



The Concept of Distance Learning in Arabic Learning

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Abstract. The occurrence of a learning shift cannot be separated from the current circumstances. The spread of the Covid-19 outbreak has had a major impact on various fields, including education. Distance learning is needed to support the education system, particularly in Arabic learning. Appropriate concepts and methods are required to ensure that learning is in the right direction, especially for Arabic, which is certainly more difficult than learning other languages due to the length of the process. This study aims to describe the concept of distance learning for the Arabic language subject at SMA Muhammadiyah PK in the 2020/2021 academic year. This is descriptive qualitative research, which means describing a theory based on data using words rather than numbers. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of this study show that the use of audio material, Youtube, Zoom Cloud Meeting, Google Classroom, and PK Best, all of which are crucial in supporting Arabic learning. This concept has been formulated by all teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah PK as one of the new innovations. The process is not without challenges. Therefore, there is a need for regular evaluation and improvement so that learning remains optimal even though there are various kinds of limitations.

Keywords: Concept · Distance Learning · Arabic · Subject

1 Introduction

Learning is a process of interaction between students and teachers with learning resources in a learning environment. Learning is an educational tool for transferring knowledge and transferring educational values to students [1]. In other words, learning is a process that allows students to learn more effectively.

Allah SWT says in the Qur'an surah Al Mujadalah verse 11:

... "يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ" ...

This verse illustrates that the provision of knowledge for a person is significant for the life of the world and the hereafter because the degree of knowledgeable people will be exalted by Allah SWT. As a result, there is a need for the process of education as an effort to provide knowledge for someone.

One interesting provision of knowledge is learning languages. Language is the most significant means of communication used by a person to convey his thoughts and feelings to the other person [2]. Language is an important need for humans since it serves as a medium for humans to convey their ideas, thoughts, and feelings both in oral and written form [3]. This includes learning Arabic, which is the language of the Qur'an, moreover, it is a way of understanding Islamic teachings [4]. Arabic requires relevant methods so that the learning goals can be achieved and can develop potential [5].

However, there was a change in the learning process in 2020 due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic virus in Indonesia, which caused many shifts in various aspects, one of which is in the field of education [6]. The change occurred swiftly and instantly. The switch from a conventional learning system to a virtual learning system as the government's efforts to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 virus drew a lot of criticism and complaints [7]. This happened because there was no other learning model besides face-to-face learning [8].

One of the available teaching methods is the direct method [9], which involves direct interaction between teachers and students, as well as implications and habituation in understanding Arabic [10]. Particular emphasis should be placed on learning to fulfill four areas of language proficiency, namely writing skills, reading skills, speaking skills, and listening skills [11] so that students can develop their skills in Arabic [12] by training as a means of mastering these four aspects of proficiency [13]. However, as face-to-face learning was restricted, the systems, methods, and various kinds of learning tools evolved from conventional to virtual learning [14].

Distance learning is a new breakthrough in learning as technology develops in the modern era [15]. Teachers are professional educators whose missions are to transfer knowledge and values to students [16]. A teacher has a responsibility to teach, educate, and develop the potential of students by any method [17]. A new method of learning needs to be developed [18]. Platforms or applications of distance learning can be used as an alternative to providing assistance and understanding to students of the material being taught [19]. Variations in methods must be supported by variations in learning media [20] in order for distance learning, or e-learning, to be efficient and effective [21].

Previous research related to this study was conducted by Agustina, entitled "Analysis of Class VII Arabic Learning Methods at MTsN Subulussalam City". This research discusses the implementation of the *maharah istima'*, *kalam*, *qiro'ah*, and *kitabah* methods in Arabic learning. Meanwhile, this current study will discuss the implementation of technology-based e-learning. This research is expected to serve as a reference for readers to develop further research as well as a reference for future e-learning models and methods.

2 Research Method

This study aims to describe the concept of distance learning in the Arabic language subject at SMA Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat in the 2020/2021 academic year. This research elaborates on the concept of learning Arabic through e-learning as a learning solution during a pandemic.

This research is field research using qualitative research methods and a descriptive approach. Data in this study were collected through several techniques, namely interviews, observation, and documentation. Data in this study were in the form of words, which were then analyzed and described by referring to the data that had been collected.

This research also employed data triangulation, which is an attempt to see and analyze the truth of data or information obtained by researchers. The analysis process was carried out through three stages, namely data reduction by selecting and sorting relevant and credible data with a research focus, then presenting the data and drawing conclusions.

