



The Concept of Arabic Language Learning Programs in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-25 Revised: 2026-05-29 Accepted: 2026-06-30 Keywords: Arabic Language, Learning Program, Understanding, Objectives. DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.8979 Corresponding Author: Mutia Khairani mutia.khairani131217@gmail.com Arabic Language Education, Sultan Syarif Kasim State Islamic University, Riau	<i>This article aims to examine the concept of Arabic language learning programs in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru, particularly in relation to the understanding and objectives of learning. The method used is descriptive qualitative through teacher interviews and classroom observation. The results of the study show that teachers understand the learning program as an integrated system covering planning, implementation, and evaluation to develop students' communicative competence. Learning is implemented communicatively with the integration of vocabulary, grammar, and conversation. The program objectives are formulated based on the four language skills with an emphasis on the active use of Arabic. Implementation is supported by activities such as Arabic Day and Hiwar Club. The main obstacles include low student motivation and limited media and facilities. In general, the program is in line with the Merdeka Curriculum but requires strengthening of strategies and the learning environment.</i>

1. Introduction

Arabic is one of the international languages that holds a special position in the world (Ahmadi & Awaluddin, 2023; Fadhli et al., 2025; Nurlis et al., 2024; Triandani et al., 2022). In addition to being an official language of the United Nations (UN), it is also spoken by more than 400 million native speakers spread across the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Asia (Aldawood et al., 2023; Almelhes, 2024; Alqurashi & al., 2022; Islam et al., 2025). However, more than just a language of communication, Arabic has an important position in the lives of Muslims around the world because it is the language of the Qur'an, hadith, and classical and contemporary Islamic literature (Agustini, 2022; Efendi et al., 2023; Harisca et al., 2023; Kamaluddin et al., 2024). Mastery of Arabic among Muslims, especially in Indonesia, is not only seen as an academic necessity, but also a religious and cultural necessity (Hasan et al., 2024; M. S. Ismail, 2019; Khasanah, 2024).

In Indonesia, Arabic has long been an integral part of the education system, especially in madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, Islamic universities, and non-formal educational institutions (A. D. A. Ayuni & Amat, 2023; Fitrianto, 2024; Hanifiyah et al., 2023). The government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has also designated Arabic as a compulsory subject at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) levels (Hidayati & Hidayat, 2024; Maksum & Jumaha, 2023; Yunita et al., 2023). This shows an awareness of the importance of Arabic in shaping a Muslim generation that is able to understand Islamic teachings from their original sources (Abdurrozzaq et al., 2024; Efendi, 2023; Mubarak, 2020). In practice, the implementation of Arabic language learning often faces various challenges, both in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, availability of learning resources, and student motivation (Ahmad, 2018; S. Idrus et al., 2024; H. Siregar et al., 2024).

In this context, the concept of Arabic language learning programs becomes very important to study (Fadhli et al., 2025; Lubis et al., 2024; Noverma et al., 2025). A learning program can be understood as a plan that is systematically and structurally designed to achieve predetermined learning objectives (Fatimah, 2023; S. A. Siregar et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2024). This plan usually includes components such as objectives, materials, methods, media, evaluation, and implementation strategies that are relevant to the needs of the students (A. Ismail et al., 2024; Kamaluddin et al., 2024; Mahmud, 2019; Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023a). With a clear learning program, teachers have guidelines for teaching, while students have direction in the learning process (N. Fadillah, 2021; Husnah et al., 2024; N. Kurniasari et al., 2024).

The definition of Arabic language learning programs cannot be separated from the basic concepts of learning planning in general (A. P. Ayuni et al., 2024; Mukhlis & Wahyudi, 2024; Silvia et al., 2023; S. A. Siregar et al., 2024). According to educational theory, learning programs serve as a framework that guides teachers in determining the steps needed to achieve certain competencies (Fadhli et al., 2024; Muadifah, 2020; Muhaimin, 2016). In the context of language learning, these programs are usually designed based on the objectives of language proficiency, which cover four aspects: listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*) (Sahidin et al., 2024; Zaini, 2019).

