

The Challenges of *Maharah Kitabah* of ICBB Students in Yogyakarta

M. Syaddad Husein Al-Madani^{a,1,*}, Muhammad Syafii Tampubolon^{b,2}, Amrin Mustofa^{c,3}
Muhammad Ghufro^{d,4}

^{a,b,c}Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Madani Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^dMadina Islamic University, Saudi Arabia

¹syaddadhusein@gmail.com; ²ms2728456@gmail.com; ³amrinbinbaz@gmail.com;

⁴muhammadghufroabdulhamid@gmail.com

* Correspondent Author

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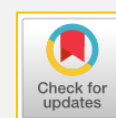
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze the problems associated with the development of maharah al-kitabah in learning Arabic at Madrasah Aliyah. The research method used is descriptive qualitative research with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The results of the study indicate that there are several problems encountered in the development of maharah al-kitabah in Madrasah Aliyah. First, limited resources and adequate learning materials are obstacles in developing students' maharah al-kitabah. The textbooks used do not support adequate writing practice, and the lack of access to varied reading materials also limits the development of students' writing skills. Second, the teacher's lack of understanding and skills in teaching maharah al-kitabah, especially in designing writing assignments that are varied and attract students' interest. Third, the low motivation and interest of students in learning to write Arabic, which can be caused by an unattractive learning approach and the low application of effective learning methods. To overcome this problem, a comprehensive effort is needed. First, it is necessary to develop more diverse and relevant learning resources and materials, including textbooks that better support writing practice. Second, the need for training and professional development for teachers in teaching maharah al-kitabah, including the use of innovative and effective learning methods. Third, it is necessary to increase student motivation and interest through interesting learning approaches, such as the use of information and communication technology and the application of interactive and participatory learning methods.



ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis problematika yang terkait dengan pengembangan maharah al-kitabah dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah Aliyah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa problematika yang dihadapi dalam pengembangan maharah al-kitabah di Madrasah Aliyah. Pertama, terbatasnya sumber daya dan materi pembelajaran yang memadai menjadi kendala dalam mengembangkan maharah al-kitabah peserta didik. Buku teks yang digunakan kurang mendukung latihan menulis yang memadai, dan kurangnya akses terhadap bahan bacaan yang variatif juga membatasi perkembangan kemampuan menulis peserta didik. Kedua, kekurangan pemahaman dan keterampilan guru dalam mengajar maharah al-kitabah, terutama dalam merancang tugas menulis yang bervariasi dan menarik minat peserta didik. Ketiga, rendahnya motivasi dan minat peserta didik dalam belajar menulis bahasa Arab, yang dapat disebabkan oleh pendekatan pembelajaran yang kurang menarik dan rendahnya penerapan metode pembelajaran yang efektif. Untuk mengatasi problematika ini, diperlukan upaya yang komprehensif. Pertama, diperlukan pengembangan sumber daya dan materi pembelajaran yang lebih beragam dan relevan, termasuk buku teks yang lebih mendukung latihan menulis. Kedua, perlunya pelatihan dan pengembangan profesionalisme bagi guru dalam mengajar maharah al-kitabah, termasuk penggunaan metode pembelajaran yang inovatif dan efektif. Ketiga, perlu meningkatkan motivasi dan minat peserta didik melalui pendekatan pembelajaran yang menarik, seperti penggunaan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi serta penerapan metode pembelajaran yang interaktif dan partisipatif.

Kata kunci: Problematika, Keterampilan Menulis, Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab.

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Introduction

Writing Skills, or the ability to write in Arabic, is one of the crucial components in Islamic education (Nashihin, 2019a). The ability to write well and correctly in Arabic enables students to understand, memorize, and analyze sacred texts such as the Quran, hadith (Julkifli, 2022), and other Islamic literature (Al-Masri and Al-saleh, 2019). In Indonesia, students typically receive religious education in Islamic boarding schools (Sumarjoko, Braham Maya Baratullah et al., 2023), one of which is the Islamic Centre Bin Baz (ICBB) located in Yogyakarta.

This research aims to identify and analyze the issues related to Maharah al-Kitabah (Agustina, Anisa Rachma; Ifadah, Luluk; Muanayah, 2022) faced by students at the ICBB Islamic boarding school in Yogyakarta. Problems that arise in the development of Maharah al-Kitabah (Alfian Nurul Khoirulloh, Hafidz, 2023) can stem from various factors, such as the curriculum, teaching methods, learning environment, and students' motivation levels (Al-Mhanna, 2018).

