



Arabic Language Learning Program Management Model in Islamic Boarding Schools in Padangsidimpuan City

Zulni Hidayah Putri Lubis¹, Hakmi Wahyudi²

^{1,2}Arabic Language Education, Sultan Syarif Kasim University Riau

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Corresponding Author:

Zulni Hidayah Putri Lubis
zulnihidayahputrilubis@gmail.com
Arabic Language Education,
Sultan Syarif Kasim University
Riau, Indonesia

Abstract

This study analyzes the management patterns of Arabic language learning programs in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Padangsidimpuan City through three approaches: classical, four language skills, and grammar-based (qawā'id). The study employed a qualitative field approach using interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings show that the yellow book-based pattern defined as learning that relies on classical Islamic texts (kutub al-turāth) is the most dominant and systematically implemented, supported by structured book selection, bandongansorogan methods, and teacher guidance in text comprehension and i'rāb analysis. The four-skills approach is applied gradually from receptive to productive skills, but its effectiveness is constrained by the lack of a supportive Arabic language environment (bi'ah lughawiyyah) and limited learning resources. The qawā'id based pattern remains a foundational approach for understanding texts but is still largely deductive and weakly integrated with modern instructional media. Overall, these patterns complement each other, yet their implementation is hindered by limited facilities, varied student abilities, and weak program integration. This study underscores the need to improve teacher competence, learning facilities, language environments, and curriculum integration to enhance students' communicative skills and mastery of classical texts.

1. Introduction

Language is the primary tool humans use to communicate with others around the world (Mailani et al., 2022). Many languages were created to make it easier for humans to interact (Dash, 2022). Language is an important tool (De Stefani & De Marco, 2019), fast (Adashovna & Axmadovna, 2020), and creative in conveying ideas (Adashovna & Axmadovna, 2020), thought (Morais & Martins, 2025), and feelings (Lubis et al., 2024). Therefore, language cannot be separated from human life because it is humans who use it to communicate. (Adashovna & Axmadovna, 2020; Fedorenko et al., 2024). Furthermore, Arabic is an international language that continues to develop in the social and scientific fields. (Nugrahawan et al., 2023). Historically, Arabic belongs to the Semitic language family, a group of languages spoken by peoples around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the Syrian plains, and the Arabian Peninsula (Mukarromah & Hidayat, 2024).

In Indonesia, especially in the city of Padangsidempuan, which is known for its many Islamic boarding schools, Arabic language learning plays a strategic role in shaping the scientific quality of students (Muin, 2022). As we know, learning program management is a very important part of every institution in starting and running programs within the institution, because the success of Arabic language programs depends on the strength of program management within the institution (Noverma et al., 2025).

The management of Arabic language learning programs needs to be designed in a planned and sustainable manner so that learning is effective and supports the development of students' speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills (Siti Aisiyah Siregar et al., 2024). Then, in the current era of globalization in education, effective and efficient management is also needed in administering a program (Karim et al., 2024). And management can be defined as the organization or management of all resources consisting of several processes (Fitri et al., 2023). In addition, a program is defined as a series of planned activities that will be carried out to achieve specific objectives (Fitri et al., 2023).

However, the management patterns of Arabic language learning programs in Islamic boarding schools often vary depending on the educational orientation of each institution (Karim et al., 2024). Therefore, the Arabic language program management pattern in Islamic boarding schools generally includes, first, the planning stage, which is the most important process of all management functions because without planning, the other functions of organizing, directing, and controlling will not be able to run (Nurmalina et al., 2023), Second, organization is the process of dividing work into smaller tasks, assigning those tasks to people according to their abilities, allocating resources, and coordinating them to achieve the organization's objectives effectively (Ahmad et al., 2023), Third, implementation is an action to ensure that all members of the group strive to achieve targets in accordance with managerial implementation and organizational efforts. Finally, evaluation is the assessment of learning that has gone through the

testing stage so that the results of the objectives can be determined (Noverma et al., 2025; Saparudin et al., 2024).

