The Reality of Learning Arabic Listening Skills at Pesantren-Based Universities from the perspective of Teaching Materials

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the tendency of *pesantren*-based universities in Arabic language learning which is still dominated by reading skills rather than listening skills. The aim of this research is to reveal the reality of learning Arabic listening skills in *pesantren*-based universities from the perspective of teaching materials including the distribution of courses, credit weights, lecturers, textbooks, objectives, methods, media, exercises, and obstacles to the use of teaching materials by students. This research is a type of qualitative research with a case study approach which conducted at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University. Direct observation techniques, in-depth interviews and documentation were chosen by researchers in collecting data sourced from stakeholders, lecturers and students. The data obtained was then validated using source triangulation techniques and then analyzed using interactive descriptive techniques. The results of this research show that the reality of learning Arabic listening skills in the Arabic language education study program at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University is still not running optimally. This can be seen from the unavailability of special teaching materials for listening skills, which has given rise to several fundamental problems including continuity, interconnectedness, cultural dimensions, and lecturer turnover.

Keywords: Teaching Materials, Listening Skills, Arabic Language Education, Islamic Boarding School.

واقع تعليم مهارة الاستماع للغة العربية في الجامعات التابعة للمعهد الإسلامي من منظور المواد التعليمية

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الملخص

كان الدافع وراء هذا البحث هو اتجاه الجامعات التابعة للمعهد الإسلامي في تعلم اللغة العربية التي لا تزال تهيمن عليها مهارات القراءة بدلاً من مهارات الاستماع. يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن واقع تعلم مهارة الاستماع في الجامعة التابعة للمعهد الإسلامي من منظور المواد التعليمية بما في ذلك توزيع المقررات، والساعات المعتمدة، وهيئة التدريس، والكتب التعليمية، والأهداف، والأساليب، والوسائط، والتدريبات، والتقييم، فضلاً عن معوقات استخدام المواد التعليمية من قبل الطلبة. يعتمد هذا البحث على منهج البحث الكيفي المستمد من دراسة الحالة. وقد اختار الباحثون تقنيات الملاحظة المباشرة والمقابلات المتعمقة والتوثيق في جمع البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها من هيئة الرئاسة للجامعة والمحاضرين والطلبة. ويتم بعد ذلك التحقق من صحة البيانات باستخدام تقنيات تثليث المصدر ثم تحليلها باستخدام التقنيات الوصفية التفاعلية. ومن أبرز نتائج هذا البحث هو أن واقع تعلم مهارات الاستماع في قسم تعليم اللغة العربية في جامعة كياهي عبد الله فقيه لا يسير على النحو الأمثل. ويمكن التأكد على ذلك من خلال عدم توفر مواد تعليمية خاصة لتعلم مهارات الاستماع، مما أدى إلى ظهور العديد من المشكلات الأساسية بما في ذلك: الاستمرارية، والارتباطية، والأبعاد الثقافية، ودوران المحاضرين في تدريس هذه المادة. ويتوقع في النهاية أن يوفر هذا البحث آثارًا على أشخاص ذو شأن والمحاضرين لإعداد مواد

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تعليمية لمهارات الاستماع بشكل مباشر والتي تم تصميمها بناءً على احتياجات الطلبة بحيث إنها قادرة على تجسيد رؤية الجامعة ورسالتها السامية.

الكلمات الرئيسة: مواد دراسية، مهارة الاستماع، تعليم اللغة العربية، المعهد الإسلامي.

Introduction

In order to make Arabic language teaching and learning activities successful in higher education, the role of teaching materials cannot be underestimated,[1,2] because it is one of the three pillars that must be present during the learning process.[3] Therefore, teaching materials are like spirits for teachers when they want to convey information to students in a particular learning system.

Teaching any language skill, such as listening skills, cannot be separated from its own content, starting from determining learning approaches, methods, media and selecting appropriate and suitable content, which in turn is expected to increase the desired academic achievement. Therefore, in order for the learning process to be orderly and away from randomness and confusion, the learning process must depend on certain contents that regulate its operations so that it is possible to achieve the desired goals.[4] This is in line with Ainin's opinion which explains that a teacher's professionalism is based on his ability to develop academic material and other related matters that he produces directly.[5]

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[1] Phuangphet Tonawanik and Nawapun Donavanik, "Teaching Materials: Adopting and Adapting," *Journal of Suvarnabhumi Institute of Technology (Humanities and Social Sciences)* 5, no. 2 (2019): 635–48, https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/svittj/article/view/234088.

[2] Brian Tomlinson, *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023).

[3] Muh Sabilar Rosyad, "Idealitas Dan Desain Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Arab," *JALIE; Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education* 4, no. 02 (2020): 300–314, https://doi.org/10.33754/jalie.v4i02.289.

[4] Hidayah Ibrahim al-Syaikh Ali, "Istirātijiyyah Muqtaraḥah Fī Ḍau'i Al-Madkhal Al-Tawāṣulī Li Tanmiyah Mahārāt Al-Fahm Al-Sam`ī Ladā Dārisī Al-Lughah Al-`Arabiyyah Al-Nāthiqīn Bi Ghairiha," *Majallah Al-`Ulūm Al-Insāniyyah Wa Al-Ijtimā`iyyah*, no. 24 (2020): 1–24.

[5] Moh Ainin, "Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Berbasis Kompetensi Dan Kontesktual," *Jurnal Bahasa Dan Seni* 1, no. 1 (2007): 110–25.

