

TEACHER STRATEGIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE ARABIC CURRICULUM AT PIONEER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Rafi Fitranur¹, Devira Saharani², Lu'lu Fakhira³, Maswani⁴

Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta¹²³⁴

rafi.nur23@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi guru dalam mengimplementasikan kurikulum bahasa Arab di SD Pioneer Depok, Jawa Barat. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh pentingnya pendidikan bahasa Arab di sekolah berbasis Islam serta kebutuhan akan pendekatan pedagogis yang efektif, mengingat kurikulum 'unik' yang digabungkan di SD Pioneer, yaitu: Tahfiz Al-Qur'an, konsep alam, dan pesantren. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi, mendeskripsikan, dan menganalisis strategi pengajaran, media, serta adaptasi terhadap karakteristik siswa. Metode yang dilakukan adalah kualitatif deskriptif melalui observasi langsung dan wawancara mendalam dengan kepala kurikulum serta guru bahasa Arab. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa SD Pioneer menerapkan strategi holistik dan inovatif, termasuk hari bahasa, hari wajib berbahasa Arab, mabit bahasa, serta penggunaan media Interaktif dan metode percakapan aktif di kelas. Sekolah ini juga adaptif terhadap Siswa berkebutuhan khusus dengan pembentukan kelompok belajar. Disimpulkan bahwa keberhasilan pembelajaran bahasa Arab di SD Pioneer berasal dari sinergi kurikulum, lingkungan imersif, dan pedagogi berpusat pada siswa dapat menciptakan Pengalaman belajar yang inspiratif dan efektif.

Kata Kunci: Strategi Guru, Kurikulum Bahasa Arab, SD Pioneer, Pembelajaran Aktif, Sekolah Alam

ABSTRACT

This research examines teachers' strategies in implementing the Arabic curriculum at Pioneer Elementary School in Depok, West Java. The background of this study is based on the importance of Arabic language education in Islamic-based schools as well as the need for an effective pedagogical approach, given the "unique" curriculum combined at Pioneer Elementary School, namely: Tahfiz Al-Qur'an, nature concept, and pesantren. The purpose of this study is to identify, describe, and analyse teaching strategies, media, as well as adaptations to student characteristics. The method used was descriptive qualitative through direct observation and in-depth interviews with the head of curriculum and Arabic language teachers. The results of this study show that Pioneer Elementary School implements holistic and innovative strategies, including language days, compulsory Arabic days, language mabit, as well as the use of Interactive media and active conversation methods in the classroom. The school is also adaptive to students with special needs by forming study groups. It is concluded that the success of Arabic learning at Pioneer Primary School comes from the synergy of curriculum, immersive environment, and student-centred pedagogy that can create an inspiring and effective learning experience.

Keywords: Teacher Strategy, Arabic Curriculum, Pioneer Primary School, Active Learning, Nature School

INTRODUCTION

Arabic language learning in Indonesia, which historically has played a central role in the religious context, is now increasingly recognised as an important competency on an international scale. However, significant challenges often arise in teaching methods, which are sometimes considered boring and uninteresting for students, especially at the primary

education level. In fact, at this level, the main focus should be on the gradual development of the four language skills, with an emphasis on listening (istima') and speaking (muhadatsah) as the main foundations. The limitations of conventional methods encourage the need for pedagogical innovation that can create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment.

A review of the literature shows that various studies conducted between 2010 and 2025 have identified several effective strategies to address this issue. First, the conversation or hiwar method is widely recommended because it has been proven to improve students' speaking skills (maharah al-kalam). Studies show that this method helps train students' tongues to become accustomed to dialogue, even with simple words, thereby improving their fluency and confidence. Second, the use of media and gamification has become an increasingly popular innovative approach. Learning media, as described in a study published in 2025, can accelerate understanding, make material easier to comprehend, and most importantly, capture students' attention. The concept of gamification through media such as board games has also proven effective in fostering interest in learning Arabic among students. In addition, other innovative methods recommended for children include games, songs, and peer-to-peer learning.

In this context, this study examines the case of SD Pioneer Depok, a school that combines an Islam-based and nature-based curriculum, which inherently requires adaptive and active learning strategies. Based on observations, the strategies implemented by this school, such as the vibrant 'language day' program, 'language retreats,' and the use of game-based media like cards, snakes and ladders, and Monopoly to enrich vocabulary, empirically align with current literature recommendations. This approach demonstrates that Arabic language learning is not isolated but is holistically integrated into the school's educational ecosystem, including the tahfidz curriculum and extracurricular activities, which systematically create a functional environment for language use. The success of this method also heavily depends on the role of teachers, who are not only curriculum implementers but also innovators capable of developing materials and adapting teaching methods to the characteristics of heterogeneous students, including those with special needs or hyperactivity.

