speaking skills (مهارة الكلام), reading skills (مهارة القراءة), and writing skills (مهارة) الكتابة.(رشدي أحمد طعيمة, ١٩٨٦)

The distribution of courses in the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah) can be observed in the following tables.

Table 1: Curriculum 2024 Language Preparation Study Program

Semester I			
No	**Code**	**Course**	**Credits**
1	ILSY11	Al-Quran I	2
2	ILSY12	Tafsir II	2
3	ILSY13	Hadits I	2
4	ILSY14	Tauhid I	2

5	ILSY15	Fikih I	2
6	ILSY16	Ilmu Tajwid	2
7	ILBA11	Al-Hiwar	2
8	ILBA12	Al-Ashwat Wal-Mufradat	2
9	ILBA13	Fahm Al-Masmu' I	4
10	ILBA14	Maharah Al-Kalam I	4
11	ILBA15	Fahm Al-Maqru' I	4
12	ILBA16	At-Tarakib Wal-Qawa'id I	4
13	ILBA17	Maharah Al-Kitabah I	2
14	ILBA18	Sharaf I	2
Total Credits			**36**

Semester II			
No	**Code**	**Course**	**Credits**
1	ILSY21	Al-Quran II	2
2	ILSY22	Tafsir II	2
3	ILSY23	Hadits II	2
4	ILSY24	Tauhid II	2
5	ILSY25	Fikih II	2
6	ILBA21	Fahm Al-Masmu' II	4
7	ILBA22	Maharah Al-Kalam II	4
8	ILBA23	Fahm Al-Maqru' II	4
9	ILBA24	At-Tarakib Wal-Qawa'id II	4
10	ILBA25	Maharah Al-Kitabah II	2
11	ILBA26	Sharaf II	2
12	ILBA27	At-Tathbiq An-Nahwi	2
13	ILBA28	Balaghah	2
14	ILBA29	Thuruq Tadris Al-Lughah	2
Total Credits			**36**

Upon examining the curriculum structure of the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah) presented above, it is evident that the curriculum is oriented toward the four Arabic language skills. This curriculum is structured to create an immersive language environment, enabling learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities in a balanced manner. Through this comprehensive approach, students will more readily adapt to the nuances of Arabic in various contexts,

both formal and informal. Furthermore, practical activities such as discussions, simulations, and project-based assignments will promote active student engagement in the learning process, such that they not only comprehend language structures but also demonstrate the confidence to employ them in real-world situations.

Additionally, this curriculum is designed to enable students of the Language Preparation Study Program who will continue their studies at the undergraduate level at STAI As-Sunnah to attend lectures more fluently and effectively. With a solid Arabic language foundation, students will be better prepared to engage with complex and diverse academic materials at the undergraduate level.

2. Engaging Native Speakers

The presence of native speakers in the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah) plays an exceptionally important role in enhancing the quality of Arabic language learning. Native speakers, as natural speakers of Arabic, not only assist students in mastering accurate pronunciation and natural expression usage but also provide profound insights into the culture and social context embedded within the language. Through direct interaction with native speakers, students can refine their intonation, comprehend dialectal variations, and learn idioms and vocabulary commonly used in daily life in Arab countries.

Furthermore, native speakers are frequently involved in learning activities such as group conversations, practical communication simulations, and serving as language mentors. The experience of learning directly from native speakers helps students develop confidence in communication and enriches their understanding of the language more authentically and profoundly.



Image 1: : Learning with a Native Speaker

In the image, a native speaker can be observed teaching in the Language Preparation Study Program classroom. The method employed in this learning activity is the *Mubasyirah* (Direct) Method. This method emphasizes direct interaction between the teacher and students, wherein instruction is conducted entirely in the target language without employing another language as a medium of instruction. As stated by William Francis Mackey, the direct method is a manner of presenting foreign language subject matter wherein the teacher directly uses the said language without employing the mother tongue in language learning activities. In other words, the mother tongue is not used during any learning session.(Nuha, 2012)

3. Immersion-Based Activities

Language immersion activities within the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah) are designed to create a language environment wherein students can utilize Arabic intensively across various situations and contexts. One approach to learning a second language is to fill learners' activities with engaging pursuits conducted in the target language. Among the activities undertaken by I'dad Lughah students based on language immersion are:

a. Muhadatsah Shabahiyyah (Morning Conversation)

Muhadatsah Shabahiyyah, or morning conversation, constitutes one of the routine daily activities conducted before class commences within the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah), scheduled from 07:15 to 08:00. This activity is designed to habituate students to the active use of Arabic from the beginning of each day, thereby assisting them in preparing for formal learning sessions.