This research began with an exploratory study at the Arabic Language Education Department of Abdullah Faqih Islamic University, especially in the process of learning listening skills. It should be noted that the learning of listening skills in the Arabic Language Education Department has not achieved the desired goals, so it seems that *Maharah Istima'* are the most neglected language art in its development and teaching.[6]

The initial study of this research revealed at the outset that one of the most prominent reasons for this reality is the lack of availability of teaching materials that can be relied upon to teach language skills in general and listening skills in particular. These teaching materials have not been determined by the study program or even the university, but rather by each lecturer and their efforts independently. It is up to them to assign and select materials. There is no doubt that teaching materials play an important role in completing the process of learning listening skills in particular.

This is in line with the opinion of Umi Hanifa who views that teaching materials or textbooks act as the most important factor that supports the completion of the teaching and learning process in order to achieve the goals of learning Arabic.[7] Muhammad Zaki also added about the importance of designing teaching materials specifically for

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[6] In the last twenty years, interest in listening skills has begun to increase along with the development of technology, this can be seen from the availability of many original teaching materials that are full of linguistic content in the form of audio and visual materials simultaneously and ready to use, as well as many studies showing an increase in interest related to this study. Although listening skills play an important role in language acquisition and learning, they have long been neglected and forgotten. For More, Look at: (Khaled Abu Amsyah, et al. *"Al-Dalīl Al-Tadrībī fī Tadrīs Mahārāt Al-Lughah Al-`Arabiya wa Anāshirihā li Al-Nāthiqīn bi Ghairihā Al-Naẓariyyah wa Al-Taṭbīq". Mamlakah Arabiyah Saudia: Majma' Al-Malik Abdullah Al-Daulī li Khidmah Al-Lughah Al-Arabiya, 2017), 173."*

[7] Umi Hanifah, "Pentingnya Buku Ajar Yang Berkualitas Dalam Meningkatkan Efektivitas Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab," *Jurnal At-Tajdid* 3, no. 1 (2014): 99–121.

certain language skills.[8] This emphasized the urgency of providing independent listening skills teaching materials that are in harmony with the students' environment, or what he called educational unit-based learning.[9]

As we know that Arabic has four skills, starting from listening, speaking, reading, and ending with writing, therefore listening is considered the first skill or first rank.[10,11] This priority is determined by the nature of the language, whatever the language, because students cannot learn other skills unless the listening process has preceded them.[12] Therefore, when students have mastered listening skills, this leads them to think about what they hear, speak in *Fusha* Arabic, read critically, and write clearly and logically.

Learning listening skills as a course must be given at the beginning of the semester before students learn other language skills. This is in line with the hierarchy of learning language skills. In this case, the famous English linguist L.G. Alexander thought: "Nothing should be spoken before it has been heard; Nothing should be read before it has been spoken; and Nothing should be written before it has been read".[13]

However, from a communicative theory perspective, it is deemed necessary to study productive and receptive skills simultaneously, such as the *Istima'-Kalam* course. Therefore, a

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[8] Mohamamad Zaki, "Urgensi Bahan Ajar Bahasa Arab Sebagai Penentu Dalam Proses Belajar Mengajar," *Al-Af'idah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Pengajarannya* 5, no. 1 (2021): 93, https://doi.org/10.52266/al-afidah.v6i1.893.

[9] Mochamad Syaifudin, "Desain Materi Ajar Keterampilan Menyimak (Penelitian Pengembangan Di MA Darut Taqwa Ngoro Mojokerto," *QUDWATUNA* 2, no. 1 (2019): 108–25.

[10] Feruza Odilovna Djabbarova, "Modern Methods of Teaching Listening Skills," *Science and Education*, 2020, https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/modern-methods-of-teaching-listening-skills.

[11] Nobuko Osada, "Listening Comprehension Research: A Brief Review of the Past Thirty Years," *Dialogue* 3, no. 1 (2004): 53–66.

[12] Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1978), 546.

[13] Yayan Yu, "Problems in and Solutions to Oral English Teaching in Rural Middle School-A Case Study in ZhaoCheng Middle School," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 10, no. 2 (2019): 372–82, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1002.20.

person's ability to speak is determined by his ability to listen,[14] as well as his reading and writing skills, both of which contribute to each other. In this case, Palmer believes that spoken Arabic must be integrated with the curriculum, which is realized through teaching materials, so that learning Arabic language skills becomes learning that is integrated with each other.[15]

In the case of non-pesantren islamic universities, language skills learning will of course be carried out as in general. However, at pesantren-based universities, Arabic language learning which focuses on mastering language skills based on communicative theory (*Istima', Kalam, Qira'ah, Kitabah*) simultaneously still needs to be studied further in depth. This is because Islamic boarding school culture is very strong with mastery of the Islamic texts written (*Kitab Kuning*) by ulama through reading skills using the *Qawaid Tarjamah* approach.[16] Kassem also found that there was a main emphasis on grammar and vocabulary rather than language skills in Arabic books. And in these four language skills, more emphasis is placed on reading and writing skills than listening and speaking skills.[17]

Research regarding teaching materials for Arabic language skills generally and listening skills specially is nothing new. This is in line with what Taha said in his study that until now the practice of

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[14] Julie Anne Wilson, "A Program To Develop the Listening and Speaking Skills of Children in a First Grade Classroom." (United State of America: ERIC, 1997), https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED415566.

[15] Jeremy Palmer, "Arabic Diglossia: Teaching Only the Standard Variety Is a Disservice to Students," *Journal of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching* 14 (2007): 111–22, https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/AZSLAT/article/view/21267/20847.

