



MULTAQA TSAQAFI AS A MEDIUM FOR STRENGTHENING ARABIC LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AMONG FIFTH-GRADE KMI STUDENTS AT PONDOK MODERN DARUSSALAM GONTOR

PUTRI 1

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34125/jmp.v11i3.2368>

Sections Info

Article history:

Submitted: 11 April 2026

Final Revised: 23 April 2026

Accepted: 16 May 2026

Published: 20 June 2026

Keywords:

Multaqa Tsaqafi

Language Competence

Communicative Competence

Bi'ah Lughawiyah

Pesantren Education



ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Multaqa Tsaqafi in strengthening Arabic language competence among fifth-grade KMI students at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research explores how the program contributes to students' communicative competence, language habituation, and academic participation within the pesantren environment. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis involving students, teachers, and language supervisors. The findings reveal that Multaqa Tsaqafi significantly strengthens students' Arabic communicative competence through contextual interaction, scientific discussion, and authentic language practice. The activity also reinforces the Arabic linguistic environment (bi'ah lughawiyah) by encouraging continuous Arabic use in both academic and daily communication. Furthermore, the program promotes students' confidence, active participation, linguistic discipline, and academic motivation. Another important finding indicates that Multaqa Tsaqafi integrates language learning with Islamic character formation by cultivating communication ethics, intellectual responsibility, and discipline within pesantren culture.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran Multaqa Tsaqafi sebagai media penguatan kompetensi bahasa Arab santriwati kelas V KMI di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif untuk mengeksplorasi kontribusi program terhadap kompetensi komunikatif, pembiasaan bahasa, dan partisipasi akademik santriwati dalam lingkungan pesantren. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumentasi yang melibatkan santriwati, guru, dan penggerak bahasa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Multaqa Tsaqafi secara signifikan memperkuat kompetensi komunikatif bahasa Arab santriwati melalui interaksi kontekstual, diskusi ilmiah, dan praktik bahasa autentik. Kegiatan ini juga memperkuat lingkungan bahasa Arab (bi'ah lughawiyah) dengan mendorong penggunaan bahasa Arab berkelanjutan dalam komunikasi akademik maupun sehari-hari. Selain itu, program ini meningkatkan rasa percaya diri, partisipasi aktif, kedisiplinan berbahasa, dan motivasi akademik santriwati. Temuan penting lainnya menunjukkan bahwa Multaqa Tsaqafi mengintegrasikan pembelajaran bahasa dengan pembentukan karakter Islami melalui penanaman etika komunikasi, tanggung jawab intelektual, dan disiplin dalam budaya pesantren.

Kata Kunci: Multaqa Tsaqafi, kompetensi bahasa Arab, kompetensi komunikatif, bi'ah lughawiyah, pesantren, pendidikan Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Arabic occupies a central position in Islamic education because it functions not only as a communication tool but also as the primary language for understanding the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship. In the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), Arabic learning is therefore directed toward developing communicative competence that enables students to actively use the language in both academic and daily interactions. Contemporary Arabic education no longer emphasizes grammatical mastery alone, but also stresses the importance of meaningful language practice, interaction, and authentic communication environments (Muttaqin, Bakheit, & Hasanah, 2024).

Recent studies have shown that the success of Arabic language acquisition in Islamic boarding schools is strongly influenced by the existence of a supportive linguistic environment (*bi'ah lughawiyyah*). A language environment encourages students to continuously receive language input, participate in interaction, and produce meaningful output in real-life situations. Hamid et al. (2024) explain that intensive interaction and consistent language practices in pesantren become important foundations for strengthening students' communicative competence. Likewise, research conducted by Fitri et al. (2026) demonstrates that structured language activities, disciplinary systems, and cultural habituation significantly contribute to improving students' fluency, confidence, and linguistic accuracy in Arabic communication.

As one of the modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1 consistently develops various language-based programs to strengthen Arabic mastery among students. One of these programs is *Multaqa Tsaqafi*, an academic and cultural forum designed to enhance students' linguistic awareness and communicative ability through scientific presentations, motivational sessions, and interactive discussions in Arabic. The program reflects the pesantren's educational philosophy that language is not merely a subject to be learned in classrooms but a living culture that must be practiced continuously in everyday life. Through this activity, students are encouraged to internalize Arabic as part of their academic identity and religious character formation.