Based on this background, this study aims to investigate in depth the implementation and effectiveness of Arabic language learning strategies at SD Pioneer Depok. Thus, the research questions in this study are (1) how Arabic language learning strategies are implemented by teachers at SD Pioneer Depok, and how these strategies adapt to the unique characteristics of the school as an Islamic and nature-based school; and (2) to what extent these strategies, such as the hiwar method and gamification, align with the principles of innovative and effective language learning as recommended in academic literature.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research type. This approach was chosen to describe in depth and thoroughly about the teacher's strategy in implementing Arabic language at Pioneer Depok Elementary School based on the results of observations that occurred in the field. In line with the opinion of L.j moleong, related to qualitative research is research that forces researchers to collect primary data in the field,

where in this case the author seeks the necessary information, in the form of written or oral questions and understandable behavior. (Moleong, L.J. 2017) Therefore, this approach is relevant to examine teaching strategies in the context of Islamic and nature-based education. This research was conducted at SD Pioneer Depok, West Java, an integrated Islamic school that implements a curriculum using a typical tahfiz-based method, nature application, and pesantren method. The time of this research was carried out in June 2025, The data collected was divided into three main methods, namely:

- A. Observation. The researcher directly observed the Arabic learning process inside and outside the classroom, including several activities related to Arabic. The observation was conducted in a participatory manner by recording the activities of teachers, students, and interactions during the learning process.
- B. Interview. Interviews were conducted with Arabic language teachers, the head of curriculum, and students in a structured manner, which aimed to explore the reasons for strategy selection, learning challenges, and expectations for Arabic language development at the school.
- C. Documentation. Documentation data is obtained from study guides, photos of activities, learning videos, and supporting instruments for student learning in the classroom. after collecting some of the supporting data, the next step is to reduce or select relevant data as a research topic which we will then explain.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Arabic Language Curriculum

According to Thu'aimah, the Arabic Language Curriculum is a systematically planned learning program, including cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills) learning experiences, both inside and outside school, under the guidance and responsibility of the school. (Yusnidar & Nurbayah, 2023, p. 6),

The perspective of design presents curriculum as the dynamic component of education with opportunities and possibilities for change, renewal and adaptation in policy, programs and practices appropriate to people's contexts. Curriculum is constituted with language in policy statements, syllabuses, programs, textbooks and tests. Teachers and students shape curriculum and are shaped by curriculum. (Mickan & Wallace, 2020, p. 3).

The Arabic language learning curriculum is a set of plans and learning experiences carried out by students under the guidance of the school, which aims to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values so that students are able to communicate in Arabic and understand Arabic culture. (Yusnidar & Nurbayah, 2023, p. 6)

The Arabic curriculum is a learning plan that is organized to improve all aspects of students' potential, including knowledge, attitudes, and abilities in speaking Arabic. The curriculum is not limited only to learning activities in the classroom, but also learning experiences outside the classroom organized by the school. In addition, the Arabic curriculum is flexible and relevant, which means it can adapt to the changes and needs of society and the times. The curriculum consists of a number of elements such as policies, teachers, students, syllabus and teaching materials, which at the same time also play a role in shaping the content and implementation of the curriculum itself.

Curriculum Implementation Theory

Implementation is defined as the execution of strategies, and the assignment of resources. Implementation is an important element in the planning process. (Rusydi Ananda, 2019). Wulandari (2020) also said that curriculum implementation is the implementation of policies, curriculum concepts and learning which aims to enable students to master their own competencies or abilities. (Dewi, 2020) The curriculum is implemented when the curriculum is used to achieve educational goals through specific teaching and learning activities at school. (Majid, 2014).

Curriculum implementation is not influenced by many variables that can affect its success. These factors include the readiness of teachers as the main implementers of the field, the availability of supporting facilities and infrastructure, the school environment, and support from the management and policies of educational institutions. According to Ornstein & Hunkins (2013), the success of curriculum implementation depends largely on how well the parties involved in the educational process communicate, cooperate and commit. To implement the curriculum well and meet students' needs, adaptive and participatory strategies must be implemented. These factors include teachers not fully understanding the content and objectives of the curriculum, lack of training, and discrepancies between the real situation in schools and central planning.

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), curriculum implementation refers to the implementation of educational plans in accordance with established guidelines. In other words, curriculum implementation does not only include the literal implementation of the curriculum, but also includes a review of all aspects that have been listed in the curriculum, such as learning objectives, materials, methods, evaluation, and other information that students want to include in their assignments.