[16] Mohammad Makinuddin, "Pemerolehan Bahasa Arab Melalui Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning Di Pesantren Indonesia," *JALIE; Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (2022): 213–30, https://doi.org/10.33754/jalie.v6i2.601.

[17] Kassem M Wahba, "The Current Trends in Arabic Language Teaching Materials: Description and Analysis (< Special Feature> Teaching and Learning Arabic)," *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies* 31, no. 2 (2016): 83–113, https://doi.org/10.24498/ajames.31.2_83.

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teaching Arabic remains tied to textbook teaching.[18] There are several previous studies related to the use of Arabic language skills teaching materials at the higher education level, including a study by Ahmad Yani, et al. who concluded that Arabic language teaching materials at universities which are equipped with various teaching aids (audio visuals) are very interesting to use in the learning process, because of their perfection, development, and increased effectiveness. [19] Syuhada' also added that the preparation of teaching materials plays an important role in accommodating multicultural learning needs at PTKIN.[20] In conclusion, teaching materials can support the mastery of Arabic language skills and language elements, including vocabulary (*mufradat*) which is considered the main asset in learning Arabic.[21]

Ritonga, et al. in their findings stated that the Arabic language teaching materials used in Islamic universities need to be reconstructed in accordance with the vision and mission of Islamic universities.[22] This is because each university has its own unique curriculum which is tailored to its vision and mission.[23] Likewise,

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[18] Hanada Taha-Thomure, "The Status of Arabic Language Teaching Today," *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues* 1, no. 3 (2008): 186–92, https://doi.org/10.1108/17537980810909805.

[19] Achmad Yani and Siti Sara Binti Haji Ahmad, "The Instructional Materials of the Arabic Language Teaching for Non-Arabic Speakers in the Republic of Indonesia: A Typical Study of the State University of Malang, Indonesia," *European Journal of Education Studies* 5, no. 6 (2018): 83–94, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1488655.

[20] Syuhadak Syuhadak, Danial Hilmi, and Inayatur Rosyidah, "Arabic Language Learning with Multicultural Perspective at State Islamic Universities in East Java," *LISANIA: Journal of Arabic Education and Literature* 5, no. 2 (2021): 129–43, doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.18326/lisania.v5i2.129-143.

[21] Iffat Maimunah, Sutaman Sutaman, and Zubaidah Zubaidah, "Philosophical Studies on Arabic Learning Problems of University Students," in *4th Annual International Conference on Language, Literature and Media (AICOLLIM 2022)* (Atlantis Press, 2023), 431–41, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-002-2_41.

[22] Mahyudin Ritonga, Hendro Widodo, and Talqis Nurdianto, "Arabic Language Learning Reconstruction as a Response to Strengthen Al-Islam Studies at Higher Education," *Studies at Higher Education (January 23, 2021). International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* 10, no. 1 (2021): 355–63, https://ssrn.com/abstract=3791177.

[23] Khusnul Khitom and Taufik Taufik, "Kurikulum Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Perguruan Tinggi Keislaman Islam Negeri (PTKIN)," *TADRIS AL-ARABIYAT:*

some teaching materials used in universities still adopt books from the Middle East, which in their use creates a gap in the achievement of Arabic language skills for beginners in Indonesia. [24] This is supported by Yayan Nurbayan's initial findings which state that there is a scarcity of Arabic textbooks used at Islamic Universities, so it is necessary to prepare teaching materials independently that are integrated in Islamic universities.[25] Muhammad Thohir, et al. argues in the initial hypothesis that in the current era of digitalization, Arabic electronic textbooks are an important tool that supports the practical aspects of teaching Arabic as a foreign language (TAFL) in higher education.[26]

Welcoming the Era of Society 5.0, the use of Arabic language teaching materials in higher education should not only be limited to textbooks but should be varied according to the demands of the times and human resource needs. This can be seen in the Arabic language learning process at the State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah and the State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim.[27] Thus, it is hoped that Arabic language teaching materials used in teaching and classroom activities at universities are helpful for students to

Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan Bahasa Arab 3, no. 1 (2023): 28–44, https://doi.org/10.30739/arabiyat.v3i1.1766.

[24] Puti Zulharby, Yumna Rasyid, and Nuruddin Nuruddin, "The Characteristics of Teaching Material Arabic Speaking Skills in Higher Education," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 11, no. 2 (2019): 194–213, https://doi.org/10.24042/albayan.v11i2.5175.

[25] Yayan Nurbayan, "Elaboration of Integrated Arabic Lesson for Increasing Expertness of Arabic Mastery of Islamic University Students," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 8, no. 4 (2014): 327–37, https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v8i4.380.

[26] Muhammad Thohir, Mohammad Kurjum, and Abdul Muhid, "Design and Discourse of Modern Standard Arabic E-Textbook," *LITERA* 19, no. 1 (2020): 1–20, 10.21831/ltr.v19i1.28901.

[27] Wati Susiawati, "Arabic Learning Styles at State Islamic Universities in the Society Era 5.0," *Arabi: Journal of Arabic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2023): 56–66, https://doi.org/10.24865/ajas.v8i1.594.

develop communicative competence in Arabic, and not vice versa as found by Bader and Mohammad.[28]

From the brief explanation above, it is clear that the position of this article is to enrich and strengthen the findings on the use of Arabic language teaching materials in Islamic universities. Thus, the novelty and scientific contribution of this research lies in the specifications for the use of Arabic language teaching materials in listening skills, in addition to the unique nature of the research object, namely pesantren-based university in East Java. These two things have not yet been revealed and studied specifically and in depth at the same time.