The implementation of *Multaqa Tsaqafi* among fifth-grade students of *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimat Al-Islamiyah (KMI)* is particularly important because students at this level are expected to demonstrate higher linguistic competence and become role models for younger students in maintaining the Arabic-speaking environment. The activity combines formal scientific exposure with practical language habituation, thereby creating a dynamic learning ecosystem. Previous studies have discussed Arabic language environments, communicative approaches, and conversational training in pesantren contexts (Kholis & Mustofa, 2024; Silviyanti et al., 2024), yet limited research specifically examines *Multaqa Tsaqafi* as a structured socio-cultural medium for strengthening Arabic communicative competence among santriwati in modern pesantren education.

Furthermore, many Arabic learning studies in pesantren tend to focus on classroom instruction, curriculum development, or language discipline systems, while

extracurricular intellectual forums remain underexplored. In fact, communicative language learning theory emphasizes that meaningful interaction and contextual practice are essential elements in second language acquisition. The communicative approach encourages learners to actively negotiate meaning, express ideas, and engage in authentic communication situations rather than merely memorizing grammatical structures (Yudiawan, Musthafa, & Anam, 2026). Therefore, Multaqa Tsaqafi deserves scholarly attention because it integrates linguistic practice, academic culture, and character education within the pesantren environment.

Based on the above background, this study aims to analyze the role of Multaqa Tsaqafi as a medium for strengthening Arabic language competence among fifth-grade KMI students at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse of Arabic communicative learning in Islamic boarding schools and practically to provide insights into the development of innovative language programs that support sustainable Arabic language environments in pesantren education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the role of Multaqa Tsaqafi as a medium for strengthening Arabic language competence among fifth-grade students of Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimat Al-Islamiyah (KMI) at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the research aimed to understand social interactions, educational experiences, and linguistic practices occurring naturally within the pesantren environment. According to Creswell and Poth (2024), qualitative research enables researchers to investigate participants' perspectives, behaviors, and meanings within a specific socio-cultural context. The case study design was selected because it allows an in-depth investigation of a bounded educational phenomenon within its real-life setting (Yin, 2023).

The research was conducted at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1, one of the modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia that consistently implements Arabic language habituation programs. The participants consisted of fifth-grade KMI students who actively participated in Multaqa Tsaqafi activities, language supervisors, and teachers involved in organizing the program. Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they possessed direct experience and relevant knowledge regarding the implementation of the activity. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative studies to obtain rich and contextual data from information-rich participants (Campbell et al., 2020).

Table 1. Research Participants and Their Roles

Participant Category	Number of Participants	Roles in the Research
Fifth-Grade KMI Students	20	Main participants involved in <i>Multaqa Tsaqafi</i> activities and Arabic language practices
Arabic Language Supervisors (<i>Muharrakah al-Lughah</i>)	4	Monitoring students' language discipline and encouraging Arabic communication

Teachers / Invited Speakers	3	Delivering scientific materials, motivational sessions, and language guidance
Organizing Committee	5	Managing and coordinating the implementation of <i>Multaqa Tsaqafi</i> activities
Dormitory Mentors	2	Supervising students' daily language habituation outside formal sessions
Total	34	Participants contributing to observational, interview, and documentation data

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis. Participant observation was conducted during the implementation of *Multaqa Tsaqafi* sessions in both daytime and evening activities to examine students' interaction patterns, language use, participation, and communicative behavior. Observation is essential in qualitative educational research because it allows researchers to capture authentic practices and social dynamics within natural settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2021).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students, teachers, and program organizers to explore their perceptions regarding the contribution of *Multaqa Tsaqafi* to Arabic language development. The interview format provided flexibility for participants to express their experiences and opinions while maintaining focus on the research objectives. As stated by Brinkmann and Kvale (2022), semi-structured interviews are effective for obtaining in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences and educational perspectives.