At the commencement of the *Muhadatsah Shabahiyyah* activity, the topics discussed focus on conversations drawn from the textbook *Al-'Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk*, an Arabic language guide specifically designed for beginner to intermediate levels. This book provides various dialogues and everyday life situations that are relevant, such as self-introduction, discussing family, purchasing goods at the market, and other topics. By utilizing this book as a guide, students can learn practical vocabulary and expressions frequently used in daily conversation.

This activity also provides a robust foundation in grammar and sentence structure, enabling students to build more solid language skills. The approach based on

Al-'Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk facilitates students' comprehension of language usage contexts in real situations while simultaneously preparing them for more complex conversations in the future.



Image 2: : *Muhadatsah Shabahiyyah Activity*

b. Musyahadah Lailiyyah (Evening Film Viewing)

Musyahadah Lailiyyah, or viewing Arabic-language films, constitutes one form of language immersion activity organized by the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah) for its students. This activity aims to enhance Arabic language proficiency through an enjoyable and interactive method, such as viewing films or Arabic-language broadcasts.

Musyahadah Lailiyyah also provides students with the opportunity to enrich their vocabulary and become acquainted with various Arabic dialects that may not be formally taught in class. Through carefully selected films, students can observe language use within different social, cultural, and emotional contexts, thereby enabling a more profound understanding of the nuances of Arabic.



Image 3: : *Musyahadah Lailiyyah Activity*

c. Khat (Arabic Calligraphy)

The study of *khat* (Arabic calligraphy) within the context of language immersion represents a learning method that integrates the art of Arabic calligraphy writing with language deepening. Through *khat* practice, students not only refine their skills in writing Arabic letters beautifully but also deepen their understanding of the structure and form of Arabic in a visual manner.

Learning *khat* within the language immersion context provides an additional dimension for students to deepen their understanding of Arabic more thoroughly. Through calligraphy writing, students learn not only to recognize the forms of Arabic letters but also to attend to details related to writing, such as balance, proportion, and the flow of each letter. This process sharpens their sensitivity to Arabic language structure and helps strengthen visual and motor memory in recognizing words and sentences.



Image 4: : *Khat (Arabic Calligraphy) Learning*

d. Musabaqah Mufradat (Vocabulary Competition)

Musabaqah Mufradat, or the Arabic vocabulary competition, constitutes a program conducted at the end of each semester as an effort to assess and enhance students' vocabulary mastery. This activity is also designed to support language immersion among students. In this activity, participants are challenged to master various Arabic vocabulary items rapidly and accurately. *Musabaqah Mufradat* helps create an environment that supports intensive Arabic language use. Through this program, it is anticipated that students will experience the benefits of deeper language immersion, thereby preparing them to face challenges in the academic and professional spheres.



Image 5 : *Musabaqah Mufradat Activity*

In the image, students can be observed completing questions related to Arabic vocabulary, demonstrating high levels of enthusiasm and focus in the learning process. This activity not only trains their memory retention for new vocabulary but also helps them comprehend word usage across various contexts. In this manner, students practice associating vocabulary with appropriate meanings. The winner of this competition is the student who achieves the highest score with the most accurate response time.

Challenges in the Implementation of the Language Immersion Program in the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang

Although Arabic language immersion programs have gained increasing popularity, challenges in their implementation persist. Several of these include limited numbers of competent teaching staff, inadequacy of teaching materials, and disparities in language comprehension levels among students. Furthermore, support from institutions and the environment also constitutes a critical factor for program success. Collaborative efforts among lecturers, students, and institutions are necessary to create an environment that supports Arabic language use in daily life, thereby rendering the learning process more natural and effective.

In this section, the researcher elaborates upon the challenges confronted by lecturers and students in the implementation of language immersion within the Language Preparation Study Program (I'dad Lughah). The challenges identified are as follows.

