



Two Second Languages at Once

Arabic and English Learning Method at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, situated in East Java, stands as a prominent Islamic educational institution within Indonesia. Renowned for its unique approach, students are immersed in daily Arabic and English communication. This research seeks to illuminate the distinctive linguistic strategies employed, evaluate their effectiveness, and offer insights through qualitative analysis. The pioneering aspect involves the concurrent learning of two foreign languages, providing a rare opportunity for pedagogical investigation. Employing a triangulation qualitative approach, data was gathered through observation and documentation, followed by systematic analysis involving data reduction, presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. Findings uncovered a spectrum of methods and programs implemented at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor to expedite language learning. Coordinated by integrated language departments, these encompass language courts, daily vocabulary and conversational exercises, Arabic and English speech coaching, weekly language-centric events, language discipline protocols, as well as comprehensive classroom instruction in Arabic and English.

Keywords: *Arabic language, English, pondok pesantren, second language learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the most fundamental means of communication in our interconnected world. Numerous languages exist, each designed to facilitate interaction among diverse communities. Language, as a creative and swift communication tool, enables humans to convey ideas, thoughts, and emotions effectively. It is inseparable from human existence, as people employ it to interact with one another (Hidayat, 2012).

Among the most crucial foreign languages studied globally are English and Arabic. English is a vital international language that connects societies with the world across various domains, including education. On the other hand, Arabic is a universal language spoken by nearly 400 million people worldwide. Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population globally, regards Arabic as the language of revelation, the language of the Qur'an, and a medium of worship. Consequently, Arabic holds a significant position in Islamic practice, serving as a means of communication and a tool for ritual worship among Muslims (Fuad, 2015).

However, the process of learning English and Arabic often poses challenges for students. Many English learners struggle with pronunciation, which can be complex and differ from the written form. Additionally, they may face difficulties in comprehending spoken English at a normal pace, lack vocabulary knowledge, grapple with intricate grammar rules, and lack sufficient practice (Megawati, 2016).

Similarly, in the case of Arabic, even though it might be taught in elementary school (MI), junior high school (MTS), and senior high school (MA), and even in higher education, the outcomes have not reached a level of proficiency and practical application (Fuad, 2015). Many students struggle with Arabic script, lack vocabulary knowledge, and find Arabic grammar challenging. Moreover, they often lack sufficient exposure and practice.

Another issue is the involvement of schools in foreign language education. Some schools may not adequately support foreign language learning, as evidenced by a lack of facilities conducive to enjoyable language learning environments and insufficient training for educators teaching foreign languages (Maili & Hestningsih, 2017).

Gontor itself is known as a living laboratory for Arabic and English in Indonesia. The founders of Gontor recognized the need for proficiency in Arabic and English, not just in education but also in daily life. Students at Gontor are required to communicate in either Arabic or English according to a predetermined weekly schedule. For new students, there is a four-month adaptation period to become familiar with the official language of the boarding school. Language development at Gontor is also a focus, with the introduction of new vocabulary and language-based programs and competitions such as drama and speech contests. For Gontor, language is the key to acquiring knowledge and understanding the world.

The objective of the research is to investigate the methods and practices employed in the teaching and learning of Arabic and English languages at Gontor. This study aims to gain insights into the unique language learning strategies employed in this renowned Islamic boarding school, shedding light on how Gontor effectively fosters language proficiency in both Arabic and English among its students. By examining the curriculum, language immersion techniques, linguistic challenges, and the overall language development process at Gontor, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students learn these two crucial languages within the institution's educational framework.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The simultaneous learning of multiple second languages has piqued the interest of the language education community, revealing distinct opportunities and challenges for learners. This review delves into the strategies used to teach Arabic and English simultaneously at Gontor, Indonesia—an exemplary integrated educational institution, blending religious and academic studies, offering a captivating context for dual language learning exploration.

2.1. Language Learning Context in Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, a renowned Indonesian Islamic institution, offers a comprehensive education encompassing religious, linguistic, and academic domains. Arabic is emphasized for Islamic text comprehension, while English is vital for global communication and knowledge access. The pesantren employs a unique pedagogical approach, primarily the direct method (Berlitz Method), promoting language-focused thinking and exclusive target language use in teaching (Zaid, 2012).