Learning objectives are the goals to be achieved from the entire teaching and learning process (Albina & Pratama, 2025; Fathoni, 2023; Jamil & Nandang, 2025). These objectives can be categorized into general and specific objectives. General objectives are usually related to the formation of students' basic Arabic language skills, both passive and active. Meanwhile, specific objectives include the ability to understand religious texts, develop everyday communication skills, and foster an appreciation of Arab culture (Hidayat, 2017; Rahayu & Amril, 2025; Salam et al., 2022).

The objectives of the Arabic language learning program are not limited to linguistic aspects, but also include affective and spiritual aspects. Students are expected not only to be able to use Arabic in scientific communication, but also to have a positive attitude towards the language, foster a love for the Qur'an and hadith, and increase their motivation to learn as a form of devotion to religion (M. Fadillah et al., 2025; Hamidullah, 2020; Hidayat, 2017; Salam et al., 2022; Simamora et al., 2024). Thus, Arabic language learning has a dual function: as a means of scientific communication and as a medium for character building and faith (Fauziyah, 2019; Muhartini & Amril, 2023; Zakiyah, 2024).

Pekanbaru, as the capital of Riau Province, is one of the cities with rapid development in Islamic education (Fadhli et al., 2025; Lubis et al., 2024). Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) has become a popular educational institution among the community because it offers a balance between general knowledge and religious knowledge, including Arabic language subjects (Fitri et al., 2023; Husnah et al., 2024). In various MTs in Pekanbaru, Arabic is

positioned not only as a compulsory subject but also as the main means of gaining a deeper understanding of the sources of Islamic teachings.

In practice, the implementation of Arabic language learning often faces various challenges, both in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, availability of learning resources, and student motivation (Ahmad, 2018; M. Idrus et al., 2024). This fact is also evident in Pekanbaru, which has experienced rapid development in Islamic education. Based on data from the Pekanbaru City Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2025, there are 45 Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) with a total of approximately 18,500 students (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025; Nurdianto & Ismail, 2020). This condition shows the high level of public interest in Islamic-based education, while also indicating the challenges in equalizing the quality of Arabic language learning at the madrasah level.

More specifically, of the 45 MTs, there are 3 public MTs and 42 private MTs, with varying accreditation statuses ranging from A, B, C, to some that are not yet accredited (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025b). Initial observations in several MTs show diverse dynamics. For example, in 2025, MTs Negeri 1 Pekanbaru held an Arabic Language Assessment (OBA) at the provincial level as a form of strengthening students' language skills (MTsN 1, 2025). Meanwhile, MTs Masmur Pekanbaru, as one of the favorite private madrasahs, actively publishes school activities, although specific data on Arabic language learning achievements is not yet available (MTs Masmur, 2025). Meanwhile, MTs Al Muttaqin Pekanbaru in 2025 continues to develop technology-based learning innovations by integrating digital platforms into the Arabic language learning process (MTs Al Muttaqin, 2025).

However, the current reality on the ground shows that the implementation of the Arabic language learning program at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru still faces various challenges. One of these challenges is the high level of diversity in students' initial abilities, where some students are already fluent in reading the Qur'an, some are only familiar with the Hijaiyah alphabet, and some have never had any formal experience learning Arabic (Akbar, 2023; Nurhadi & Lubis, 2023). This situation creates disparities in the learning process, forcing teachers to deal with highly heterogeneous classes and making it difficult to achieve curriculum outcomes evenly (Lukmana et al., 2024; Syaefudin & Umi, 2023).

Many previous studies have shown that Arabic language learning in schools or madrasahs often still faces serious obstacles. Some of the problems that arise include low student interest in learning, limited innovative teaching methods, minimal use of modern learning media, and a lack of opportunities for students to actively practice Arabic (Putri et al., 2023; Supriyanto, 2021; Umam & Wijaya, 2023).