Based on the explanation above, this research will try to reveal in detail the reality of learning Arabic listening skills at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University which is under the auspices of the Mambaus Solihin Islamic boarding school foundation. The reality above consists of the position of listening skills courses, distribution of lecturer schedules, learning objectives, assigned credit weights, teaching materials and topics of material taught. learning methods and media, types of evaluation, obstacles faced and analysis of student-based needs.

Method

Based on the object studied, this research is classified into a type of qualitative research with a case study approach, which is a series of scientific activities carried out intensively, in detail and in depth about a program, event and activity, both at the individual level, a group of people, institutions, or organizations to gain in-depth knowledge about the event.[29] And because the case study departs from actual state of affairs or situation,[30] so the series of processes in this research are case selection, data collection, data analysis, improvement, and report writing.

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[28] Bader Dweik and Mohammad Al-Shallakh, "Teaching Arabic for Non-Natives in Jordanian Public Universities: Difficulties and Solutions," *American Journal of Educational Science* 1, no. 3 (2015): 52–59, http://www.aiscience.org/journal/paperInfo/ajes?paperId=876.

[29] Mudjia Rahardjo, "Studi Kasus Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Konsep Dan Prosedurnya," 2017.

[30] Bent Flyvbjerg, "Case Study," The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research 4 (2011): 301–16.

This research uses data collection methods through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.[31] The data sources needed in this research are primary data sources generated from stakeholders, lecturers who taught *Maharah Istima'* courses in the last four years, and some students who are currently taking *Maharah Istima'* courses, as well as several samples of teaching materials used in learning *Maharah Istima'*. The resulting data is in the form of a descriptive narrative or description, not a calculation of numbers or figures that can be studied through statistical procedures. However, the use of numbers in this research is not a problem, because what is important is how and where the numbers are used, so that they are not confused with the use of numbers in mixed and quantitative research methodologies.[32,33] The researchers himself is the key instrument,[34] so their selves can measure the accuracy and adequacy of the data and when data collection should end.

To determine the level of validity of the data, researchers used data credibility testing techniques by extending observations, increasing persistence in research, and triangulating sources. Likewise, the dependability test technique is carried out by auditing

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[31] Gary Thomas, "How to Do Your Case Study," How to Do Your Case Study, 2021, 1–320.

[32] Shylet Yvonne Chivanga, "Qualitative Research Methodology and Numbers," Journal of Social Sciences 47, no. 2 (2016): 119–22, https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2016.11893551.

[33] Bertrum H MacDonald, "When Numbers Alone Are Not Enough: Applications of Qualitative Methodologies," *Feliciter; Canadian Library Association* 1 (2007): 26–29, https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/10236/Feliciter_MacDonald.pdf?sequence=1.

[34] Marie Poggenpoel and Chris Myburgh, "The Researcher as Research Instrument in Educational Research: A Possible Threat to Trustworthiness?(A: Research_instrument)," *Education* 124, no. 2 (2003): 418–23.

the entire research process by the supervisory board.[35,36] The data obtained by researchers will then be analysed using interactive analysis techniques in the style of Miles and Huberman, which includes data collection, data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions.[37]

Result and Discussion

Distribution of Course Groups at Pesantren-Based University

In Indonesia, learning Arabic at state and private Islamic universities is an absolute thing that must be carried out in the teaching and learning process during one lecture period. This makes Arabic an official part of the group of compulsory subjects, so that it is included in the semester credit unit system.[38] This is found at the Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang, hereinafter referred to as curriculum integration between institutions in higher education as discussed in the research of Syaiful Mushtofa, et al.[39]

According to Bahruddin, this integrated curriculum contributes to the acceleration of institutional development and internationalization. Moreover, it also increases the competence of human resources.[40] In the case of private Islamic universities which manage Arabic language education study programs within them, apart from Arabic as a compulsory subject which has been determined by

[35] M Isabel López, M Pilar Callao, and Itziar Ruisánchez, "A Tutorial on the Validation of Qualitative Methods: From the Univariate to the Multivariate Approach," *Analytica Chimica Acta* 891 (2015): 62–72, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aca.2015.06.032.

[36] Priscilla M Pyett, "Validation of Qualitative Research in the 'Real World,'" *Qualitative Health Research* 13, no. 8 (2003): 1170–79, https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732303255686.

[37] Matthew B Miles and A Michael Huberman, Analyse Des Données Qualitatives (De Boeck Supérieur, 2003).

[38] https://simpuh.kemenag.go.id/regulasi/kepmendikbud_056_94.pdf

[39] Syaiful Mustofa, Suci Ramadhanti Febriani, and Faisal Mahmoud Ibrahim, "The Improvement of Arabic Language Learning Program in Realizing the World Class University," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 13, no. 1 (2021): 53–72, https://doi.org/10.24042/albayan.v13i1.7705.

[40] Zulfi Mubaraq et al., "Taṭbīq Al-Manhaj Al-Takāmuly Fī Mu'assasāt Al-Ta'līm Al-'Āly," *Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 20, no. 1 (2022): 15–32, https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v1i1.3701.
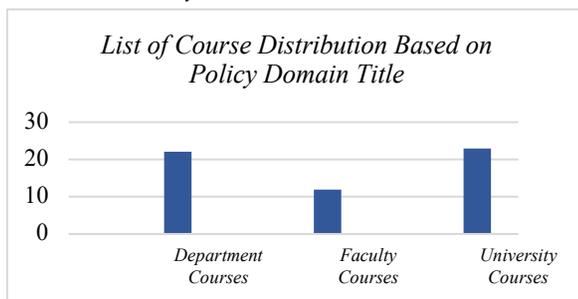
the Ministry of Religion through representatives of the Coordinator of Private Islamic Religious Universities (*KOPERTAIS*), Arabic is also taught in more detail and is divided into several credits, starting from aspects of the four skills, language elements, and linguistics with various branches such as pure, interdisciplinary and applied linguistics.