2.2. Bilingual Education and Its Challenges

Bilingual education, as practiced at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, strives for simultaneous proficiency in Arabic and English. The distinctiveness of this approach lies in managing the coexistence of two languages, each with distinct linguistic structures and scripts. This arrangement engenders challenges, notably navigating language interference and upholding balanced focus on both languages. Overcoming language dependency, particularly reliance on the native language, poses a significant hurdle.

2.3. Integrated Language Instruction

A hallmark of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor's language learning approach is the fusion of language instruction with religious and academic studies. This integration aims to nurture a comprehensive grasp of language usage across diverse contexts, amplifying students' linguistic competence and cultural awareness.

2.4. Language Learning Strategies

Studies reveal diverse language learning strategies used by learners at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor to acquire two second languages. Common code-switching and code-mixing indicate efforts to bridge the Arabic-English gap. Learners also transfer knowledge and skills between languages, facilitated by the institution's comprehensive teaching strategy, including methods, regulations, steps, assessment, and supervision (Jubaidah, 2015).

2.5. Motivation and Attitude

The pivotal role of motivation and attitude in language learning is well-established. Learners' enthusiasm for acquiring Arabic and English is moulded by their perceptions of the languages' relevance to personal and academic

aspirations. Positive attitudes towards language learning foster an environment conducive to effective language acquisition. In Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, educators employ ten motivational tactics, encompassing elucidating learning objectives, rewards, competition, praise, and disciplinary measures, among others (Nusantara & Setyaningsih, 2018).

2.6. Curriculum and Pedagogical Approaches

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor's curriculum seamlessly integrates language teaching methodologies in harmony with the institution's educational philosophy. Innovations encompass communicative language instruction, immersive language experiences, and blended learning techniques, all orchestrated to catalyze language acquisition and communicative aptitude. The enduring curriculum of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, titled *Kulliyatul Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyah* Curriculum, persists as a testament to its commitment to enriching education (Syarifah, 2016).

3. METHOD

This research employed a case study approach using qualitative methods with a descriptive orientation. Qualitative research is grounded in natural settings, involves humans as research instruments, utilizes inductive data analysis, and places a stronger emphasis on the research process rather than solely focusing on the research outcomes (Sugiyono, 2013). The study was conducted at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, located in Ponorogo, Indonesia. The research encompassed 200 students spanning from class 1 to 6, members of the student organization, central language improvement staff, members of the language advisory council, and two teachers.

Data collection methods employed in this study included participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The data analysis process followed four key stages: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data display, and (4) drawing conclusions and verifying them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To enhance the validity of the data, triangulation was implemented through source triangulation and technical triangulation.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor rigorously enforces regulations that bind students to converse exclusively in Arabic and English, both within and beyond classroom settings. This immersive approach reflects the institution's commitment to fostering bilingualism as an integral skillset. Those regulations can be understood as below:

4.1. Introduction to the KMI Curriculum at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor adopts a distinctive curriculum known as the Kulliyatul-Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyyah (KMI) curriculum, setting it apart from conventional public state schools and other educational institutions. This curriculum spans from Grade 1 to Grade 6, with each grade building upon the linguistic foundation laid in the previous level. Given that a substantial portion of KMI's curriculum is conducted in both Arabic and English, proficiency in Arabic and English is essential for students as it is intertwined with their ability to access and comprehend the curriculum effectively. This aligns with broader educational research emphasizing the pivotal role of language proficiency in academic success (Stein-Smith, 2017).

The KMI curriculum encompasses various academic domains, namely:

- Arabic Language: Encompassing dictation, language practice, proverbs, grammar, morphology, rhetoric, literature history, and Arabic calligraphy.
- Islamic Studies: Encompassing the Qur'an, intonation, Quran interpretation, hadith, hadith terminology, jurisprudence, fundamentals of jurisprudence, religious obligations, Islamic theology, comparative religions, history of Islam, logics, and Arabic translation.
- English Language: Encompassing reading, comprehension, grammar, composition, and dictation.

The integration of language components into multiple academic domains reflects a well-rounded approach to language education (Saville-Troike, 2012). By infusing language learning into subjects like Islamic Studies and Arabic calligraphy, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor not only enhances language proficiency but also underscores the practical application of language skills in various contexts.