After reading several journals on Arabic language learning program management patterns, researchers found that there are generally three Arabic language learning program management patterns used, namely: based on the four language skills (maharah al-lughawiyah), based on classical texts (turats), and based on grammar (qawaid an-nahwiyyah wa ash-sharfiyyah) (Nuha, 2024), and can adjust to the needs of students, both for communication, namely by developing a language environment (bi'ah lughawiyah) as a communicative method and integrating speaking practice into daily activities (Maghfurin et al., 2023), as well as mastery of grammar such as the I'rab method and the use of special books (Hanani et al., 2024). Therefore, the integration of structural and functional methods is highly recommended so that students can master Arabic comprehensively: communicate fluently, understand classical literature, and master grammar (Afriati et al., 2025; Azhar, Wahyudi, & Promadi, 2022; Hamed et al., 2024).

The importance of research on Arabic language learning management patterns can be seen from the fact that although Arabic is taught in almost all Islamic boarding schools, the level of proficiency among students often varies (Fitri et al., 2022). The study also found that constraints such as limited study time are one of the main obstacles faced by students in various educational contexts. (Elmannan et al., 2021), and the recommended strategies to overcome these obstacles include better learning planning, forming study groups, and establishing learning routines and goals (Axatovna, 2025; Walck-Shannon et al., 2024).

Furthermore, research also shows that limited facilities are a major obstacle in education, especially in remote or underdeveloped areas (Siagian et al., 2024; Suharningsih & Fathoni, 2025), The study also found that obstacles related to teacher competence remain a major challenge in the world of education (Galeng, 2024), and obstacles often encountered include a lack of professional training (Chin et al., 2022), limited access to technology and infrastructure (Knyazeva et al., 2022), as well as low teacher motivation, especially in remote areas or among teachers approaching retirement age (Harianto & Anshori, 2021; Setiawan et al., 2024), as well as interference from the mother tongue, as this interference can affect various aspects, such as pronunciation (phonology) (Nwokedi, 2023), grammar (Muliana et al., 2025), vocabulary (lexical), intonation (Nair & Krish, 2021; Rohach & Kishko, 2023), all of the obstacles mentioned above contribute to uneven learning outcomes (Zurqoni et al., 2020).

Some students are able to communicate well both verbally and in writing, but others are only able to understand the texts in the classical Islamic books without being able to actively apply Arabic (Khusnan & Syaifullah, 2020). In many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, learning still focuses on understanding texts (kitab kuning), reading, and grammar (Nabihah et al., 2025). As a result, santri are

more dominant in passive skills such as reading and comprehension but are less trained in speaking and writing. This fact shows that there is a gap between ideal needs and practice in the field (Ihwan et al., 2022).

A number of previous studies have discussed Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools. For example, Nurhadi's (2019) study emphasizes the importance of integrating communicative methods in improving students' speaking skills (Efendi et al., 2024). Another study by Fadilah (2021) reviews the effectiveness of using classical Islamic texts as the main tool for deepening religious knowledge while enriching vocabulary. Meanwhile, research by Ramadhan (2022) shows that mastery of grammar (nahwu-sharf) is still considered fundamental to understanding classical Arabic texts, even though it tends to be less popular among santri. However, these three studies remain separate, without attempting to systematically link how the three approaches to Arabic language learning program management are applied in Islamic boarding schools, particularly in Padangsidempuan.

Based on this description, it can be understood that the main problem that arises is the lack of a comprehensive study on how Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan design and manage Arabic language learning programs by combining or choosing between three main patterns: language skills-based, classical texts, and grammar.

Therefore, the researchers posed several questions for study: First, how is the management pattern of Arabic language learning programs based on classical texts implemented in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan? Second, what is the pattern of Arabic language learning program management oriented towards the four language skills in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan? Third, what is the pattern of Arabic language learning program management based on grammar in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan?

The purpose of this study is, first, to identify and analyze the management patterns of Arabic language learning programs based on classical texts in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan. Second, to identify and analyze the patterns of Arabic language learning program management oriented towards the four language skills in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan. Third, to identify and analyze patterns of Arabic language learning program management based on grammar in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan.