Practical challenges in the field also concern learning methods and media. Some madrasahs still use traditional methods that are more lecture or face to face in nature, with few interactive activities, lack of media use, and lack of communicative activities. Learning programs are often inflexible in adapting to the needs of students and technological developments. On the other hand, learning materials are sometimes too focused on classical religious texts without balancing them with contemporary material or the use of modern Arabic in the context of real communication.

The urgency of this study becomes even more apparent when linked to the challenges of the times. In the era of globalization and the 4.0 industrial revolution, language learning is not only required to prepare students to be able to understand classical texts, but also to be able to communicate in a modern context. Students need to be equipped with 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. All of these skills can be integrated into Arabic language learning if the learning program is well designed (Abdillah, 2019; Nazifa & al., 2024; Yanda & Ali, 2023).

Several previous studies relevant to this study can be used as references in understanding the concept of Arabic language learning programs. First, a study conducted by Masturoh & Mahmudi (2023) entitled "Implementation of Curriculum-Based Arabic Language Learning Programs in Madrasahs" examined how Arabic language learning programs are designed and implemented in the context of formal Islamic education. The results of this study indicate that a good Arabic language learning program must include elements of goal planning, material preparation, methods, media, and evaluation that are systematically arranged so that the learning process runs effectively. This study emphasizes that teachers need clear guidelines in implementing Arabic language learning so that learning objectives can be optimally achieved, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Thus, this study provides an overview that the concept of an Arabic language learning program is not merely an administrative document, but a practical instrument that serves to direct all learning activities so that they are focused and in line with the needs of students (Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023).

Second, research conducted by Asyrofi & Ridwan (2023) in their article entitled "Basic Concepts of Arabic Language Learning Programs in the Perspective of Modern Curriculum" focuses on formulating learning programs that are relevant to the demands of globalization and technological developments. This study emphasizes that Arabic language learning programs should not only focus on the ability to understand classical religious texts, but also encourage students to have communicative competencies that include listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The results of the study show that Arabic language learning programs must integrate a communicative approach and utilize digital learning media to be more in line with the characteristics of millennial students. This study adds that the success of learning programs is determined by the alignment between the written design and classroom implementation, including teacher readiness and supporting facilities (Asyrofi & Ridwan, 2023).

Based on the above description, it is clear that the discussion on the concept of Arabic language learning programs, particularly related to the understanding and objectives of Arabic language learning programs relevant to the needs of students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru. This study is expected to make a real contribution to improving the quality of Arabic language learning. Not only that, the results of this study can also be used as a reference for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational institutions in formulating more effective learning strategies that are in line with the needs of students.

Therefore, the researcher would like to discuss the following: First, how the Arabic language learning program is understood and implemented at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru. Second, how the objectives of the Arabic language learning program are formulated and implemented at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to describe in depth the concept of Arabic language learning programs at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru. The research locations were MTsN 1 Pekanbaru and MTsN 3 Pekanbaru, which were selected based on accessibility and active involvement in the implementation of Arabic language programs.

The research subjects were Arabic language teachers, who were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: actively teaching, involved in planning and implementing learning programs, and willing to be informants. The number of informants was determined until data saturation was reached, as is common in qualitative research (Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023b; Salsabila & Setiyawan, 2024). The teachers who were selected as informants were those who had been actively teaching Arabic, were directly involved in the planning and implementation of Arabic language learning

programs, and were willing to provide information related to learning strategies, methods, and challenges.

Data were obtained through interviews and observations. Teacher interviews focused on the implementation of the learning program, the achievement of objectives, obstacles, and the form of support provided by the madrasah. Observations were used to assess the suitability between the planning and implementation of learning in the classroom (M. Fadillah, 2021; D. Kurniasari et al., 2024).

Data analysis uses an interactive model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Nurdin & Hafidzi, 2023; Salsabila & Setiyawan, 2024). Data validity is maintained through: source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checks to ensure the accuracy of information (Akmaliyah et al., 2021; Nurdin & Hafidzi, 2023).