Kiai Abdullah Faqih University defines and groups different types of courses from each other. There are four groups of courses organized by him, including: General Courses (MKU), Special Courses (MKK), Basic and Skills Courses (MKDK) and Pesantren Courses (MKP) which focus on studying *turast* books according to the type of course. Therefore, all study programs and faculties under this university accommodate the distribution of courses based on these groupings.

The group of special courses at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University is a distribution of courses that are characterized by study programs, while general courses are characterized by faculties. The groups of basic and skill courses, as well as Islamic boarding school courses, are managed directly by the university, guided by the decisions of the Minister of Religion and the policies of Islamic boarding school leaders. Pesantren courses are among the core subjects considered here. Therefore, researchers can call it a local or regional curriculum.

Pesantren courses that study the *turast* books play an important role in creating advantages or characteristics that may not be found or possessed by other Islamic universities in Indonesia. Perhaps this is one of the most important findings of researchers regarding the implementation of Islamic boarding school course groups by stakeholders in the Kiai Abdullah Faqih University.

Based on these criteria, researchers tried to group the distribution of courses in Arabic language education study programs at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University based on the realm of authority of policy makers as seen in the diagram below:

List of Course Distribution Based on Policy Domain Title

30		
20		
10		
0		
Department Courses	*Faculty Courses*	*University Courses*

Picture 1

Format of Listening Skills Courses and Its Position at Pesantren-Based University

The Arabic Language Education Department at Abdullah Faqih University has been holding language skills courses since the first semester. This means that listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are treated as subjects for students in the first academic year. Arabic language skills courses are divided into two consecutive semesters, for example *Maharah Istima'* 1 for the first semester and *Maharah Istima'* 2 for the second semester. However, in previous years, the *Maharah Kitabah* 1 and 2 courses were taught in the second academic year because they were considered to be courses that required more effort and sufficient linguistic skills, so they could not be easily done by students in the first year. This is in accordance with what Islamiyati expressed in her research, where she stated that writing skills are one of the most difficult language skills.[41]

Even though writing skills occupy the last line in language learning because they require sufficient linguistic capital compared to other language skills, listening skills cannot be considered easy to learn and teach. This is proven by the majority of student portfolio grades which are still below the average set by the university. In addition to the lack of varied methodologies and media which are able to attract the attention and focus of students, as well as the selection of themes or topics and various exercises suggested to facilitate the acquisition of listening skills practice. Therefore, the researcher

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[41] Islamiati Islamiati, "Istirātījiyyat Ta`līm Mahārat Kitābah Al-Lughah Al-`Arabiyyah," *Lisaanuna Talim Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 1 (2021): 145–55, https://doi.org/10.15548/lisaanuna.v4i1.3255.

concluded that learning listening skills is not easy because students are in the initial phase of language learning through the listening process. They start from point zero, namely ignorance of the language to the level of knowing the language. This case of the difficulty of the teaching and learning process of listening skills is in line with Walker and Alzamil's research.[42,43]

As is known, the language acquisition process is first achieved through listening skills. This is because they will have difficulty mastering other language skills before they have learned listening skills.[44] Departing from this urgency, the Arabic language education study program at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University implemented a learning process for two semesters which was charged to first year students. Thus, the position of *Maharah Istima'* in the Arabic language education study program is very important, so it has been determined that the credit unit for listening skills courses in the Arabic Language Education Department is four credits, with the division of *Maharah Istima'* 1 being two credits as well as *Maharah Istima'* 2 being two credits as well. This is in line with the contents of the curriculum document based on the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) at the Arabic Language Education Department of Abdullah Faqih Islamic University.[45]

The determination of four credits of listening skills courses in the Arabic language education study program at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University cannot be assumed to be sufficient and very attentive to

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[42] Natasha Walker, "Listening: The Most Difficult Skill to Teach," Encuentro 23, no. 1 (2014): 167–75.

[43] Jwahir Alzamil, "Listening Skills: Important but Difficult to Learn," Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume 12, no. 3 (2021): 366–74, http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3952957.

[44] Khaldun, Muqaddimah, 546.

[45] Tim penyusun kurikulum. *Dokumen Kurikulum Berbasis Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia (KKNI) Dan Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi (SNPT) Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Fakultas Tarbiyah Institut Keislaman Abdullah Faqih* (Gresik: INKAFA Press 2018), 34.

the learning of this receptive skill. This is considered normal because several other universities set listening skills courses with a weight of four credits as well. However, this can be considered a small amount because there are other universities that assign listening skills courses with more weight with six credits.[46]

Learning Arabic Listening Skills at Pesantren-Based University

Learning listening skills in the Arabic language education study program at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University is carried out by several lecturers, namely more than one lecturer in one subject and alternately in each semester or even period or academic year. This has an impact on the learning material which consists of topics and linguistic content becoming unsustainable between *Maharah Istima'* 1 and *Maharah Istima'* 2 materials, so that the listening competence that has been given to students in the previous semester or period is different from the competence that will be given to students in present time. Therefore, the phenomenon of learning listening skills has ignored the element of logical continuity, which is considered one of the main characteristics of good teaching materials.