Thus, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the management patterns of Arabic language learning programs in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan and their contribution to the development of Arabic language learning quality that is relevant to the needs of students in the modern era.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a field study design (field research) (Daflaini & Mulyani, 2023). to gain an in-depth understanding of the management patterns of Arabic language learning programs in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City. A qualitative approach is considered relevant as it allows researchers to collect data directly from the field and to understand the reality holistically in accordance with the socio-cultural context of Islamic boarding schools (Rofiah & Bungin, 2021). The research was conducted over a period of three months, from sept to november 2025, which enabled sufficient time for repeated observations, interviews, and data verification to achieve data saturation.

The research sites were two Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City that implement Arabic language learning programs as part of their curriculum, namely Al-Ansor Islamic Boarding School and Istiqomah Islamic Boarding School. These two pesantren were selected purposively based on specific criteria: (1) having a structured Arabic language learning program, (2) implementing Arabic language practice in daily boarding school activities, and (3) granting researchers full access to conduct observations, interviews, and documentation. The selection of only two pesantren was intended to allow an in-depth and focused exploration of program management patterns rather than a broad comparison across multiple institutions.

The subjects of this study consisted of several key informants, namely Arabic teachers at Al-Ansor Islamic Boarding School (NS) and Istiqomah Islamic Boarding School (KN), as well as students at Al-Ansor Islamic Boarding School (ZH) and Istiqomah Islamic Boarding School (NI). There were two Arabic language teachers who served as informants, with teaching experience ranging from two to five years, and were therefore considered to have the technical competence and experience in teaching Arabic. The students who were used as informants consisted of Aliyah level students as representatives of students who directly experienced the implementation of the Arabic language learning program management model.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation (Knott et al., 2022; Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2021). Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format to allow flexibility while maintaining focus on the research objectives. The interview questions focused on management patterns of Arabic language learning programs, including classical text-based learning, four-language-skills-oriented programs, and grammar-based learning. Detailed interview questions are provided in the appendix to maintain the conciseness of the main text. Observations were conducted six times at each pesantren, with each observation lasting approximately 60–90 minutes, to examine the implementation of learning program management in real classroom and boarding school settings.

Documentation was used to collect supporting data such as curricula, lesson schedules, organizational structures, evaluation reports, and pesantren regulations related to Arabic language programs.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed in this study. Prior to data collection, researchers obtained permission from pesantren authorities and informed consent from all participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. To ensure confidentiality, participants' identities were anonymized using initials.

The researchers acted as the primary research instruments and adopted a reflective stance throughout the research process. Researcher positionality was acknowledged by maintaining awareness of potential biases and continuously reflecting on interactions with participants during data collection and analysis to minimize subjectivity.

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Kartika & Mulyadi, 2024). Data saturation was considered achieved when no new themes or relevant information emerged from subsequent interviews and observations. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, several strategies were employed, including prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation of data sources and methods (interviews, observations, and documentation), member checking with selected informants, and peer debriefing with fellow researchers. (Asipi et al., 2022; Khoiriyah et al., 2024; Safira et al., 2021; Suciati & Sartika, 2023)

3. Result

1. Arabic Language Learning Management Model Based on Classical Texts

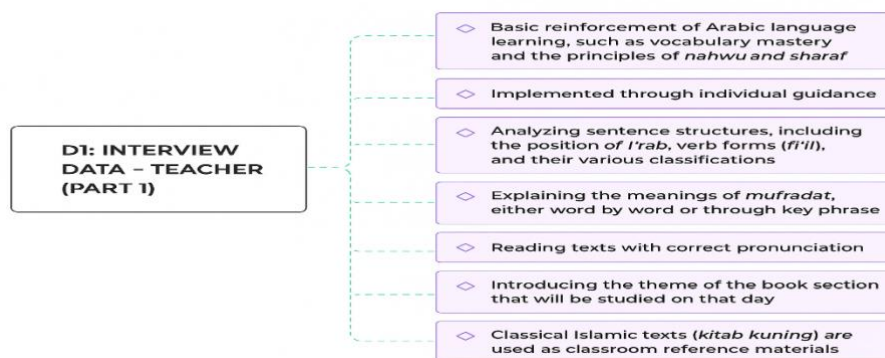


Figure I Teacher Interviews Part I

This is reflected in the results of an interview with Teacher NS, who stated:

“At Al-Ansor, Arabic language learning is entirely centered on the yellow book. Each session begins with reading the text, followed by explaining the meaning of each word, and then I explain the qawaid or rules contained in the text. The books I use include Jurumiyah, Imrithi, and several basic fiqh books that are tailored to the students' abilities so that they can follow the lessons gradually and not feel overwhelmed”.

This approach shows that teachers not only consider the level of difficulty of the textbook, but also design learning in a gradual and targeted manner.

In line with this, the KN Teacher emphasized the importance of choosing appropriate books, stating:

“We use the books Safinatun Najah, Mutammimah, and several other basic books. Learning plans are made by selecting the books that are most appropriate for the students' level of ability. We do not immediately give them difficult books, but start with simple ones so that the students' understanding can be built gradually.”

This confirms that both Islamic boarding schools implement a systematic management planning model that is oriented towards the initial competencies of the students.

During the implementation stage, the study of classical Islamic texts is conducted using traditional methods such as bandongan sorogan and musyawarah, but with a modern twist in the form of active mentoring and guided discussions.

Teacher NS explains the mentoring process:

“If students have difficulty reading the book, I assist them one by one. Usually, direct examples in reading and repeated practice make them more confident and accustomed to reading Arabic texts without harakat.”

Meanwhile, Teacher KN emphasized a dialogical approach when students had difficulty understanding the meaning of the text:

“If students don't understand the meaning of a text, I invite them to discuss the possible meanings first. Only then do I provide a full explanation to strengthen their understanding. This method makes them more critical when reading the scriptures.”

Next, we interviewed students from the two Islamic boarding schools to reinforce the above findings.

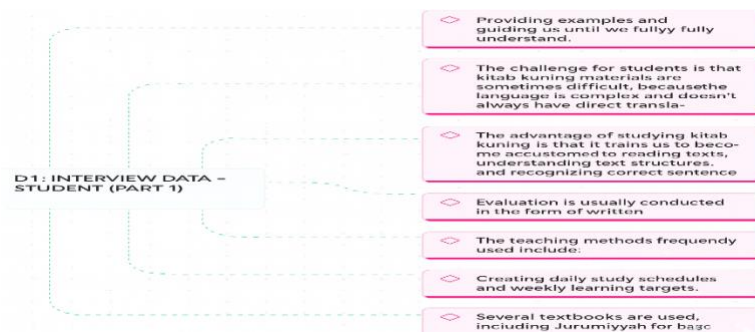


Figure II Student Interviews Part I

ZH student said:

"Usually, the teacher reads the text first, then we repeat it. If we make a mistake, the teacher corrects us immediately. Sometimes we are asked to explain the meaning of a line or a sentence, and that really helps us understand the book."

Santri NI added:

"We are often asked to find the meaning ourselves before the teacher explains it. It was difficult at first, but eventually we got used to it and became more active in understanding the text."

This data shows that learning is no longer entirely one-way, as is often criticized in traditional approaches. Students are given space to think independently, guess meanings, and discuss the content of the text, thereby increasing their engagement.

The implementation of classical Islamic texts in Padangsidimpuan Islamic boarding schools combines tradition and innovation. The bandongan sorogan method remains the foundation, but the role of teachers has evolved into that of facilitators who guide students to actively participate. Teachers introduce vocabulary before reading the text, provide reading examples, assist students individually, and involve them in discussions about meaning. This pattern creates a learning process that is oriented towards a deep understanding of texts without harakat, while also encouraging Arabic language analysis skills.