In the education of Maharah al-Kitabah, it is essential to understand the challenges faced (Hadisi, Hakim, Musthan, Nashihin, & Kendari, 2023) by students to design effective learning strategies (Ardianta, 2022). Identifying these issues will provide a better understanding of the students' needs in developing their writing skills in Arabic (Al-Qattan, 2017). Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of Islamic education at the ICBB Islamic boarding school in Yogyakarta.

The importance of Maharah al-Kitabah in Islamic education (Jatmiko Wibisono, Hafidz, Iffat Abdul Ghalib, 2023) makes this research relevant and contributes to the efforts to enhance the quality of religious education for students (Triana, Yahya, Nashihin, Sugito, & Musthan, 2023). By understanding the problems faced by students in developing their Arabic writing skills (Rhain, Nashihin, & Srihananto, 2023), boarding schools can adopt more effective teaching strategies tailored to their needs (Rizqiyah and Hasani, 2018). Hopefully, this research will provide a meaningful contribution to the development of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Based on the above, this research formulates the following questions: What is the role of teachers in teaching Maharah al-Kitabah to ICBB Yogyakarta students? What are the problems faced by ICBB Yogyakarta students in learning Maharah al-Kitabah? What techniques do Arabic language teachers use to address the problems related to Maharah al-Kitabah in ICBB Yogyakarta students?"

Method

The method used in this research is the qualitative descriptive method (Nashihin, 2023). The data collected in this study are qualitative descriptive data (Syaiful Anam, 2023) that encompass written and oral information regarding the issues experienced by teachers and students in Maharah al-Kitabah at ICBB Yogyakarta. Data sources in this research include Arabic language teachers at ICBB Yogyakarta. To gather data, this research employs observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is conducted on the school environment, facilities, the school principal, Arabic language teachers, as well as students and related aspects as data for this research. Structured interviews are carried out to corroborate data obtained from other instruments and to obtain direct responses regarding the actual problems faced by the subjects.

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with data collection through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The collected data will be systematically analyzed to identify the primary issues in the development of Maharah al-Kitabah (Karabiyik, 2019). The results of this research are expected to provide recommendations and valuable suggestions for the curriculum development and teaching methods at the ICBB Yogyakarta Islamic Boarding School, as well as other boarding schools in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

The role of teachers in helping students master *Maharah al-Kitabah*

Based on interviews with the school principal and Arabic language teachers, Ustadz Nur Apriyanto conveyed that the role of teachers in improving students' Maharah al-Kitabah is to assign written tasks to students and conduct evaluations of their writings (Rhain, Hafidz, Nashihin, Srihananto, & Hermawati, 2023). Teachers need to prepare complete teaching materials beforehand, such as analyzing Core Competencies (KI/KD), Annual Programs (Prota), Semester Programs (Prosem), and Syllabi. Subsequently, teachers must implement these materials through Lesson Plans (RPP). The Lesson Plans should include evaluations and methods for assessing the learning that has been taught by the teacher, including written assignments.

Teachers can enhance students' Maharah al-Kitabah by giving them writing assignments. One of the methods mentioned in the interview is to ask students to come forward and write something. The interview results confirm that the role of teachers is indeed crucial in the success of students' Maharah al-Kitabah. This is echoed by Reza, one of the students at ICBB Yogyakarta, who stated: "The role of teachers is very important in learning Maharah al-Kitabah because without teachers, we as students cannot write correctly and well according to the rules of Arabic writing. It is the teachers who provide us with the rules of Maharah al-Kitabah. If we try to learn on our own, we might make mistakes in writing Arabic."

Based on an interview with Zulfikri Hasan, a student at ICBB Yogyakarta, he mentioned: "One of the roles of teachers in helping with Maharatul Kitabah is by showing how to write correctly according to the rules and by dedicating time for students and always being present during class hours." The role of teachers in assisting with Maharatul Kitabah is to demonstrate how to write correctly following the rules. Teachers should provide clear and structured instructions on the proper way to write, including the use of letters, punctuation marks, correct spelling, and writing proper and good sentences.

Furthermore, teachers also need to dedicate specific time to guide students in developing Maharatul Kitabah. This can be done through writing practice sessions, reviewing written assignments, and providing constructive feedback to help students improve their writing skills (Nikita Nur Zulaecha, Hafidz, Biela Nanda Oktivibi Pertiwi, 2023). Another essential aspect is the presence of teachers during class hours. Teachers should always be present and punctual to provide direct guidance to students. Consistent and disciplined attendance also helps create an organized and effective learning environment.