3. Result and Discussion

Based on data from observations and interviews, the following results were obtained:

Definition of Arabic Language Learning Program

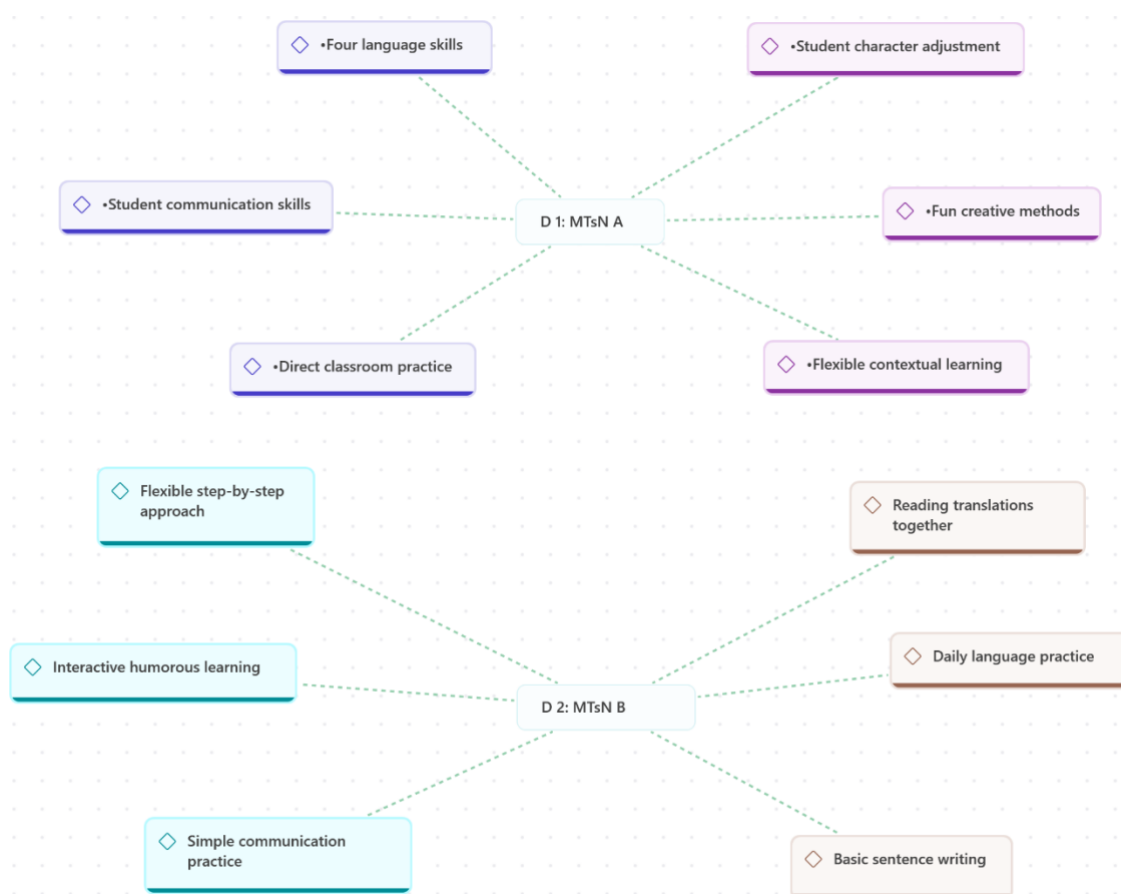


Figure 1.1 Problem Statement 1

Based on interviews with four teachers from MTsN A and MTsN B, understanding of the Arabic language learning program shows diverse but complementary patterns.

Teacher 1 at MTsN A interprets the learning program as a process that must be based on the conditions and characteristics of students in the classroom. This teacher emphasizes that the diversity of students' abilities is the basis for determining learning strategies, as stated:

"I try to adapt to the students' personalities. Some are quick learners, while others still have difficulty reading Arabic script." (Interview, MZ; 2025). Therefore, he views the learning

program as a flexible and creative activity, utilizing fun methods through games and songs so that students feel closer to the Arabic language, as he said: *"I usually start with something light... sometimes using songs or games to liven up the classroom atmosphere."* (Interview, MZ; 2025). This view supports the theory of learning program concepts in the literature that emphasizes the importance of flexible planning, integration of methods, media, and mutually supportive evaluation (Akbari & Satriadi, 2023; Rafi et al., 2025; Syam, 2025).