4.2. Intra-curricular Activities: Enrichment Within the Classroom

Within Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, teachers categorize student activities into two main spheres: intra-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Overseeing intra-curricular activities is the KMI Office, led by a director and supported by a dedicated team of teachers (ustadz). KMI offers two distinct program tracks tailored to students' educational backgrounds prior to entering the pesantren: the standard six-year program and the intensive four-year program. The availability of both standard and intensive programs acknowledges the diversity of students' linguistic backgrounds, a crucial aspect in language learning. Previous research suggests that tailoring language programs to students' prior knowledge and capabilities is a best practice in language education (Jubaidah, 2015).

This strategic engagement underscores the pivotal role of KMI in honing students' language skills and fostering a rigorous academic environment. Indeed, the establishment of the KMI system signifies a transformative milestone in the evolution of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor's educational framework, transitioning from early education to secondary-level instruction.

4.2.1. Arabic and English Learning Dynamics: A Three-Tiered Approach

The process of Arabic and English language learning at KMI unfolds through three distinct stages, namely Preliminary Activities, Core Activities, and Closing Activities. The three-tiered approach to language learning, as outlined in this section, reflects contemporary pedagogical principles that emphasize the importance of a varied and comprehensive language learning experience (Zurqoni, Retnawati, Rahmatullah, Djidu, & Apino, 2020). This approach aligns with research suggesting that language learning benefits from a multi-faceted approach that includes various language activities and exercises (Pigott, 2012).

4.2.1.1. Preliminary Activities

Preliminary activities include greetings, prayers, and a review of previously taught lessons. These activities aim to prepare students for the day's lessons and enhance their comprehension.

4.2.1.2. Core Activities

Core activities involve lesson planning, material delivery, and the use of various teaching methods. These methods, such as lectures, demonstrations, role plays, discussions, and question-answer sessions, ensure a comprehensive learning experience.

4.2.1.3. Closing Activities

Closing activities include exercises to reinforce material learned in class, followed by wisdom sharing and prayers. These activities promote understanding and retention of knowledge. To proceed fairly, the learning evaluation also consists of internal evaluation learning aspect for self-reminding of a lesson. Moreover, the learning evaluation process for the subjects used in this institution is divided into two categories: oral exams and written exams. Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor includes both oral and written exams, with daily tests conducted by teachers. The curriculum is synchronized with teacher discussions and the syllabus, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation process.

4.3. Extracurricular Enrichment

Extra-curricular engagements within Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor are intricately woven into two distinct spheres. Firstly, the dormitories, under the stewardship of the hostel administrators, serve as the locus for a spectrum of enriching activities. The second realm encompasses the wider boarding school milieu, presided over by the Organisasi Pelajar Pondok Modern (OPPM) or Student Organisation of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (Syamsu, 2018). The emphasis on extracurricular activities, both within the dormitories and at the institutional level, mirrors the findings of previous research on the benefits of extracurricular involvement in language development (Christison, 2013). Such activities provide students with opportunities for practical language use and further reinforce the linguistic skills they acquire in the classroom.

The daily and weekly life routine at the pesantren is orchestrated with precision, encapsulated in the tabular representation as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Daily activities

Time	Activity
04:00-05:30	- Waking Up - Congregational <i>Fajr</i> Prayer - Recitation of the Holy Quran - Morning Vocabulary Practice
05:30-06:00	- Leisure Activities (Sports, Arts, Clubs, Courses, etc.) - Shower
06:00-06:45	- Breakfast - Preparation for Classroom
07:00-12:15	- Morning Classroom Sessions
12:30-13:30	- Congregational <i>Zuhr</i> Prayer - Lunch
13:30-15:00	- Afternoon Lesson
15:00-15:45	- Congregational <i>Ashr</i> Prayer - Recitation of the Holy Quran
15:45-16:45	- Leisure Activities (Sports, Arts, Clubs, Courses, etc.)
16:45-17:15	- Shower and Preparation for Masjid
17:15-18:30	- Congregational <i>Maghrib</i> Prayer - Recitation of the Holy Quran
18:30-19:30	- Dinner
19:30-20:00	- Congregational <i>Isya</i> Prayer
20:00-21:30	- Evening Study - Group Learning in the Classroom
21:30-04:00	- Rest and Sleep