Thus, Arabic language learning based on classical texts at Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidimpuan is an example of program management that has successfully preserved tradition while adapting it to modern learning needs. Islamic boarding schools not only prepare students to understand classical texts, but also to develop practical Arabic language skills through an interactive, structured learning process that is oriented towards deep understanding.

2. Arabic Language Learning Pattern Based on Four Skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing).

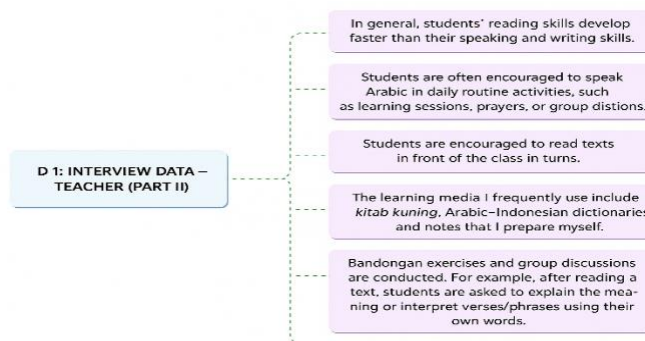


Figure II Teacher Interviews Part II

This is reflected in the statement by Teacher NS, who explains:

"Usually, the first skills I teach are listening and speaking. Through these exercises, students begin to get used to the sounds of Arabic. Only then do we move on to reading and writing skills. The activities include simple conversation exercises, listening to readings, reading short texts, and writing sentences using new vocabulary." This approach shows that the teacher builds the students' language skills gradually through a sequential and logical pattern of familiarization.

In line with this, KN teachers emphasized that learning the four skills does indeed begin with oral aspects:

"Listening and speaking skills are also our initial focus. We engage in short dialogues, read together, and do writing exercises. Our media are limited to blackboards, textbooks, and a few recordings, but we still try to maximize what we have."

This statement shows a similarity between the two pesantren, namely prioritizing the oral skills of santri before moving on to more complex literacy skills. The absence of modern media does not diminish the teachers' commitment to continue applying the four skills, albeit in a simple form.

The results of interviews with santri further reinforce these findings.

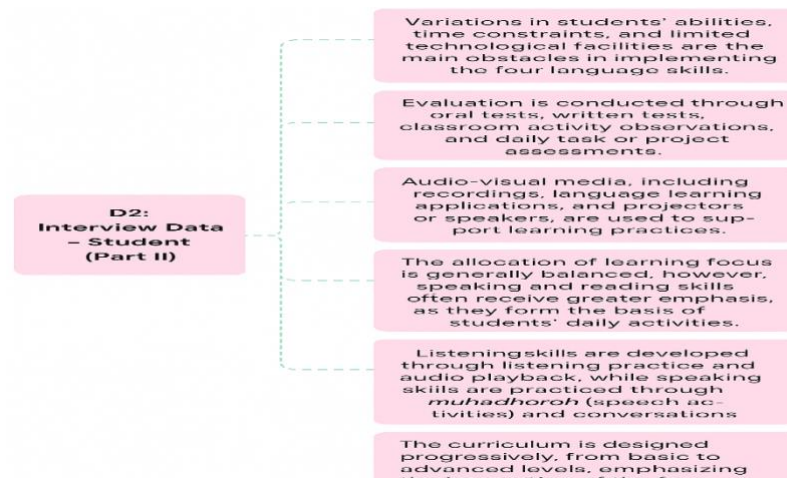


Figure IV Student Interviews Part II

ZH explained how the learning activities took place:

“Speaking practice was usually done once a week, while greetings and short conversations were sometimes done every day. For writing practice, we were asked to make sentences from new vocabulary.”

Meanwhile, Santri NI added to the challenges faced by santri in applying Arabic outside the classroom:

“We rarely use Arabic outside the classroom because the environment is not conducive. But the ustadz still tells us to practice, even in simple conversations.”

This data shows that even though the four skills approach has been implemented, the continuity of daily practice is still limited because the language environment does not yet fully support it.