Meanwhile, Teacher 2 at MTsN A understands the learning program as a means to develop students' communicative competence in a balanced manner. This teacher emphasizes the importance of mastering the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), which, according to him, are outlined in the teaching materials and implemented directly in the classroom. He explains that:

"The objective of the program is clear: for students to understand and use Arabic, both passively and actively." (Interview, DR; 2025). It is implemented through systematic activities, such as vocabulary repetition, simple conversations, and reading exercises, as stated: *"Each meeting begins with vocabulary repetition and simple conversations, then moves on to mufradat and qawaid material."* (Interview, DR; 2025).

Meanwhile, Teacher 1 at MTsN B views the learning program as a gradual process that must provide comfort to students. For him, flexibility is key because students' backgrounds and abilities vary. The teacher said: *"Arabic language learning is carried out in stages and adjusted to the abilities of the students... our approach must be flexible."* (Interview, FR; 2025). He also emphasized the use of humor as part of the learning program because, according to him, it helps reduce student anxiety, as he said:

"I usually use humor to make the atmosphere more relaxed and for students to understand the material more easily." (Interview, FR; 2025). This understanding illustrates that learning programs are not only about curriculum structure, but also about creating emotional conditions that support the learning process. This supports the theory of literature understanding that learning programs must be able to form positive attitudes towards Arabic (Jezy et al., 2025; Rizki & Sinaga, 2024).

Meanwhile, Teacher 2 of MTsN B interprets the Arabic language learning program as a process of language familiarization through routine activities and gradual literacy exercises. This teacher explains that small familiarization with the Arabic language is an important part of the program, as he or she states:

"At the beginning of the lesson, we make it a habit to greet each other and pray in Arabic... from small things like that, students become accustomed to it." (Interview, G; 2025). In addition, he emphasized that learning must involve direct practice in understanding texts, translating them together, until finally students are able to write simple sentences. He said: *"I often ask students to read short texts and translate them together... so that they don't just memorize but understand the meaning."* (Interview, G; 2025).

From these four perspectives, it can be concluded that Arabic language learning programs are understood by teachers as adaptive pedagogical efforts that are not only based on curriculum documents, but are also realized through adjustments to student abilities, the development of communicative skills, the creation of a comfortable learning atmosphere, and the gradual habituation of language use. This shows that the success of learning is more determined by teacher creativity, classroom dynamics, and the suitability of the approach to the student context.

Research findings support the theory that Arabic language learning programs are structured designs that combine objectives, materials, methods, media, and evaluation (Munawwir, 2022; S. A. Siregar et al., 2024). Teachers' emphasis on language skills and language habits is also in line with the concepts of linguistic and communicative competence (Fahmy, 2016; Rosyidi, 2019). However, the research results also criticize the

theory because classroom practices emphasize flexibility, adaptation to student abilities, and the use of affective strategies—elements that are not emphasized in theories that focus on formal planning aspects (Akbari & Satriadi, 2023). Thus, the theory is conceptually relevant, but its implementation is contextual and does not always strictly follow the program structure.