Table 2. Weekly Activities

Day	Activity
Saturday	- No changes to the daily schedule.
Sunday	- In the evening, after the <i>Isya</i> prayer, students from grades 1 to 4 engage in English public speaking practice. Fifth graders hold weekly discussions, while sixth graders will supervise the English public speaking practice.
Monday	- No changes to the daily schedule.
Tuesday	- In the morning, after the <i>Fajr</i> prayer, there are weekly conversation training in both Arabic and English. This is followed by the compulsory morning run for students.
Wednesday	- No changes to the daily schedule.
Thursday	- The last two periods of the Morning Classroom Sessions are dedicated to Arabic public speaking practice. - In the afternoon, from 13:45 to 16:00, there is a Scout session. - In the evening, from 20:00 to 21:30, there is public speaking practice in Indonesian.
Friday	- Friday is a free day, with no classes. In the morning, all students attend the weekly Language event, followed by a mandatory morning run. Afterwards, there is community service and campus environment cleanup.

4.3.1. Language Development Initiatives

Effective language learning unfolds systematically, entailing a meticulous orchestration of logical stages that consider material mastery levels, learning styles, age disparities, and motivational nuances (Saepudin, 2012). Therefore, the language pedagogy at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is underpinned by a comprehensive framework that nurtures four pivotal language competencies: (1) listening skills, (2) reading skills, (3) writing skills, and (4) speaking skills. The focus on these four language competencies aligns with contemporary research in language education (Sadiku, 2015). Developing well-rounded language skills is essential for effective communication and academic success.

4.3.1.1. Morning Vocabulary Practice

The Morning Vocabularies Practice, conducted daily except for Tuesdays and Fridays, involves recitation of Al-Qur'an followed by vocabulary learning. Students across grades 1 to 4 engage in learning new vocabularies, enhancing their language skills. This approach can enhance students' motivation and retention of vocabulary.

4.3.1.2. Language Court and Vigilant System

At Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, a strong linguistic ethos mandates the widespread use of Arabic and English among all students. This essential aspect is symbolized by inscriptions in Arabic and English, reading means “Language is The Crown of the Pesantren”, prominently displayed throughout the institution. To uphold this linguistic discipline, the Language Section, comprising senior grade 6 students, plays a crucial role in enforcing language protocols. They act as linguistic custodians, ensuring that students in grades 1 to 5 adhere to the specified language norms. The Language Section has the authority to impose sanctions on violators, with penalties commensurate with the severity of the offense. In cases of repeated violations, formal trials may be conducted at the Language Court, which serves as a platform for deliberation and the imposition of sanctions, which escalate for repeat offenders.

The Language Court and Vigilant System exemplify the institution's commitment to enforcing language norms. This is consistent with research highlighting the role of peer monitoring in language acquisition (Alharbi, 2023). Peer-enforced language norms can be effective in promoting consistent language use and reinforcing bilingualis (Cook, 2013). Additionally, the formalization of language discipline through a system of penalties and trials aligns with educational research emphasizing the importance of clear rules and consequences in shaping behavior (Charles, 2010).

4.3.1.3. Weekly Conversation Drill

Amplifying conversational fluency, the Weekly Conversation Drill unfolds each Tuesday and Friday morning, following the *Fajr* prayer. A prelude to these sessions is the dissemination of forthcoming themes to be discussed by all students from grades 1 to 4. Armed with daily conversation books, participants convene along the premises of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, engaging in dynamic dialogues. Dormitories vie spiritedly, orchestrating lively conversations that cover diverse themes, enriching linguistic dexterity.

The incorporation of regular conversation drills reflects the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the importance of authentic language use and interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Such activities provide students with opportunities to apply their language skills in real-life situations.

4.3.1.4. Weekly Wall Magazine

Every dormitory competes to create a wall magazine in either Arabic or English, showcasing vocabulary words, idioms, conversational phrases, stories, and images. The creation of wall magazines fosters creativity and language proficiency, in line with research highlighting the benefits of project-based learning (Sirisrimangkorn, 2018). Engaging in collaborative projects like these can enhance students' language skills while promoting a sense of ownership and pride in their work.