Successful implementation is strongly influenced by teacher guidance, school administration, availability of facilities and infrastructure, and ongoing educational activities. The implementation involves various stakeholders, starting from the teacher as the main implementer, students as the object of learning, and the school environment as an incubator of the process. is strongly influenced by teacher guidance, school administration, availability of facilities and infrastructure, and ongoing educational activities. Therefore, implementation is not just mechanical, but also requires understanding, flexibility, and creativity so that the curriculum is able to meet the needs of students and is relevant to the local context and relevant to the school.

Arabic Language Learning Strategies

Arabic language learning strategy is a systematic effort in managing the teaching and learning process that includes planning approaches, selecting methods, and using appropriate techniques to achieve Arabic language skills that are active, productive, creative, and fun according to the needs of students and the learning context. (Gumiandari, 2021, hlm. 55)

Arabic learning strategies are of two types: direct and indirect, which are used according to the learners' absorption ability. Each strategy has advantages and disadvantages. Direct learning strategies have advantages in terms of ease of planning and implementation in the classroom, but have the disadvantage of not being able to foster learners' attitudes, critical thinking and group work. In contrast, indirect learning strategies

offer advantages, such as increasing understanding, encouraging creativity and social skills, increasing students' interest and curiosity, and improving comprehension. (Nur Syahid, 2020, pp. 98-99).

The Teacher's Role In Curriculum Implementation

The curriculum is a dynamic teaching and learning tool which is dynamic so it needs to be developed and assessed continuously in accordance with developments in the community. The role of the teacher in curriculum implementation, namely: a) teachers conduct discussions in the process of preparing lesson plans; b) teachers prepare lesson plans through appropriate steps; c) teachers carry out detailed learning in detail; d) the teacher as a facilitator; e) teachers provide character education; f) teachers guide students in learning according to with the scientific approach; g) the teacher chooses and use varied methods, media, and learning resources varied methods, media, and learning resources; h) teachers conduct authentic authentic assessment; i) teachers choose and use a variety of assessment techniques. (Andiyanto, 2017)

Because of their role as implementers of the curriculum, teachers must have the ability to implement it. The curriculum does not function as an educational tool and learning will not be effective without it. Specific duties of teachers include: 1) As an implementer, it is important for teachers to implement the existing curriculum. Here, only the policies of the curriculum makers are accepted by teachers. Teachers do not have the authority to determine the content or objectives of the curriculum. Their job is simply to implement the curriculum that has been designed. 2) As adaptors: Teachers do more than just implement the curriculum; they also serve as adapters of the curriculum to the characteristics and needs of the students and local needs. Teachers are given the ability to adapt the existing curriculum to school and local needs. 3) as study program researchers. This role is undertaken as part of teachers' professional responsibility to improve their performance as teachers. 4) Teachers as learning designers. This is part of teachers' professional responsibility to improve their performance as teachers. As professional teachers, they are responsible for determining the learning styles that students will engage in. Learning tools that are structured, practical, and applicable demonstrate learning design. (Syafriani et al., 2022).

Discussion

Pioneer Elementary School is an Islamic and nature-based elementary school located in Depok City, West Java. The school combines formal education (national curriculum) with Islamic education and a nature-based approach. The school's vision is "To be a leading school in Depok based on Islam and nature". In the field of Arabic language learning, this school places Arabic not only as a subject, but as part of the school curriculum that is favored by this school, The implementation of the Arabic curriculum in this school is also carried out through various creative and contextual strategies designed by teachers to make Arabic part of students' daily lives This can be seen from various special activity programs aimed at applying Arabic to students such as the existence of compulsory language days, language Mabit, and Arabic art performances, These strategies show that teachers do not only teach based on the syllabus, but also actively develop and apply the Arabic curriculum to make it more applicable and meaningful. The following is an explanation of some of the strategies

used by teachers in implementing the Arabic curriculum at Pioneer Depok Elementary School:

1. Mandatory Language Day. One of the main strategies implemented by Pioneer Elementary School teachers is the implementation of mandatory language days which are held twice a week. On that day, students are required to use Arabic in daily communication in the school environment when learning in class or outside the classroom, the teacher also makes a commitment with students, especially this application is in the upper grades which are in grades 5-6 in the form of punishment for those who do not speak Arabic on predetermined days in the form of depositing memorized mufrodat (vocabulary) with a set amount. Students' enthusiasm was also seen on that day because the teacher also gave examples of conversational sentences in Arabic when interacting with students. This program is also supported by a pleasant environment for students to be able to speak in Arabic such as the existence of some vocabulary that gives the meaning of the item or place, for example the word "الحمام" in front of the bathroom wall, which means the sentence in Arabic represents the meaning of the bathroom in Arabic and also the sentence "الديوان المدرسة" on the front door of the school office the sentence represents the meaning of the school office in Arabic so that there are several forms of Arabic sentences that are clearly exposed like that can make it easier for students, especially high school students who are required to speak, to easily remember some forms of Arabic vocabulary or sentences that will be used in conversations with fellow students or teachers at school.
2. Art Performance. In addition to the compulsory language program, this school also holds performing arts activities in Arabic which aim to apply Arabic and also display the results of student learning during Arabic learning in class and in the school environment, by holding this activity students are enthusiastic about practicing and memorizing several conversations or Arabic texts, Because these results will be displayed in the form of activities such as nasyid, speeches, and dramas which all activities are designed using active Arabic, as well as several dances accompanied by Arabic songs, where this art performance is held as lively as possible and also invites several representatives of other schools to attend as well as guardians of students who watch them perform in the form of several activities. As said by the Arabic language teacher at this school as well as the originator of this activity said: *"Dengan adanya pentas seni ini, wali murid bisa melihat langsung kemampuan anak-anak dalam berbahasa Arab, dan ini menjadi bentuk apresiasi atas proses belajar mereka,"* (With this art performance, guardians can see directly the children's ability to speak Arabic, and this is a form of appreciation for their learning process.) (Interview with Ust. Etra, Arabic Language Teacher). The strategy of implementing this activity is in accordance with the communicative approach in language learning, which emphasizes real language skills. According to Mahmud (2018), "An effective Arabic language learning strategy must provide space for students to practice language in a real context, not just memorize theory" (p. 34).
3. Mabit Language. Returning to the learning system in this school, which is based on Islam and nature, the learning approach to students is also in the form of activities that are not fixated on formal learning in the classroom, this activity is also included as a compulsory curriculum in Arabic language learning in this school, where teachers

invite students in active learning methods in the surrounding environment with several media that can be used in the surrounding environment, one form of activity and approach with nature is the holding of a language Mabit, Arabic language mabit activities are a form of strengthening learning through intensive experiences for students. This activity also invites students in grades 4-6 to visit the surrounding nature and spend the night for one day, during this activity, students are only allowed to communicate in Arabic and apply Arabic learning media, the goal is to foster courage and familiarize students using Arabic in real conditions and situations. This activity is filled with several learning media that make students happy and happy during its implementation, there are learning media in the form of mufrodat cards, Arabic monopoly, and Arabic snakes and ladders where all these games take place actively filling activities for one day in the open air. As our interview with the Arabic language teacher at this school said: *"Media ini kami buat sendiri agar sesuai dengan karakter anak, dan ternyata mereka lebih aktif dan senang belajar dengan cara ini,"* (We made this media ourselves to suit the character of the children, and it turns out that they are more active and happy to learn this way.) (Interview with Ust. This is in line with Sari, R. & Putra, A. (2023)" emphasizes that enjoyable learning experiences are important for increasing students' motivation and engagement in language learning". The Arabic teacher as well as the principal of this school is very enthusiastic and creative in designing his strategies for teaching Arabic and applying them to his students, he said. *"saya senang mengajarkan anak-anak bahasa arab karena saya nya juga cinta dengan bahasa tersebut sehingga membuat saya semangat untuk menerapkan nya juga kepada siswa"* (I enjoy teaching children Arabic because I also love the language so it makes me excited to apply it to students as well) (Interview with Ust. Etra).

No	Strategy	Forms of Activities	Media/Supporting Methods	Impact/Findings
1	Mandatory Language Day	Arabic language day is mandatory twice a week with rules and penalties for memorizing vocabulary.	A context labeled with Arabic vocabulary, examples of conversations from the teacher.	Improving communication habits in Arabic.
2	Art Performance	Arts performance in Arabic (nashid, drama, speech)	Practice dialogues, music, or performances in the form of drama using the Arabic language.	Sharpening courage & direct communication skills.
3	Mabit Language	Night activities while communicating entirely in Arabic in the open air.	Mufrodat cards, Arab monopoly, Arab snakes and ladders, language relay.	Increasing participation & learning motivation.
4	Adaptation for Students with Special Needs	Small study group specifically.	Individual assistance.	Ensure all students are involved according to their abilities.