1. Limited Utilization of Technology by Lecturers

Based on the research findings, the utilization of technology in the Arabic language learning process by lecturers in the I'dad Lughah Program remains relatively

limited. Learning generally proceeds through conventional methods, such as lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and direct practice without the support of varied digital media. The utilization of devices such as language learning applications, online platforms, and audiovisual media has not been optimally employed in teaching and learning activities.

This condition results in a relatively limited variation of learning methods that tend to be repetitive. In several sessions, materials are delivered directly without integration with technology-based learning resources. This indicates that the use of technology as a support for Arabic language learning has not yet become a principal component in the implementation of classroom immersion.

2. Restrictions on Student Technology Use

The research findings indicate that a policy restricting technology use, particularly digital devices such as mobile phones, exists for students within the dormitory environment. This policy is implemented as part of efforts to create a conducive learning environment and to minimize distractions in the learning process and language-based interactions.

Nevertheless, these restrictions also impact the limited access students have to various digital-based Arabic language learning resources. Students are unable to freely utilize dictionary applications, online learning platforms, or widely available Arabic-language audiovisual content. This condition renders the learning process more dependent on materials directly provided by lecturers and the immediate environment.

3. Inconsistency of Arabic Language Use by Students

In the implementation of the immersion program, it was found that the use of the Arabic language by students has not been fully consistent. Although regulations mandating Arabic use in specific activities exist, in practice, students continue to employ other languages, particularly in informal situations or when outside of supervision.

This phenomenon is evident in daily interactions among students, wherein Arabic language use tends to diminish under certain conditions. Some students use Arabic only at designated times and locations, while reverting to their mother tongue or Indonesian at other times. This indicates that the habituation of Arabic language use has not yet

occurred comprehensively.

4. Disparities in Linguistic Backgrounds

The research findings also reveal disparities in initial Arabic language proficiency among students of the I'dad Lughah Program. Students originate from diverse educational backgrounds, such as general schools, *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), and religion-based educational institutions, which influence their level of language mastery.

These disparities are evident in their ability to comprehend materials, communicate, and absorb new vocabulary. Some students are able to follow the learning process effectively, while others experience difficulties in understanding instructions and participating in language-based activities. This condition indicates variations in students' levels of readiness to participate in the language immersion program.

The research findings demonstrate that the implementation of language immersion in the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang has integrated the use of Arabic in academic and non-academic activities through the creation of a language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*). The immersion model applied within this program may be categorized as a form of *full immersion*, wherein Arabic is predominantly used as the medium of instruction in classroom learning as well as the language of communication in daily dormitory life. This model emphasizes the integration between formal learning and social practice,(Nascimento, 2016) such that students receive intensive and sustained language exposure.

Further findings indicate that the implementation of language immersion in the I'dad Lughah Program is not solely reflected in the use of Arabic as the medium of instruction, but is also manifested through various supporting strategies, such as the habituation of daily *muhadatsah*,(Aflisia & Harahap, 2019) the structured provision of vocabulary (*mufradat*) ,(Ridwan & Awaluddin, 2019) the involvement of *musyrif* in language supervision,(Humaedi & Uyuni, 2025) as well as the organization of communicative language activities outside the classroom. In addition, the enforcement of Arabic language usage rules within the dormitory environment further strengthens the establishment of a *bi'ah lughawiyah*, encouraging students to actively use the language in their daily interactions. These findings reinforce previous studies which assert that the

success of immersion programs is largely determined by the intensity of target language use across various life contexts,(H. T. Mustofa, 2023) as well as the consistency of an environment that supports authentic language practice.(Nurlaila, 2021)

On the other hand, these findings also extend the existing body of research on language immersion by demonstrating that the integration of institutional regulations, the development of a supportive social environment, and structured language activities are crucial factors in sustaining immersion practices. Therefore, the implementation of language immersion in the I'dad Lughah Program not only reinforces existing theories but also contributes a contextualized practical model for Arabic language learning within Islamic higher education settings.