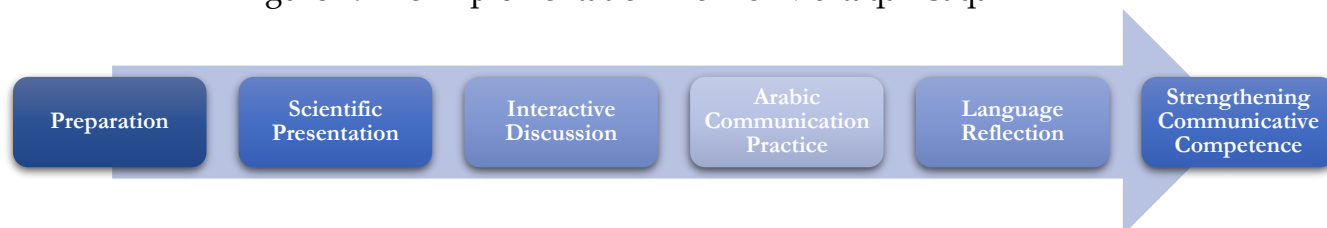
In addition, documentation analysis was employed to support the observational and interview data. The analyzed documents included activity schedules, institutional language regulations, students' notes, program reports, and visual documentation of *Multaqa Tsaqafi* activities. Document analysis helps researchers strengthen contextual understanding and triangulate findings obtained from other data sources (Bowen, 2021).

The collected data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. This analytical framework enables researchers to systematically organize, interpret, and verify qualitative findings throughout the research process (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). The analysis focused on identifying themes related to communicative competence, language habituation, students' participation, and the educational values embedded in *Multaqa Tsaqafi* activities.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied triangulation techniques involving multiple data sources and collection methods. The researcher compared findings from observations, interviews, and documentation to maintain consistency and credibility. Member checking was also conducted by confirming interview interpretations with participants to minimize misunderstanding and increase research validity (Lincoln & Guba, 2021).

Ethically, this study maintained participants' confidentiality and obtained permission from the pesantren authorities before conducting the research. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that the collected data would be used solely for academic purposes. Ethical considerations are crucial in educational qualitative research to protect participants' rights and maintain research integrity (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

Figure 1. The Implementation Flow of Multaqa Tsaqafi



RESULTS

The findings of this study demonstrate that Multaqa Tsaqafi played a significant role in strengthening the Arabic language competence of fifth-grade KMI students at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation analysis, the implementation of the program contributed to the development of students' communicative competence, linguistic confidence, active participation, and Arabic language awareness within the pesantren environment.

Table 2. Forms of Activities in Multaqa Tsaqafi

Session	Activity Type	Description of Activities	Main Objective	Arabic Language Focus
Day Session	Scientific Lecture	Delivery of academic materials by invited speakers concerning the importance of Arabic in Islamic education and daily communication	Expanding students' linguistic insight and awareness	Listening comprehension and vocabulary enrichment
Day Session	Motivational Language Session	Interactive motivation session encouraging students to actively use Arabic in daily activities	Strengthening language motivation and confidence	Speaking motivation and communicative awareness
Day Session	Note-Taking and Reflection	Students recorded important points and reflected on the presented materials	Reinforcing language understanding and academic engagement	Academic vocabulary acquisition
Night Session	Discussion Forum	Group discussions and interactive communication among students using Arabic	Developing communicative competence and active participation	Speaking fluency and interactive communication
Night Session	Question-and-Answer Session	Students asked and responded to questions related to language learning and pesantren culture	Encouraging critical thinking and spontaneous language use	Oral expression and argumentation

Night Session	Language Evaluation and Reflection	Reflection on students' language performance and reinforcement of language discipline	Strengthening sustainable Arabic language habituation	Communicative accuracy and language discipline
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*Source: Observation and Documentation Data Processed by the Author

1. Multaqa Tsaqafi Strengthened Students' Arabic Communicative Competence

One of the major findings revealed that Multaqa Tsaqafi functioned as an effective medium for improving students' communicative competence in Arabic. During the activity, students were exposed to scientific presentations, formal discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and interactive communication delivered primarily in Arabic. These practices encouraged students to actively listen, comprehend messages, formulate responses, and express opinions using Arabic in authentic communicative situations.