The implementation of the four skills in Padangsidempuan Islamic boarding schools reflects a combination of tradition and modernization efforts. Teachers conduct listening exercises through text reading, speaking exercises through simple dialogues, strengthen qira'ah through book reading, and writing exercises through sentence composition assignments. However, this practice still relies on conventional methods due to limitations in audio media and technology. Nevertheless, teachers continue to facilitate these exercises so that students gain a more comprehensive learning experience.

From a managerial perspective, the four skills are taught without a specific curriculum that explicitly regulates the proportion of practice for each skill. Teachers organize practice patterns based on the needs of students and classroom conditions. This makes learning flexible, but at the same time causes an imbalance in the intensity of each skill. Istima' and kalam skills are given more attention at the beginning, while qira'ah and kitabah appear as reinforcement later on.

In general, the findings of this study indicate that learning based on the four skills has been implemented in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City, but it has not yet reached the stage of habituation as described in the literature on modern Islamic boarding schools. Learning is going well in the classroom, but it is not reinforced by the language environment outside the classroom. Extracurricular activities that support language practice are also not functioning optimally, so that the students' speaking and listening skills have not been trained intensively.

Thus, this study presents a critique that literature tends to describe ideal conditions, while the reality in the field is more complex and does not fully meet the four skills standards as described in theory. The results of this study not only refute several claims in the literature but also reinforce the argument that learning the four skills in Islamic boarding schools requires management support, facilities, and a more adequate language environment

3. Grammar-Based Learning Pattern (Qawā'id-Tarjamah)

This is evident in the statement by Teacher NS, who explains:

"I start with basic rules such as *mubtada'-khabar* and *fi'il-fa'il*. Once the students understand these basics, I move on to more complex structures. I use the deductive method because it is easier for students to accept. I explain the rules first, then give examples from the book."

This statement shows that grammar learning is built on a tiered pattern that emphasizes conceptual understanding before practice.

A similar approach was also conveyed by Teacher KN:

"I also use the deductive method. *Qawaid* is the main basis for understanding the yellow book, so students must understand the concept before reading the text. We conduct evaluations through translation exercises and sentence analysis."

This confirms that both *pesantren* have almost the same teaching pattern, which is to place *qawaid* as the main gateway to understanding Arabic texts.

The results of the interviews with *santri* also reinforce these findings.

ZH, a student at Al-Ansor Islamic Boarding School, said:

"The *qawaid* lessons are very helpful in reading the book. Sometimes it feels difficult when there are many rules, but if the teacher gives additional examples, we understand better."

Meanwhile, NI, a student at Darul Istiqomah Islamic Boarding School, added:

"The rules really help us understand the text, even though sometimes the new rules are confusing. But the teacher repeats them until we understand."

This data shows that although the deductive method is considered effective, challenges still arise when too many rules are given without sufficient supporting examples. Teachers work around this by using repetition, i'rab exercises, and translation exercises to reinforce the students' understanding.

The implementation of qawaid learning in both pesantren illustrates a combination of traditional methods and the needs of modern santri. Teachers still rely on lectures and explanations of rules (deductive), but also provide space for sentence analysis exercises and translation practice. Although learning facilities are still simple, relying only on blackboards and printed books, the learning process remains intensive and focused on mastering Arabic sentence structure.

From a managerial perspective, qawaid learning takes place without a formal curriculum that clearly regulates the progress of the material. Teachers organize the delivery of rules based on the abilities of the students and the progress of the class. This pattern creates flexible learning, but causes the depth of the material to be highly dependent on the experience and initiative of the teacher. Nevertheless, qawaid still serves as a foundation for students in understanding unvocalized classical texts.

In general, the findings of this study indicate that grammar learning in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City has been effective in a traditional context, but has not yet reached the level of innovation described in the literature on modern Islamic boarding schools. Learning is teacher-centered, rule-oriented, and does not yet fully utilize active methods or supporting technology.

Thus, this study contributes empirical clarification that qawaid learning in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City is still deeply rooted in traditional patterns. Although effective in building a foundation for understanding Arabic language structure, this learning requires more modern management, curriculum, and facilities in order to respond to the challenges of learning classical Islamic texts in the current era.