Theoretically, this type of immersion model aligns with the concept of language immersion developed in second language acquisition studies, wherein the target language is employed as the primary medium in all learning activities. Language immersion aims to develop learners' proficiency in the target language across various competency domains, as well as to elevate learners' competence in the target language. (العربية, ٢٠١٨) Professor Tulus Mustofa also articulates that the primary objective of language immersion programs is for learners to acquire target language communication skills akin to those of native speakers.(H. T. Mustofa, 2023)

Nevertheless, within the context of its implementation in the Society 5.0 era,(Sugiono, 2020) the language immersion model also confronts challenges about the utilization of technology in learning. Although STAI As-Sunnah possesses supporting facilities such as language laboratories, audiovisual equipment, and internet access, their utilization in the learning process remains suboptimal. This is evidenced by the continued dominance of conventional methods employed by lecturers and the limited integration of digital media in Arabic language learning activities. Indeed, educational technology plays a strategic role in enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and enrichment of students' learning experiences.(Hanifah Salsabila et al., 2020)

Conversely, the policy restricting the use of digital devices such as smartphones and laptops within the dormitory environment, while intended to create a conducive learning environment, presents a challenge in expanding students' access to digital-based learning resources. In the Society 5.0 era, technology functions not merely as an

auxiliary tool but also as a primary means of accessing information and enhancing learning competencies.(Lestari, 2018) Therefore, a balance between restriction and utilization of technology is required to ensure that language immersion implementation remains relevant, adaptive, and capable of optimally supporting the enhancement of students' Arabic language skills.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that despite the establishment of Arabic language use regulations, in practice, students continue to employ other languages, particularly in informal situations or outside supervision. This phenomenon suggests that the established immersion environment has not yet fully succeeded in promoting the internalization of sustainable language habits. In the field of second language acquisition, consistency in target language use constitutes a key factor in developing communicative competence, as the frequency of actual language use accelerates the process of *language acquisition*.(Susanti, 2019) This finding also aligns with the study by Lyster, which affirms that without consistent language practice, learners tend to experience limitations in the development of communicative skills despite having received language exposure in the classroom.(Ranta & Lyster, 2007)

Beyond the factor of language use consistency, the research findings also demonstrate that disparities in students' linguistic backgrounds influence the effectiveness of language immersion implementation. Students from *pesantren*-based educational backgrounds generally possess a stronger Arabic language foundation compared to students from general schools, thereby exhibiting differences in the speed of material comprehension, participation in communication, and adaptability to the language environment. This condition indicates that the immersion program confronts heterogeneity in initial proficiency that impacts learning dynamics both in the classroom and within the dormitory environment.

From the perspective of second language acquisition, differences in initial proficiency constitute one of the significant factors influencing the success of language learning. Individual factors such as educational background, learning experience, and initial linguistic ability exert a significant influence on the process and outcomes of second language learning.(Richards, 2006)

Consequently, disparities in linguistic backgrounds constitute one of the critical factors

that warrant attention in language immersion implementation. Programs are not only required to create language environments. Still, they must also accommodate student diversity through inclusive and adaptive learning strategies, ensuring that all students derive optimal benefit from the application of language immersion.

Overall, the language immersion model within the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang has reflected the principles of immersion-based language learning through the integration of academic activities and the language environment. However, its effectiveness continues to be influenced by several factors, including technology utilization, consistency of language use, and disparities in students' initial proficiency. Therefore, the reinforcement of more adaptive and integrative strategies is required to ensure that language immersion implementation operates optimally in enhancing students' Arabic language competence.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the language immersion model implemented in the I'dad Lughah Program at STAI As-Sunnah Deli Serdang constitutes an ecological learning system that integrates academic, social, and institutional dimensions in the development of Arabic language competence. The effectiveness of this model is determined by three main factors: the intensity of language exposure, the consistency of language use across various contexts, and the support of a structured language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*). These findings not only reinforce existing immersion language theories that emphasize comprehensive use of the target language but also extend them by demonstrating that successful immersion requires the integration of formal instruction and sustained social practice, as well as adaptability to learners' dynamics and technological developments.

Based on these findings, future research is recommended to further investigate the integration of technology within language immersion environments, particularly in contexts where the use of digital devices is restricted. In addition, quantitative or mixed-method approaches are needed to empirically measure the effectiveness of immersion models in improving language proficiency. Comparative studies across institutions are also suggested to enrich the development of more contextual and innovative immersion

models in the era of Society 5.0.

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