The Problems Faced by ICBB Yogyakarta Students in *Maharah al-Kitabah*

As per the interviews conducted with Ustadz Nur Apriyanto M.Pd, the head of ICBB Yogyakarta, the common problems encountered in teaching Arabic language within the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) environment are the difficulties faced by students who come from regular schools. These students often struggle with writing in Arabic because there are no restrictions on admitting students who cannot write Arabic. Therefore, the most significant difficulties are usually experienced by students from regular schools, both those without pesantren backgrounds and those with non-Islamic background.

The primary challenge lies in connecting Arabic letters. Additionally, another issue that arises in *Maharah al-Kitabah* (writing skills) is that this material is only taught in grade X, with the expectation that after completing this grade, students will be able to write well and fluently in Arabic. However, this target cannot be guaranteed 100% for students who progress to grades XI and XII. Whether their writing skills have reached the expected criteria or not remains a challenge. This issue is due to the fact that there are no specific lessons on Arabic writing in grades XI and XII. As mentioned earlier, writing skills are only evaluated and incorporated into other subjects, such as theology and ethics.

In this context, teachers are expected to assign written Arabic tasks to students, including checking if their *qowaidul imla'* (grammar) usage is correct and meets the expected criteria in grades XI and XII. However, there are difficulties in implementing this in practice. While in grade X, because this material is already part of the curriculum, students' writing skills are usually better.

In conclusion, based on the interview results, the common problem in teaching *Maharah al-Kitabah* (Arabic writing skills) in pesantren is the difficulties faced by students who come from regular schools. They struggle with connecting Arabic letters, especially students in grades XI and XII, as there are no specific lessons addressing Arabic writing at that level. In grade X, writing skills are typically better because this material is taught separately.

This is reinforced by Ustadz Turino, S.Pd, an Arabic language teacher at ICBB Yogyakarta, who mentioned, "*Maharah al-Kitabah* is a skill that requires practice and training. The problem generally lies with students who previously attended *salafiyah wushto* or other pesantren schools as they already have good *Maharah al-Kitabah* skills. The problem arises for students from regular schools or public junior high schools because they lack the basics of the Arabic language. Most of them cannot even read the Quran correctly, let alone have *Maharah al-Kitabah* skills. Another issue is my limited time for teaching, which is only two hours. I can only provide minimal guidance for students with weak *Maharah al-Kitabah* skills." This implies that *Maharah al-Kitabah* is an important skill, but students from regular

schools tend to have deficiencies in this area. More time and attention are required to help them develop their *Maharah al-Kitabah* skills.

Additionally, problems reported by Zulfikri Hasan, a student at ICBB Yogyakarta, include a lack of practice in writing, the absence of specific guidance on *Maharah al-Kitabah*, and a shortage of teacher guidance. Therefore, the conclusion from the interviews is that students face obstacles in developing their writing skills due to a lack of practice and habit, a lack of specific guidance in the context of *Maharah al-Kitabah*, and insufficient guidance from teachers.

Reza Ridanta, another student at ICBB Yogyakarta, mentioned, "Sometimes there are difficult letters to write and certain rules that need to be understood; it's not arbitrary." This suggests that certain Arabic letters are challenging to write, and there are specific rules that must be understood before writing those letters. It demonstrates that writing requires a good understanding of the language and script used. Therefore, to write correctly and effectively, one must comprehend the rules and principles applicable to the language and script.

As motivators, teachers understand that motivation is an effort to encourage and direct an individual's behavior toward achieving goals. Successful learning occurs when students have the motivation to learn and exhibit effective learning behavior. Teachers play a role not only as instructors but also as motivators who inspire students' learning spirit. Teachers must develop students' potential and guide them to use it effectively so that students can study diligently and achieve their desired goals.

A successful teacher is one who provides encouragement, regardless of the results of students' efforts. The same applies to Arabic language teachers; they provide advice and encouragement to students to generate interest and enthusiasm for learning. As stated by the Arabic language teacher at ICBB Yogyakarta, "I give guidance, comments, and some input to encourage students to pay more attention to their *Maharah al-Kitabah*." From this statement, it can be concluded that the teacher does not provide detailed or in-depth teaching to improve the Arabic writing skills of students. Instead, the focus is on providing guidance and motivation to make students more attentive to this aspect. In conclusion, the teacher only provides advice, comments, input, and guidance to all students to pay more attention to their *Maharah al-Kitabah*.