Figure 2. Fifth-grade KMI students expressing opinions



The observation data indicated that students became more confident in speaking Arabic during daily interactions after participating in the program. Several participants stated that the activity motivated them to reduce dependence on their mother tongue and increase the use of Arabic inside dormitories, classrooms, and organizational activities. This finding supports the communicative language learning theory emphasizing that meaningful interaction and contextual practice are essential for second-language acquisition (Richards, 2022).

Furthermore, students demonstrated improvement in vocabulary usage, pronunciation accuracy, and spontaneous oral expression. The interactive nature of Multaqa Tsaqafi created opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning and practice language production naturally. This finding is consistent with the study of Muttaqin, Bakheit, and Hasanah (2024), which explains that continuous language interaction and

output production significantly influence Arabic language acquisition in pesantren environments.

2. The Program Created a Strong Arabic Linguistic Environment (Bi'ah Lughawiyyah)

Another important finding showed that Multaqa Tsaqafi contributed to strengthening the Arabic linguistic environment within the pesantren. The program was not limited to formal academic sessions but also functioned as a cultural mechanism for reinforcing language discipline and habituation among students.

Observational findings revealed that students attempted to maintain Arabic communication before, during, and after the activity. Teachers and language supervisors also continuously encouraged students to use Arabic expressions during interactions. Such practices created an immersive linguistic atmosphere that supported continuous exposure to Arabic input and communication patterns.

The existence of a supportive language environment has been widely recognized as a key factor in successful language acquisition. Hamid et al. (2024) argue that language environments in Islamic boarding schools facilitate sustainable interaction patterns that strengthen learners' communicative abilities and language identity. Similarly, Fitri, Mukhlisin, and Izomi (2026) found that structured Arabic language environments positively influence students' fluency, discipline, and communicative awareness.

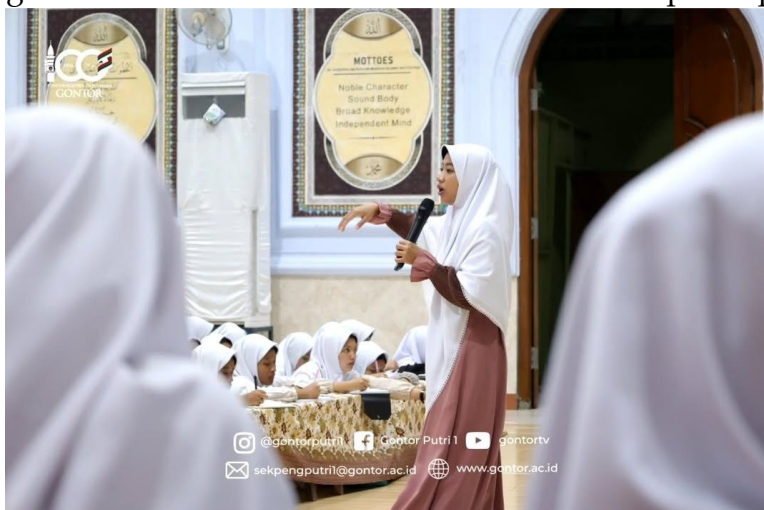
The findings also indicated that Multaqa Tsaqafi strengthened students' emotional attachment to Arabic as part of pesantren culture rather than merely an academic subject. Students perceived Arabic as a symbol of intellectual identity, religious commitment, and institutional values. This cultural internalization became one of the distinctive characteristics of Arabic learning at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1.

3. Multaqa Tsaqafi Encouraged Active Participation and Academic Motivation

The study further found that Multaqa Tsaqafi increased students' academic enthusiasm and participation in Arabic-related activities. The forum-based learning model allowed students to engage actively through listening, note-taking, asking questions, and responding to presenters' ideas.

During the daytime session, students attentively listened to scientific presentations delivered by invited speakers and recorded important points related to Arabic language development and language practice. In the evening session, students participated more interactively through discussion forums and reflective activities. Such engagement reflected a student-centered learning atmosphere that encouraged autonomy and active learning behavior.