Objectives of the Arabic Language Learning Program

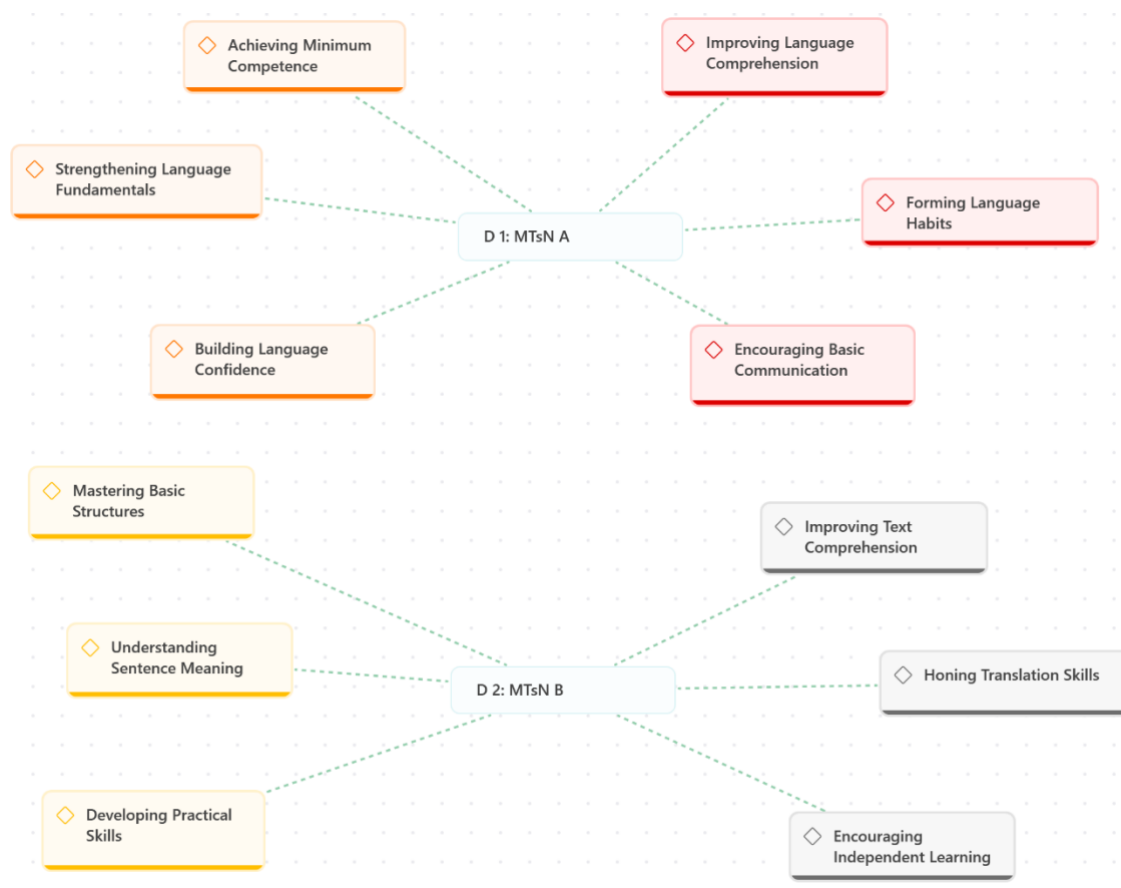


Figure 1.2 Problem Formulation 2

Based on interviews with four teachers from MTsN A and MTsN B, the objectives of the Arabic language learning program were understood in various ways but complemented each other, depending on the pedagogical orientation of each teacher. Teacher 1 from MTsN A viewed that the main objective of Arabic language learning was to build a foundation of language comprehension through language practice. This teacher emphasized the importance of a strong foundation before students were directed to higher skills. He explained:

"The goal of the program for me is for students to really understand the basics first, starting with small habits such as vocabulary and simple sentences." (Interview, MZ; 2025). He also added that this goal includes encouraging students to have the courage to try to communicate, as he said: *"The important thing is that they have the courage to speak first, even if it is simple."* (Interview, MZ; 2025). This is in line with theories that emphasize the importance of strengthening linguistic foundations before moving on to more complex skills (Bloom, 2016; Rosyidi, 2019) and basic communicative competence (Fahmy, 2016).