Teachers as Implementers of the Arabic Curriculum

The results of this observation show that every Arabic teacher has a very important role in implementing the Arabic curriculum in his or her school. Teachers not only act as deliverers of teaching materials, but also as active designers and implementers of innovative learning strategies. The teacher's role as a curriculum implementer can be seen from his ability to adjust the formal curriculum with an approach that suits the characteristics of the school and students.

At Pioneer Elementary School, the Arabic teacher who also serves as the principal consistently designs various additional programs as part of the implementation of a communicative and contextual Arabic curriculum. The existence of programs such as Compulsory Language Day, Arabic Art Performance, and Language Mabit are not only extracurricular activities, but are a tangible form of curriculum implementation designed to encourage students' active involvement in the functional use of Arabic. This shows that teachers in this school are able to apply the habituation approach as part of a curriculum strategy that emphasizes experiential learning which not only directs the passive use of Arabic, but also provides education in the form of active language application which is part of the formative assessment in curriculum implementation. Thus, the role of teachers as curriculum implementers in this school is reflected through their ability to adapt the formal curriculum with a contextual approach and develop a learning environment that supports Arabic language habituation and actively involves learners in the use of Arabic.

Challenges in Implementing the Arabic Language Curriculum

Although teachers at Pioneer Depok Elementary School have implemented various innovative strategies in implementing the Arabic curriculum, the findings show that there are a number of challenges faced in its implementation. These challenges arise from various aspects, ranging from limited learning time, differences in student abilities, to the lack of Arabic language teaching resources themselves, because not all teachers in this school are able to speak Arabic properly and correctly outside of teachers who are able to speak Arabic to students in teaching their subjects.

One of the main challenges in implementing the Arabic curriculum is the limited time allocation. Arabic at Pioneer Primary School is part of the local content which is scheduled for only a few hours a week. With this limited time, teachers are required to deliver material as well as train students' active language skills, such as speaking and listening, which require time and intensive practice. As stated by the Arabic teacher in the interview: "*Waktu belajar formal itu sangat terbatas, makanya kami buat program tambahan seperti hari bahasa dan mabit agar siswa tetap bisa mempraktekan bahasa arab.*" (Formal learning time is very limited, so we create additional programs such as language days and mabit so that students can still practice Arabic." (Interview with Ust. Etra). This shows that time constraints encourage teachers to look for alternative learning strategies outside of formal class hours, but it remains a challenge in terms of the continuity of other learning. Apart from problems related to Arabic learning time itself in the implementation process, teachers also face challenges in the form of students' ability to understand and use Arabic. Not all students have the same background or environmental support and daily life at home in learning this language. Some students show high interest, but others have difficulty understanding the basics of Arabic, especially in mastering mufrodat because a foreign

language skill starts with the environment first so that each other can strengthen and practice their skills, especially in understanding Arabic easily.

The role of parents at home is also very helpful in involving children's abilities in applying Arabic to students such as supporting, training and always reminding to do the assignments given from school, because in line with Sugiyono's opinion, "In education, parental involvement can strengthen control of student learning at home and improve the quality of learning outcomes". (Sugiyono, 2016) so that the language skills that students get from school can be monitored and paid attention to by their parents at home, but sometimes not all parents have an understanding or support for Arabic language learning. As a result, the continuity of learning at home is not maintained and students' ability to speak Arabic will be lost.

No	Challenge	Cause	Teacher's Solution
1	Study time is limited.	The class hours are only a few hours/week.	Creating additional programs (language day, overnight stay)
2	Differences in students' abilities.	The background of the Arabic language is diverse.	Study groups & individual approaches.
3	Parental support is uneven.	Not all parents understand the importance of the Arabic language.	Communication via the WA group & involve parents in the event.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Arabic curriculum at Pioneer Depok Elementary School shows that the success of curriculum implementation is greatly influenced by the creativity, dedication and active involvement of teachers in formulating relevant and applicable learning strategies. The Arabic curriculum is not only considered a planning document, but also a series of learning experiences designed to actively hone students' language skills. Initiatives such as Language Obligation Day, Arabic Language Art Show, and Mabit Bahasa are clear evidence that Arabic language learning can be initiated in students' daily lives through a fun and meaningful approach.

Teachers play an important role as curriculum implementers, as well as pioneers and facilitators of learning. This role is realized in the teacher's ability to adapt the curriculum to the characteristics of students and the school atmosphere. However, the implementation of the curriculum is also faced with various challenges, such as limited learning time, variations in student abilities, and lack of support from the home environment. Therefore, cooperation between schools, teachers and parents is needed to support sustainable Arabic language learning as a whole. With a participatory approach and locally relevant strategies, the Arabic curriculum can be effectively implemented to improve students' communication skills in Arabic as well as instill cultural values.

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