Figure 3. Interactive discussion session of Multaqa Tsaqafi



Interview data showed that students considered Multaqa Tsaqafi different from ordinary classroom learning because the activity provided a more relaxed yet intellectually stimulating atmosphere. Students felt more motivated to improve their Arabic proficiency because they directly observed the practical use of Arabic in academic communication contexts.

This finding aligns with contemporary educational perspectives emphasizing that participatory learning environments positively influence learners' motivation and communicative engagement (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). Interactive educational forums also encourage students to develop confidence, critical thinking, and collaborative communication skills.

4. Integration of Language Development and Character Education

Another significant finding demonstrated that Multaqa Tsaqafi integrated Arabic language development with Islamic character formation. The activity not only emphasized linguistic competence but also cultivated discipline, respect, intellectual responsibility, and Islamic ethics during communication practices.

Students were trained to communicate politely, listen attentively to speakers, and express arguments respectfully during discussions. Teachers emphasized that Arabic mastery should reflect moral integrity and Islamic educational values. This integration reflects the pesantren educational philosophy that language education cannot be separated from character development and spiritual cultivation.

The findings support the argument of Abdullah and Rahman (2023), who explain that Islamic boarding school education combines cognitive, linguistic, and moral dimensions within holistic educational practices. In this context, Multaqa Tsaqafi functioned not merely as a language program but also as a medium for strengthening students' intellectual and ethical formation.

Overall, the findings indicate that Multaqa Tsaqafi served as a multidimensional educational medium that strengthened Arabic communicative competence, supported

the Arabic linguistic environment, increased academic participation, and reinforced character education among fifth-grade KMI students at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1.

Table 3. Findings on Arabic Language Competence Development

Findings	Indicators Observed	Educational Impact
Increased speaking confidence	Students actively communicated in Arabic	Better communicative competence
Improved vocabulary mastery	Frequent use of new expressions	Richer language production
Stronger language discipline	Reduced mother-tongue use	Sustainable language environment
Higher academic participation	Active involvement in discussions	Increased learning motivation

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Multaqa Tsaqafi functions not merely as an extracurricular activity, but as a socio-linguistic educational medium that systematically strengthens Arabic language competence among fifth-grade KMI students at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. The activity creates a communicative learning atmosphere in which students actively engage with Arabic through authentic interaction, intellectual discussion, and continuous language exposure. This confirms the argument that language acquisition develops more effectively when learners are immersed in meaningful communicative environments rather than relying solely on formal classroom instruction (Richards, 2022).

The improvement of students' communicative competence observed in this study demonstrates that Multaqa Tsaqafi successfully facilitated contextual language use. Students were not only passive recipients of linguistic knowledge but active participants in constructing meaning through interaction and discussion. This finding aligns with communicative language teaching theory, which emphasizes that second-language acquisition occurs through negotiation of meaning, interactional practice, and functional communication (Nation & Newton, 2020). The students' increased confidence in speaking Arabic also reflects the importance of creating psychologically supportive environments where learners feel encouraged to practice language without excessive fear of making mistakes.

Furthermore, this study strengthens previous research regarding the strategic role of *bi'ah lughawiyyah* (language environment) in Arabic learning within Islamic boarding schools. The findings reveal that Multaqa Tsaqafi contributed significantly to maintaining the continuity of Arabic exposure beyond classroom boundaries. The activity reinforced students' daily language habits, strengthened linguistic discipline, and normalized Arabic communication within academic and social interactions. This supports the study conducted by Hamid et al. (2024), which found that pesantren-based language

environments create sustainable linguistic ecosystems that facilitate language acquisition through constant exposure, repetition, and social interaction.