Considering the importance of the element of continuity in subjects, linking previous learning with new topics is deemed necessary in all aspects and teaching and learning processes, especially in the subject of Arabic listening skills. This is in line with what was stated by the education syllabus development team at Islamic Teacher Training College Gontor.[47] Therefore, the continuity of subjects plays an important role in the completion of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, because subjects have a close relationship between educational elements and other elements, as stated in Marja and Yusharto's research.[48]

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[46] Tim Penyusun Kurikulum. *Katalog Jurusan Sastra Arab, Edisi 2020* (Malang: Fakultas Sastra Universitas Negeri Malang, 2020). 11.

[47] Qism al-Manhaj al-Dirasi. *al-Tarbiyah al-Amaliyah fi al-Tadris Muqarra li al-Shaf al-Sadis; Thab'ah Mazidah Munaqqaha* (Ponorogo: Darussalam Pres, 2007), 30.

[48] Marja Sinurat and Yusharto Huntoyungo, "Analisis Kesinambungan Mata Kuliah Kemapongprajaan," *TRANSFORMASI: Jurnal Manajemen Pemerintahan*, 2017, 199–208, https://doi.org/10.33701/jt.v8i2.620.

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with lecturers who have taught listening skills courses, it can be seen that the majority of them use various types of methods to teach listening skills, including the audio-oral method, question and answer method, lecture method, discussion method, project-based methods, and methods based on language games. All of these methods are not used by all lecturers, but some of them use two to three types of methods, there are even some who are dominant with only one type of method in teaching Arabic listening skills. The use of several of these methods can be grouped based on lecturers who teach listening skills courses as in the following diagram:
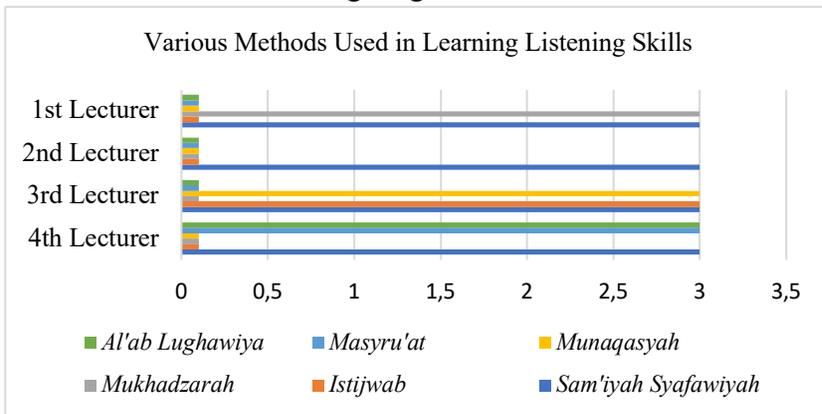
Lecturers also have different points of view in designing evaluations in learning listening skills. Some are of the view that the assessment of listening skills learning should be carried out at the end of all learning sessions through mid-term and final exams. Some believe that the assessment should be carried out every week or at every class meeting, so that the assessment is more authentic and real. This type of assessment assumes that the mid-term and final exam assessments cannot be a guarantee of passing a course, but rather the overall assessment that students get while attending lectures.

It doesn't stop there, there are other lecturers who are of the opinion that the learning of listening skills and the evaluations produced in each meeting are just practice and not a specific

assessment, because the assessment itself is a mid-semester and final exam which aims to measure students' abilities and academic achievements. This view tries to see that assessment in learning listening skills cannot be carried out in every learning session but may be carried out once every two or even three weeks. This aims to ensure that students do not get bored and stressed when participating in the learning process in the classroom. This can be seen in several styles and models of evaluation or assessment applied by several lecturers as shown in the following diagram:

Format for Assessment and Evaluation of Listening Skills Courses
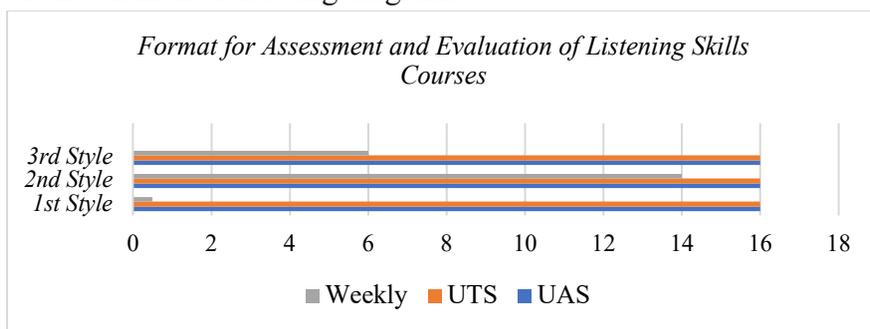
From the case above, the researcher concludes that learning management and assessment or evaluation formats are not uniform among lecturers, so it is estimated that certain types of assessment are difficult for one lecturer or easier for other lecturers. Therefore, in connection with this, the researcher suggests developing an integrated teaching material design that includes comprehensive instruction in learning listening skills, starting from learning objectives, methodology, content, media, as well as types of exercises and evaluations, even language games that support listening skill improvement. Thus, even though the lecturer changes or even differs in the same course, the direction and weight of learning still remains the same, intact and harmonious.