3 Research Result

3.1 Definition of Distance Learning and Arabic

The implementation of distance learning, according to Chaeruman (2017), can be categorized into two types, namely synchronous learning and asynchronous learning. Synchronous learning occurs when the teacher and students are in the same place at the same time, similar to face-to-face learning but using a web conferencing application or a virtual classroom. Meanwhile, asynchronous learning is independent learning using the internet as a learning tool.

The emergence of a distance learning system undoubtedly necessitates supporting applications that are relevant and suitable for learning. Sucipto's research (2019) found that there are several platforms or applications that are used to support the learning process, namely the WhatsApp application and LMS (Learning Management System). Meanwhile, Jajang (2021) mentioned the Zoom Cloud Meeting application as a tool that can be used to support distance or virtual learning.

In terms of utility, research by Chabibie and Hakim (2016) showed the graph of the convenience of comparing offline and online learning. The results informed that 80.4% of teachers and students found it easier to access online learning than offline learning with a percentage of 72.5%. Distance learning has a positive value in that it allows teachers and students to explore knowledge as broadly as possible, but it is necessary to review and re-observe whether distance learning has a good or bad impact on students, especially in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

Arabic is a very important thing in human life, especially for the Muslim community. Arabic, which is the language of the Qur'an, is one of the keys to understanding matters related to Islam. According to Al Ghaliyyin (2005), Arabic is a collection of sentences used by Arabs to communicate and express their goals, whether they are based on thoughts or feelings. Subjectively, Arabic uses Hijaiyyah letters, which Arabs utilize in communicating and interacting, both in writing and orally.

In terms of learning, according to the content standards set by the government regarding Graduate Competency Standards and Content Standards for Islamic Religion and

Language Education in Madrasas in 2008 state that learning Arabic consists of four components, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four components are arranged in one theme in order to provide the right experience and learning for students. The four components are presented in five aspects, namely mufrodah, istima', muhadatsah, qira'ah, and kitabah.

Referring to the main components of learning Arabic, appropriate and suitable learning methods are needed based on the situation, circumstances, and conditions. According to Sumardi (1974), there are several methods of learning Arabic, including the qawaid method, the direct method, the silent way method, group language learning, total physical response, the mim-mem method (mimicry-memorizing), the sam'iyah method, the communicative approach, and Intiqaiyyah method. Of the various existing methods, it is necessary for the teacher to selectively choose appropriate and relevant learning methods because the existing methods are different from each other, both in terms of technical implementation, media, and concentration of learning objectives.

3.2 Implementation and Concept of Distance Learning in Arabic Subjects

The transition from offline to long-distance learning models was not done immediately and instantaneously, but it went through a process of adjustment. This transition was the main focus for all schools and learning devices as well as educational staff to keep learning efficient, effective, and optimal. In response to this, SMA Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta made various efforts to support and assist the learning process. In an interview with the Principal, Ustadzah Upik explained the school's response to distance learning:

"We must accept this, but school services in the form of communication to students must be maximized, different from before. We have to find a solution so that we can be enthusiastic about learning, facilitate children, and worship can also run well."

Meanwhile, in terms of managing teachers and students in adaptation to distance learning, Ustadzah Upik explained as follows:

"If we have supervision, with evaluations of the teacher, it is discussed together; also every week there is a teacher meeting after Friday to report on the progress of each class. I am still monitoring. When it comes to children, we also sometimes join in to provide motivation. There is a meeting once a month for parents. Its function is to bridge programs from schools to be conveyed to parents for children so that parents also know."

Ustadz Iwan, a PAI teacher, explained in his interview the initial facility that was pioneered and established in the implementation of distance learning.:

"There was no Zoom at that time. So, at the beginning, it was very strange, the children were only given written material and practice questions. It was just like being self-taught. It's very strange. Finally, for some materials, I make audio recordings, and I send them to students. But that's not enough for learning Arabic."

After assessing the level of adequacy of learning Arabic by providing written and audio materials, Ustadz Iwan, as a PAI teacher, made a video explaining Arabic material and uploaded it to the YouTube application. He told in an interview:

“Finally I made a very simple video, then, I uploaded it to YouTube. It’s really a simple video. Thank God, the response was good even some viewers from out of town also watched the video and commented that the video helped them.”

The learning process involves students visualizing and comprehending material through pictures, video, and sound. This material can be accessed by students and the general public via the SMA Muhammadiyah PK YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YenLPeCZYkE>).

As learning systems progress and develop, KBM switched to using the Zoom Cloud Meeting and Google Classroom platforms. Ustadz Iwan in his interview explained:

“Entering the new 2020/2021 school year, SMA Muhammadiyah PK has created a much neater system. Remote teaching and learning is carried out using Google Classroom and Zoom as mandatory platforms. It really helps me in teaching more systematically. Systematically, teaching and learning activities are scheduled using the Google Classroom platform. There is material, and there is an assignment. To support student comprehension of material, schools require Zoom meetings but with restrictions, on one day there can only be two Zoom meetings in one class. It is to ensure that students are not too burdensome, both in terms of internet quota and learning focus.”