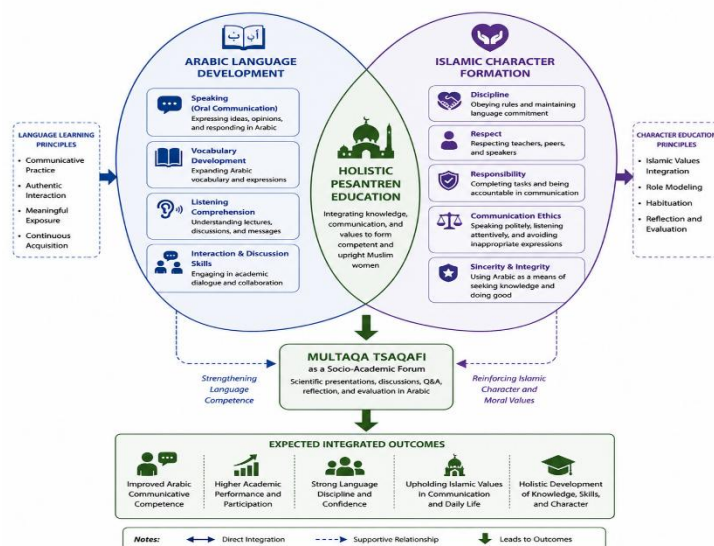
The role of Multaqa Tsaqafi can also be interpreted through the perspective of sociocultural learning theory, which argues that language development is closely connected to social participation and collaborative interaction. In this context, the forum-based structure of Multaqa Tsaqafi enabled students to learn not only from teachers and invited speakers but also from peer interaction and collective intellectual engagement. The presence of academic discussions, reflective sessions, and interactive communication created opportunities for students to internalize linguistic forms within meaningful cultural practices. Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) emphasize that collaborative participation and engagement are fundamental components in fostering sustainable language learning motivation and communicative growth.

Another important aspect emerging from this study is the integration between language learning and character education. Unlike many formal language programs that focus predominantly on technical linguistic achievement, Multaqa Tsaqafi integrated Arabic communication with Islamic ethical values and pesantren discipline. Students were encouraged to demonstrate politeness, respect, attentiveness, and intellectual responsibility while communicating in Arabic. This reflects the pesantren educational philosophy that language is not merely an academic instrument but also a medium for cultivating moral identity and spiritual maturity.

This finding supports Abdullah and Rahman's (2023) argument that Islamic boarding school education applies a holistic educational model integrating linguistic, cognitive, and ethical dimensions simultaneously. The implementation of Multaqa Tsaqafi illustrates that Arabic language learning in pesantren contexts cannot be separated from institutional culture, religious values, and character formation processes. Therefore, Arabic competence in pesantren education should be understood not only as communicative proficiency but also as part of students' identity construction within Islamic intellectual traditions.

Figure 4. Integration of Language Learning and Character Education

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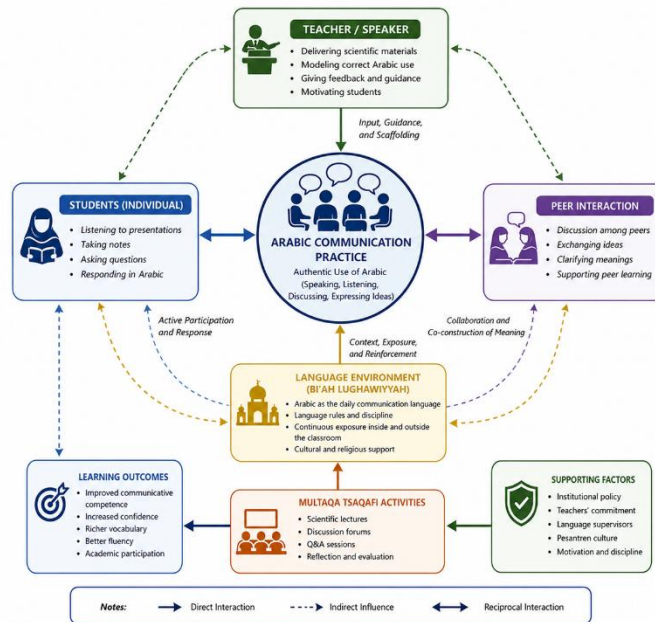


The findings also reveal the significance of non-formal educational spaces in strengthening language acquisition. Previous Arabic learning studies have often concentrated on classroom pedagogy, curriculum design, or grammar instruction, whereas this study highlights the importance of intellectual-cultural forums as alternative language learning ecosystems. The success of Multaqa Tsaqafi indicates that language learning becomes more effective when students are involved in dynamic, participatory, and socially meaningful educational experiences. This finding corresponds with Fitri, Mukhlisin, and Izomi (2026), who explain that structured extracurricular language activities positively influence students' fluency, communicative confidence, and language awareness in pesantren settings.