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that although their objectives are different, the learning objectives are still related to the main objectives in teaching listening skills in general, such as empowering vocabulary both actively and passively, understanding the structure, sentences and expressions found in listening texts, understanding the main idea or main message in listening texts, as well as developing students' ability to listen to

simple listening texts by understanding the context. All of these types aim to improve students' listening skills in a better direction. According to Al-Naqah, some of the learning objectives above have accommodated some of the general objectives of learning Arabic listening skills for non-native speakers.[49]

Teaching Materials for Listening Skills at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University

Learning listening skills so far does not have special teaching materials but has adopted several contemporary Arabic language learning books for foreign speakers which combine four language skills and their elements into one. Likewise, there are some teaching materials designed by lecturers based on several video clips obtained from various sites on the internet. These teaching materials are not prepared for one semester or throughout the school year but are limited to a few learning sessions. This can of course cause the learning process to become disorganized and vulnerable to irregularities and confusion, as well as causing the desired goals not to be achieved.[50] Teaching materials or textbooks are one of the most important pillars in the teaching and learning process which functions as a learning resource for lecturers and students. Therefore, the teaching and learning process, whatever the type and model, is very dependent on teaching materials.[51]

Among the teaching materials most frequently used in learning listening skills in the Arabic language education study program at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University are the *Al-Arabiya Baina Yadaik*

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[49] Maḥmûd Kâmil Al-Nâqah, *Ta'lim Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyyah Li Al-Naṭiqin Bi Lughât Ukhrâ; Ususuhu Madâkhiluhu Wa Ṭuruq Tadrîsihi* (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Jami'ah Umm Al-Qura, 1985), 124.

[50] Ali, "Istirātijiyyah Muqtaraḥah Fī Ḍau'i Al-Madkhal Al-Tawāṣulī Li Tanmiyah Mahārāt Al-Fahm Al-Sam`ī Ladā Dārisī Al-Lughah Al-`Arabiyyah Al-Nāthiqīn Bi Ghairiha," 52.

[51] Abdur Rohman bin Ibrahim Fauzan, *I'dād Mawād Ta'līm Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyyah Li-Ghairi Al-Nātiqin Bihā* (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2007), 2.

series, the *Al-Arabiya Li Al-Nasyi'in* series, the *Al-Arabiya Li Al-Alam* series, the *Al-Arabiya Li Al-Hayat* series, *Al-Arabiya Li Aghrad Khassah*, and several material distributions that have been designed by lecturers independently. Furthermore, it becomes clear that the teaching materials used by some lecturers come from Arab countries and are prepared by native speakers. The use of these teaching materials leaves several problems, including differences in cultural elements and the student's environment, while attention to cultural dimensions in preparing learning teaching materials is a must. This is because the two are interrelated and language is a product of a culture.[52]

In terms of themes and topics, the listening skills learning material focuses on Islamic history and civilization, social matters, religious lectures, and other Islamic matters. These themes and topics did not just appear but started from the textbook series used as well as some projects prepared by some lecturers which were adopted from YouTube. This phenomenon is certainly not in line with the cultural aspect which is considered to be one of the most important foundations that a lecturer must rely on in formulating listening material in the Arabic Language Education Department, because the cultural dimensions contained in textbooks should be contextualized by students.

This is intended so that the material can be diversified so that it can meet the broad needs of students, and so that the material is appropriate to their psychological and cultural characteristics,[53] so that they are able to differentiate between what should be presented to children, what should be presented to adults,[54] and what should be presented to native speakers and non-native speakers such as from Indonesia.

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[52] Fathi Ali Yunus and Muhammad Abd Rauf Al-Syaikh, *Al-Marja' Fī Ta'līm Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyyah Li Al-Ajānib Min AL-Nadzariyyah Ila Al-Tatbīq* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2003), 125.

[53] Nâshir 'Abdullah Al-Ghâlî and 'Abdul Ḥâmid 'Abdullah, *Asâs I'dâd Al-Kutub Al-Ta'limiyyah Li Ghayri Al-Naṭiqîn Bihâ* (Riyadh: Dar al-Ghali, 1991), 28.

[54] Mahmoud Kamil Al-Naqah and Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah, *Tharāiq Tadrīs Al-Lughah Al-Arabiya Li Ghair Al-Nāthiqīn Bihā* (Mesir: Mansyurat al-Munadzamah al-Islamiah li al-Tarbiyah wa al-Ulum wa al-Tsaqafah, 2003), 28.

The following is a display of several textbooks used in learning listening skills along with several topics or themes that are chosen by lecturers in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.
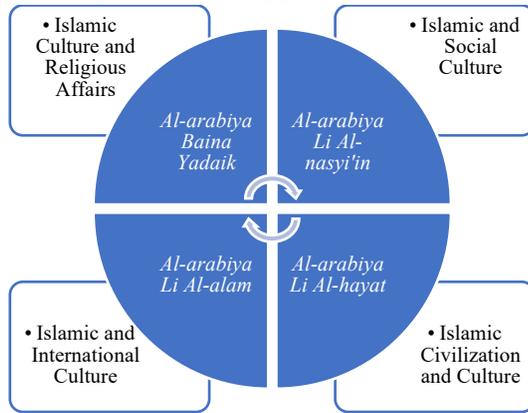
The teaching materials that one of the lecturers started to develop were taken from Arabic books for special purposes and several videos downloaded from sites on the internet such as YouTube. The topics of choice in this case are about Islamic culture, local culture and life situations. However, it is very unfortunate because the teaching materials developed are not sufficient to be used for one semester. Therefore, it is hoped that the listening skills material in the future will be of higher quality, because all of its content touches the psychological and sociological (cultural) dimensions of students simultaneously, so that the teaching material is not only able to improve students' listening skills but is also able to overcome individual differences that occur between them.