This is further supported by the school principal, who stated that in an effort to motivate students, Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School) gives recognition to students who can write their works. These works are then published on the Madrasah Aliyah website. Furthermore, the school also has a special book containing students' works, which will be displayed in the school's room after being revised. During the assessment process, the Madrasah gives higher ratings to students with good *Maharah al-Kitabah* skills. One aspect of assessment is through written works. Therefore, students with good writing capabilities receive higher grades.

In summary, as Reza Ridanta, one of the students at ICBB Yogyakarta, stated, "Teachers provide examples of good and correct writing on the board and then provide motivation and advice to students to pay more attention to their *Maharah al-Kitabah*." The conclusion is that teachers provide clear examples of correct writing on the board to provide clear guidance to students on how to write correctly in *Maharah al-Kitabah*. Furthermore, teachers also provide motivation and advice to students to pay more attention to their writing skills in the context of *Maharah al-Kitabah*.

Teaching Techniques for Arabic Language to Improve *Maharah Al-Kitabah* in ICBB Yogyakarta Students

Writing skill (*maharah al-kitabah* or writing skill) is the ability to describe or express thoughts (Nashihin, 2019c), ranging from simple aspects like writing words to complex aspects such as composition. Writing skills in Arabic language education can broadly be divided into four interconnected categories: *imla'* (writing), copying (*nasakh*), calligraphy (*al-khath*), and composition (*al-insya'*) (Nashihin, 2019b).

Every teacher has various theories and techniques for teaching Arabic, especially in the context of maharah al-kitabah, to achieve the desired goals. The theory or technique used for ICBB Yogyakarta students involves the "tadrib" method, consisting of three stages, as explained by Ustadz Nur Apriyanto, M.Pd: "The first step for Arabic language teachers to enhance maharah al-kitabah is tadrib, which involves giving exercises to students. Tadrib has several levels; the first level is to thicken Arabic writing, which is the easiest tadrib. The second level involves the teacher saying something, and then the students are asked to write it in Arabic, which is a somewhat challenging tadrib. The third level is where the teacher asks students to compose an 'insya,' which is a written composition in Arabic that combines imla' principles with qawaidul lughah (language rules), and this is the highest level of tadrib. It is through this level that someone can achieve excellent maharah al-kitabah."

This statement is further supported by the interview with Ustadz Turino, S.Pd, an Arabic language teacher, who emphasizes that maharah al-kitabah requires specific lessons to make students pay more attention to it. These lessons should not solely focus on theory but should also provide extensive writing practice to students. With sufficient practice, students will have the opportunity to develop their writing skills. This practice is crucial because maharah al-kitabah requires consistent practice to be mastered effectively.

Conclusion

The role of the teacher is crucial in helping students master maharah al-kitabah in the Arabic language. Teachers play a role in assigning written tasks to students, conducting evaluations of their writings, and providing clear and structured instruction on proper writing techniques. Teachers also need to allocate dedicated time to guide students in developing their maharah al-kitabah through writing exercises, checking written assignments, and providing constructive feedback. Furthermore, the consistent and disciplined presence of teachers during class hours is also an essential factor in creating an organized and effective learning environment.

The challenges in teaching maharah al-kitabah in the Arabic language at ICBB Yogyakarta's pesantren are primarily experienced by students from non-religious schools or public schools. They face difficulties in constructing or connecting sentences and lack practice, specific guidance, attention, motivation, and motivation in developing their Arabic writing skills. The lack of dedicated time and specialized lessons in grades XI and XII also affects students' writing abilities. Teachers provide examples of good writing, encouragement, comments, input, guidance, motivation, and advice to ensure students pay attention to their writing abilities. Additionally, the Madrasah rewards students with good writing skills.

The teaching techniques for the Arabic language to enhance maharah al-kitabah (writing skills) of ICBB Yogyakarta students involve four main categories: imla' (writing), copying, calligraphy, and composition. The "tadrib" method is used with three stages: thickening Arabic writing, writing spoken words, and composing by combining writing rules and grammar. According to Ustadz Turino, S.Pd, maharah al-kitabah requires special lessons that include both theory and sufficient writing practice. Consistent practice is essential for students to develop their writing skills effectively and master maharah al-kitabah.

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