4. Discussion

1. Arabic Language Learning Management Model Based on Classical Texts

Based on the findings of this study, it can be seen that the management pattern of Arabic language learning programs based on classical texts in Islamic boarding schools is a classical educational model that remains relevant to this day (Alwiyah et al., 2023; Hikmatuloh et al., 2024), because since ancient times, the yellow book has been an integral part of the Islamic education system in Indonesia (Ariyanto & Zalaluddin, 2025; Nabihah et al., 2025).

The results of the study show that the management pattern of Arabic language learning programs based on classical texts in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City consists of three main stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, teachers select texts

according to the level of the students' abilities, starting with basic texts before moving on to more complex ones.

And below are the results of interviews with two Arabic teachers from the Al-Ansor Islamic boarding school and the Istiqomah Islamic boarding school.

2. Arabic Language Learning Pattern Based on Four Skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)

Based on the researchers' findings, the pattern of Arabic language learning management in Islamic boarding schools that integrates the four language skills through a combination of the national curriculum and the Islamic boarding school's own curriculum has become the main practice in many modern Islamic boarding schools (Jufrih et al., 2022; Mubin et al., 2025), and reinforced through the daily activities of students in the dormitory and extracurricular activities (Atabik et al., 2024, 2023).

The results of the study indicate that the management pattern of the Arabic language learning program based on four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City is implemented through a gradual exercise arrangement that starts from receptive skills to productive skills. The initial focus of teachers is on strengthening listening and speaking skills before moving on to reading and writing skills.

3. Grammar-Based Learning Pattern (Qawā'id-Tarjamah)

Research data shows that Arabic language learning based on grammar (qawā'id an-naḥwu waṣ-ṣarf) in Islamic boarding schools remains the main foundation for understanding classical texts. (Azhar, Wahyudi, Karim, et al., 2022), However, it is now managed more systematically so that it no longer relies solely on traditional methods, but emphasizes a more practical understanding of the rules for students (Arifin et al., 2023; Fitri et al., 2023).

The results of the study show that grammar-based learning (qawā'id-tarjamah) in Islamic boarding schools in Padangsidempuan City is implemented through the gradual teaching of rules, starting from the most basic structures to more complex ones. Teachers use a deductive approach, which is to explain the rules first before giving examples of their use in texts. This pattern illustrates that theoretical understanding is considered the main foundation before students can read classical Islamic texts properly.

5. Conclusion

A. Article Conclusion

This study offers a theoretical contribution by framing Arabic language learning management in Islamic boarding schools as an integrated triadic model consisting of the yellow book, four language skills, and qawā'id patterns. Rather than operating independently, these patterns function interdependently, with effectiveness determined by the level of managerial integration. The dominance of the yellow book and qawā'id patterns reflect the epistemological foundation

of pesantren education, while the limited optimization of the four-language skills pattern indicates a structural gap between traditional instruction and communicative language learning. Practically, the findings highlight the need for targeted teacher development focused on communicative pedagogy and the integration of digital media, alongside the provision of supportive facilities such as Arabic-speaking environments, basic language laboratories, and audio-visual resources. From a policy perspective, this study underscores the importance of institutional support and curriculum frameworks that balance classical textual mastery with communicative competence in Arabic language education. Future research should involve broader institutional contexts and adopt mixed or longitudinal methods to examine the sustainability and long-term impact of integrated learning management models. Despite its contextual limitations, this study provides a concise conceptual foundation for advancing both theory and practice in pesantren-based Arabic language learning management.

B. Suggestions / Research Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that Islamic boarding schools improve the quality of Arabic language learning management by strengthening teacher competence, providing adequate learning facilities, and building a consistent language environment to support the application of the four language skills. In addition, integration between the learning of classical texts, qawā'id, and communicative approaches needs to be carried out so that students can master text comprehension as well as modern language skills. For further research, it is recommended to conduct studies on Islamic boarding schools with more diverse characteristics and to examine the use of technology and digital media in Arabic language learning as a step towards adapting to developments in education in the modern era.

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