In addition, the present study offers a conceptual novelty by positioning Multaqa Tsaqafi not only as a language-supporting activity but as a socio-academic ecosystem that integrates communicative competence, linguistic habituation, intellectual culture, and character education simultaneously. This multidimensional perspective contributes to contemporary Arabic language education discourse, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. The study suggests that sustainable Arabic learning requires the integration of formal instruction, social interaction, institutional culture, and value-based educational practices.

Figure 3. Interaction Pattern in Arabic Language Learning through Multaqa Tsaqafi

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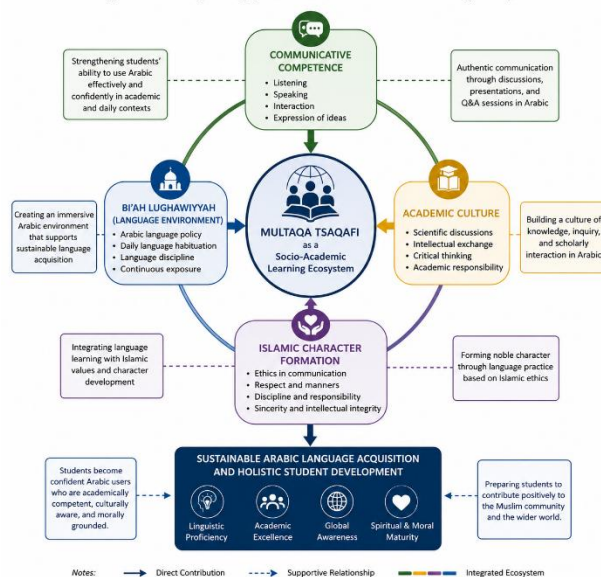


Nevertheless, this study is limited to a specific institutional and cultural context, namely Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent Arabic language programs in other pesantren models with different educational systems and language policies. Future studies may explore comparative analyses between pesantren institutions, investigate students' longitudinal language development, or examine the effectiveness of similar academic forums in improving specific Arabic language skills such as speaking fluency, critical discussion ability, or academic writing competence.

Overall, this study demonstrates that *Multaqa Tsaqafi* serves as an innovative and holistic educational medium capable of strengthening Arabic communicative competence while simultaneously reinforcing academic culture and Islamic character formation among santriwati in modern pesantren education.

Figure 2. *Multaqa Tsaqafi* as a Socio-Academic Learning Ecosystem

Figure 2. *Multaqa Tsaqafi* as a Socio-Academic Learning Ecosystem



CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study concludes that *Multaqa Tsaqafi* functions as an effective socio-linguistic educational medium for strengthening Arabic language competence among fifth-grade KMI students at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 1. The program created an interactive and immersive Arabic learning environment where students actively practiced communication through scientific discussions, presentations, and intellectual interaction. Arabic competence in pesantren education is strengthened not merely through formal classroom instruction, but through sustainable communicative practices embedded within institutional culture and students' daily lives.

Multaqa Tsaqafi contributes to students' communicative confidence, linguistic discipline, and academic participation. The integration of formal knowledge dissemination with contextual language practice enabled students to internalize Arabic naturally and meaningfully. The activity also reinforced *bi'ah lughawiyah* as a living linguistic ecosystem. Furthermore, *Multaqa Tsaqafi* reflects pesantren's holistic philosophy by integrating language development with Islamic character formation, cultivating intellectual responsibility, communication ethics, and discipline.

Theoretically, this research proposes *Multaqa Tsaqafi* as a socio-academic learning ecosystem combining communicative competence, language habituation, institutional culture, and character education. Practically, Islamic boarding schools should strengthen forum-based language programs as complementary strategies for improving Arabic proficiency. Educational institutions are encouraged to develop sustainable interactive language activities beyond grammar-oriented instruction. Future research may expand this study through comparative investigations across pesantren institutions or by

examining the long-term impact on students' Arabic proficiency and linguistic identity formation.

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