4.3.1.5. Weekly Language Event

The Weekly Language Event is a testament to Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor's commitment to providing students with a comprehensive and engaging language learning experience. By offering a wide range of activities that cater to different interests and talents, the institution effectively captures students' attention and enthusiasm for language learning. The competitive element introduced through prizes and trophies fosters a culture of excellence and achievement among students. It motivates them to invest time and effort in serious preparation and rehearsal, thereby enhancing their language skills and performance abilities.

The recognition of outstanding dormitories and individuals in various language-related categories promotes healthy competition and camaraderie, reinforcing the sense of community within the institution. The institution's emphasis on language events aligns with research on the benefits of extracurricular language activities (Makarova & Reva, 2017). Such events provide students with opportunities for immersion and practical language use, contributing to their overall language proficiency.

4.3.1.6. Language Centre and Laboratory

Augmenting the non-physical infrastructure, the pursuit of Arabic and English proficiency finds tangible support through the availability of dedicated spaces, including the language laboratory, language library, and language center. These avenues foster vocabulary expansion, dialogic engagement, competitive pursuits, literary endeavors, and multimodal language experiences, spanning diverse mediums. The provision of dedicated language resources and spaces is consistent with the principles of language resource support in education. Access to such resources can facilitate independent language learning and research.

4.3.1.7. Language League: A Weekly Contest

The Central Language Improvement (CLI) orchestrates the Language League, a vibrant weekly contest cultivating multifaceted linguistic skills. Comprising activities such as word scavenging, scrabble, public speaking, translation, lyrical completion, spelling bees, and compositional challenges, the league propels an atmosphere of spirited participation. A points-based system underscores this initiative, furnishing dormitories with accrued points following successful engagement. Weekly accolades and culminating trophies celebrate the dormitory that excels, fostering a culture of continuous linguistic refinement.

The Language League exemplifies the institution's commitment to fostering a culture of continuous linguistic refinement. Such contests can motivate students to actively engage with the language and develop a competitive spirit, as supported by research on the benefits of language competitions (Lysytska et al., 2021)

4.3.1.8. Annual Language Examination

At the culmination of the academic year, a pivotal juncture emerges with the Annual Language Examination. Synthesizing knowledge from various sources, including the Morning Vocabularies, the examination comprises a wide range of questions aligned with the curriculum. Exam results significantly impact students' academic records, reflecting their linguistic journey. The use of annual language examinations aligns with assessment practices in language education (Brown, 2004). Assessments play a crucial role in tracking students' language progress and identifying areas for improvement.

In a seamless synthesis of these pedagogical measures, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor espouses a multi-dimensional approach to language development, fostering an environment conductively to learning language excellence (Jubaidah, 2015). The institution's multi-dimensional approach to language development reflects contemporary best practices in language education (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). A holistic approach that encompasses various language activities, resources, and assessments is essential for nurturing well-rounded language learners.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor stands as a remarkable exemplar of an integrated educational system that cultivates Arabic and English proficiency within its multifaceted curriculum. The institution's commitment to fostering bilingualism is evident through its rigorous language rules, compelling students to engage exclusively in Arabic and English throughout their daily activities.

The language learning process at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor unfolds through a comprehensive framework encompassing Preliminary Activities, Core Activities, and Closing Activities. These stages contribute to the holistic development of essential language competencies: listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. The institution's focus on linguistic proficiency extends beyond the classroom, with initiatives such as the Morning Vocabulary Practice, Language Court, Weekly Conversation Drill, and Weekly Wall Magazine. These activities create an immersive linguistic environment that enhances students' communicative aptitude.

Furthermore, the Language Centre, Language Laboratory, and annual Language Examination provide essential support and assessment to students' language journey. The role of the Language Advisory Council (LAC) ensures the vigilant maintenance of language discipline, promoting activities that enrich language skills and style.

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor's language pedagogy is a testament to its dedication to nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped for global engagement. By seamlessly integrating Arabic and English into its curriculum and fostering a vibrant linguistic ecosystem, the institution equips its students with invaluable language skills that empower them to excel academically, communicate effectively, and contribute meaningfully to society both nationally and internationally.

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