Then, SMA Muhammadiyah PK applied new breakthroughs and innovations in implementing distance learning, namely the PK Best application. Ustadz Iwan explained:

“If students encounter any issues, they are welcome to ask the teacher. After that students are given practice questions, which are submitted to Google Classroom or PK Best. It is then discussed in the next meeting. The material is discussed through a Zoom Meeting. The point is PK Best is a place to deliver materials and collect assignments.”

This application is very easy to access for teachers and students because it is more systemized by the school to later be used as a reference for structured assessments from teachers and schools. It is also accompanied by features that support distance learning.

From several applications that were used to support the learning process, SMA Muhammadiyah PK had taken the right steps in an effort to guarantee learning remains efficient, effective, and optimal. Given the four components as competency standards and PAI content standards and language in madrasas, the implementation with the platform or application that had been implemented was appropriate and fulfilled the standards. In the listening skill, namely understanding the form of spoken material in the form of dialogue or vocabulary exposure, students can listen to the material via audio, YouTube, and a virtual conference platform, namely Zoom Cloud Meeting. In the speaking skill, concerning expressing meaning verbally or non-verbally, the use of Zoom Cloud Meeting was very efficient as synchronous learning with interactions between teachers and

students even though they were far away. In reading skills, students need to master the material by reading and understanding an article and explaining it using the Zoom Cloud Meeting application directly. And the last, in writing skills, which aims to measure students' ability to write words, sentences, expressions, and functional texts in Arabic, students used the PK Best application as a facility for writing in a structured and good system.

The concepts that had been implemented by SMA Muhammadiyah PK in supporting and assisting the teaching and learning process can be a reference for other schools when faced with the same situation, either now or in the future.

3.3 Problems that Occur During Distance Learning in Arabic Subjects

There were several problems during the implementation of distance learning of Arabic subjects remotely at SMA Muhammadiyah PK. From the results of interviews with informants, namely PAI teachers and SMA Muhammadiyah PK students, it was explained that:

3.3.1 Problems from Teacher

1) It is difficult to determine the current status and progress of students

Ustadz Iwan, a PAI teacher, conveyed the following information:

"It's more difficult to determine whether students really understand the material or not. Students' comprehension of the learning material is not as high as offline learning. Students are also bored because they are required to study independently. Most can only guess from the student's answers directly at the Zoom meeting, or from the answers to the questions they collect."

As educators, it is necessary for teachers to assess and know student development from cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. When it comes to distance learning, it is very difficult to know students' progress in the affective and psychomotor aspects. In the cognitive aspect, the teacher can only guess and assume that students understand from their answers through virtual meetings or from the answers to assignments and questions collected.

2) Relatively limited ways to assess student's ability to speak Arabic

Meanwhile, to assess Arabic language skills, Ustadz Iwan explained:

"It is very difficult to know their pronunciation and intonation in reading and dialogue in Arabic. If there is a mistake, there are limitations in justifying it because they did not meet face to face."

Arabic language skills are assessed not only through writing but also from pronunciation and habits as well as overall understanding. It is very difficult to assess if learning is done remotely because there are distance limitations.

3.3.2 Problems from Student

Other problems arose from the students' side. Based on the results of the interview, those problems are as follows:

- 1) Many nouns and sentences are difficult to understand in learning
- 2) It is complicated to understand the difference between fi'il and isim
- 3) Confused and do not know the meaning of Arabic objects or words
- 4) Lack of vocabulary that causes ignorance in understanding the material
- 5) Unstable connection during distance learning, which hinders the process of learning Arabic

The demand for students to study independently during distance learning is a burden and a separate obstacle for students. If examined further, besides the teacher's role, which is very much needed during the learning period, the role of parents to stimulate and support their children (students) is required because parents are the *ula madrassas* for their children. So from here, the support and encouragement of parents are one of the pivots so that children can learn independently. In addition, the interconnection between parents and teachers as educators must be intense so that in the development of students' potential they go hand in hand, not excelling or even lagging.

4 Conclusion

The preparation and implementation of distance learning at SMA Muhammadiyah PK can be a reference, testimony, and recommendation for other schools or institutions. It is implemented with the use of applications that are relevant and supportive so that learning remains efficient, effective, and optimal. This becomes a new thing and innovation when distance learning is needed to be carried out. By looking at some of the problems that occur, there is a need for improvement and evaluation from various parties so that learning continues to develop and not stagnate.

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