Meanwhile, Teacher 2 at MTsN A formulated learning objectives in a more formal and structured manner, emphasizing the achievement of minimum competencies and the strengthening of language foundations. This teacher stated:

"We make every learning objective clear in the lesson plan so that students can at least achieve the basic competencies first." (Interview, DR; 2025). In addition to linguistic competence, this teacher also sees increased confidence as part of the program's objectives. He emphasized: *"We want students to not only be able to read or write, but also to be confident in using Arabic in class."* (Interview, DR; 2025). This view supports the theory regarding the necessity of formulating clear and measurable objectives (Munawwir, 2022; S. A. Siregar et al., 2024). However, the emphasis on affective aspects such as confidence is not covered in the literature, which tends to focus on cognitive and linguistic goals (Latifah et al., 2025; Rahayu & Amril, 2025).

Teacher 1 at MTsN B interprets the learning objectives as an effort to build practical skills in understanding and using Arabic. According to him, the objectives must be realistic and relevant to the students' needs. This teacher stated:

"I see the learning objective as enabling students to understand the meaning of sentences and construct simple sentences." (Interview, FR; 2025). He also emphasized that learning should result in skills that can be used immediately, as he said: *"It's not just theory, but they must be able to use Arabic in simple examples."* (Interview, FR; 2025). This view is in line with communicative competence theory, which emphasizes the use of language in real contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Yahya, 2023). However, its orientation towards realistic and contextual goals criticizes some theories that formulate goals in an ideal and universal manner without considering the varying abilities of students in madrasah (Fitriani & Herdah, 2022; Rizal, 2024).

Unlike the others, Teacher 2 at MTsN B focused the learning program on literacy skills, particularly text comprehension and translation skills. This teacher stated:

"Our goal is for students to be able to understand simple texts and translate them correctly." (Interview, FR; 2025). He also mentioned that the learning objectives include independent learning because language skills require continuous practice. As he explained: *"Students must be accustomed to independent learning, because Arabic cannot be learned solely in the classroom."* (Interview, FR; 2025). This focus is supported by theory, as the literature places reading and text comprehension skills as the main objectives of Arabic language learning, especially in academic and religious contexts (Arifin, 2018; Fauzi, 2019; Munawaroh et al., 2024).

From the four interviews, it can be concluded that the teachers understood the objectives of the Arabic language learning program to include several core aspects: strengthening language fundamentals, achieving minimum competency, practical skills in understanding and using Arabic, improving literacy through text comprehension, and building students' confidence and independence. The differences in orientation among teachers show that learning objectives are not understood rigidly, but are practiced adaptively according to the context of the students and the pedagogical approach of each teacher.

The findings indicate that the informants interpret the objectives of Arabic language learning as strengthening linguistic foundations, developing receptive and productive skills, and achieving communicative competence, in line with the theory of multidimensional language learning objectives (Husnah et al., 2024; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

However, classroom practices show that they emphasize more contextual, realistic, and comfort-oriented goals, as well as confidence and independent learning—aspects that are less emphasized in theories that tend to place goals within a formal, structural, and administrative framework (Bloom, 2016; Sumiati et al., 2024). The informants also base their formulation of objectives on the actual needs and abilities of students, thereby criticizing theoretical models that set ideal achievements without considering the varying conditions in madrasah (Fitriani & Herdah, 2022; Rizal, 2024). Thus, the theory remains relevant, but its implementation requires pragmatic adaptation to the learning context.

4. Conclusion

Conceptually, the Arabic language learning program is a planned system that includes planning, implementation, and evaluation to develop communicative language skills. The goal is to master the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in an integrated manner with a religious, academic, and communicative orientation.

This study concludes that the Arabic language learning program at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Pekanbaru has been designed to develop students' communicative competence in accordance with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum and the policies of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Teachers interpret the program as an integrated and continuous system from planning to evaluation.

The implementation of learning uses a communicative and contextual approach through the integration of vocabulary, grammar, and conversation related to everyday life and Islamic values. The learning objectives cover four language skills, but the implementation is still dominated by reading and writing. Additional activities such as the Dialogue Club, Arabic Corner, and Arabic Day support the creation of a language environment, despite being constrained by low student motivation, limited media, and a lack of language laboratory facilities. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen strategies, learning tools, and the application of authentic evaluation to optimize the achievement of learning objectives as a whole.

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