The forms of exercise questions used by lecturers are also very diverse and different from one another. Some of them use summarizing ideas and thoughts in the listening text, narrative questions, descriptive questions, multiple choice, choosing right or wrong, rewriting statements in the listening text. The diagram below will try to classify various types of exercise questions based on their use by lecturers who teach listening skills courses.

Exercise Question Models Used in Listening Skills Learning
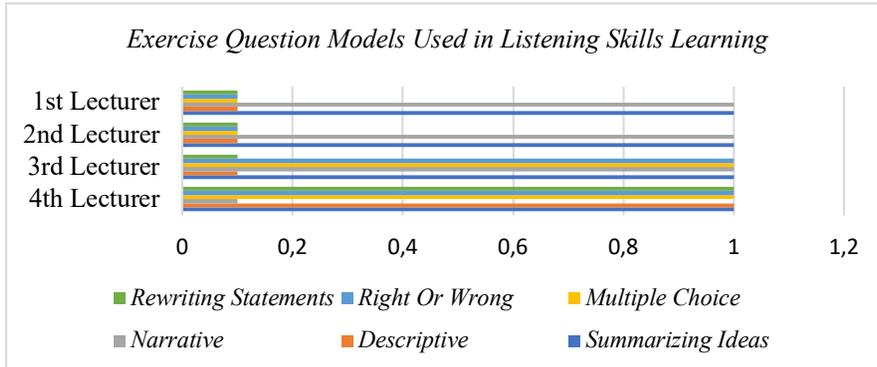
Based on the brief explanation above, researchers see that the use of three to four different learning methods and exercises is not enough to improve students' abilities in listening skills. Therefore, researchers suggest using eclectic methods during the teaching and learning process.

Problems and Solutions for Learning Listening Skills from a Student's Perspective

Most students who are taking listening skills courses are faced with several problems while in lecture classes. Based on the results of in-depth interviews with several male and female students, the researchers concluded that these various problems can be divided into two main things, namely linguistic and non-linguistic problems. Among the linguistic problems that are most visible is the language used in teaching materials, where the language of listening skills texts is considered very easy by some students and very difficult for others. Likewise, linguistic problems are also found on the vocabulary side, where the language contained in teaching materials including vocabulary, terms and expressions is less familiar and rarely used among students.

Meanwhile, the most prominent non-linguistic problems are caused by several things, including academic teaching materials. This means that the listening material in the Arabic language education department at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University is not based on a particular book, so the teaching and learning process depends on the individual teachers and their independent efforts. The second thing is the change of lecturers, where learning Arabic language skills in general and listening skills in particular is carried out by several

lecturers who differ from each other in the formulation of learning objectives, materials, competency standards, methods, media and evaluation models.

The third thing is the systematicity of teaching materials, where the topic and content of lessons do not pay attention to the dimension of continuity, so that when students finish the first listening skills course and start moving on to the second listening skills course, they receive new material that has nothing to do with the previous material. This could also be caused by changes in the role of lecturers in current and previous courses. The last one is interactive text, where the majority of students pay less attention and focus on the subject because the methods and media used are considered less attractive to students, as well as the content of the material studied by students in class is very different from the linguistic activities experienced directly in real life, so that students are unable to transfer the receptive skills they have acquired through proper language practice.

Based on the existing problems in learning listening skills in the Arabic language education department, the researcher continued the interview process with the aim of describing the ideal and expected listening skills learning activities, in addition to providing perceptions and suggestions regarding the content of the recommended teaching materials. This is based on an analysis of student needs in the teaching and learning process of listening skills. The results of these findings conclude the importance of designing teaching materials for listening skills based on contextual learning.

A learning model that encourages students to link the learning process in class with real activities experienced by students outside the classroom, [55], [56] so that students are expected to be more

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[55] Elaine B Johnson, *Contextual Teaching and Learning: What It Is and Why It's Here to Stay* (Corwin Press, 2002).

[56] Yeni Ghonivita et al., "Improving Students' Listening Skill and Vocabulary Masteryn through Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) by Using Online

enthusiastic during the learning process which is then expected to increase their listening skills in Arabic.

The teaching materials developed must then be rich in a variety of learning methods, applied using contemporary media that are easily accessible to students, adopt interesting topics that are close to the academic and social environment, arranged sequentially from easy to difficult, present exercises that are proportional to the form of evaluation diverse, and maintain dimensions of individual differences related to the language competence of each student. All of this aims to create ideal listening skills teaching materials.[57,58]

Conclusion

The reality of learning listening skills in the Arabic language education study program at Kiai Abdullah Faqih University is still far from expectations which can be seen from several fundamental problems behind it. Therefore, the process of teaching and learning listening skills should have special teaching materials that are tailored to the needs of students. It will have implication to the student which they can be more focused and enthusiastic in participating in a series of learning activities. However, teaching materials designed based on needs analysis must be in line with the general objectives of learning Arabic listening skills, as well as paying attention to several principles in preparing good and ideal teaching materials.

Based on all these findings, the researcher appeals to lecturers and policy makers at relevant institutions to follow up on this research to create teaching materials that meet several of those criteria, so that the process of teaching and learning listening skills in the classroom becomes livelier and more meaningful, which in turn is expected to be able to increase students' competence in listening.

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[57] Tomlinson, *Developing Materials for Language Teaching.*

[58] Rosyad, "Idealitas Dan Desain Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Bahasa Arab."

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