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Implementing Bi'ah Lughawiyyah to Enhance Arabic Language Discipline among Santri at Gontor Campus 7

Dika Syam El Fatony [1a*], Syarifudin Basyar [2b], Zulhannan [3c]
[1,2,3] Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

[a]dikasyamelfatony@gmail.com, [b]syaripbasyar66@gmail.com, [c]zulhannan@radenintan.ac.id

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Correspondence Address:
dikasyamelfatony@gmail.com

Abstract:
A language environment does not automatically produce disciplined language use. This study examines how bi'ah lughawiyyah (Arabic language environment) is implemented and how it enhances the Arabic language discipline of santri at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Campus 7, South Lampung, Indonesia. A descriptive qualitative design was used. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with boarding-care staff, language advisors, language-section officers and santri 9 informants in total), supported by observation and documentation, and analysed with the Miles, Huberman and Saldaña model. Interview, observation and document codes were grouped into themes, and the developmental pattern was derived by comparing how santri at different stages described and displayed their language use across sources. Credibility was checked through source and technique triangulation and member checking. The findings show that bi'ah lughawiyyah works as an integrated educational system: official-language rules, habituation programmes, layered supervision, enforcement through the Language Court, and modelling by teachers, officers and senior santri. Discipline develops unevenly: some santri still depend on rules and supervision, others have formed habits, and a few use Arabic without being monitored. The study proposes a developmental pattern running from rules and supervision, through habituation and modelling, to habit, awareness and self-regulation. In practice, the pattern suggests that pondok leaders should direct supervision to informal settings where Indonesian returns, and shift guidance from compliance towards awareness while keeping consequences educational. It contributes a view of language environments as systems that form discipline, not only proficiency.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Arabic holds a strategic position in Islamic education. It is not only the language of the primary sources of Islam but also a language of scholarship and communication taught systematically in many Islamic institutions. In Indonesia, Arabic is usually learned as a second language, so acquisition depends on more than grammar and vocabulary. Motivation, intensity of use, social interaction and an environment that offers real opportunities to use the language also matter (Annisa et al., 2023). Classroom instruction alone is therefore not enough. Knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and sentence patterns needs space in which it can be put to use. Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) can provide that space, because students (*santri*) live together and meet the language through communication, organisations, worship and dormitory life throughout the day.

In Arabic language education, an environment that is deliberately built to support language use is called *bi'ah lughawiyyah*. The concept is wider than Arabic signage or a set of scheduled language activities. It is an ecosystem that supplies exposure, interaction, production, correction and habituation. Programmes such as vocabulary delivery (*ilqā' al-mufradāt*), conversation, speech training and weekly activities are central to it (Muzammil & Jannah, 2023), and they widen the room for practice (Setiyadi et al., 2023; Yakin & Hasan, 2025). Yet having programmes does not guarantee a strong culture of language use. Research at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor found that formal and non-formal settings support each other and that figures who consistently speak Arabic (*qudwah*) are essential. The same study found obstacles: uneven abilities among santri, limited mastery, and a tendency to take language discipline lightly (Rochmat et al., 2023). Recent work in another boarding school reports inconsistent use, weak supervision and mother-tongue dominance as barriers to sustained Arabic communication (Silviani et al., 2026).

These findings move attention from programmes to language discipline. Discipline is not the same as proficiency. Proficiency is a linguistic capacity: vocabulary, structure, pronunciation and the four skills. Discipline concerns regularity, obedience, consistency, responsibility and self-control in using a language according to the rules of the environment. A santri may speak good Arabic and still not use it daily, and a santri whose Arabic is still developing may be disciplined by persisting in its use. Following Tu'u (2004), discipline is treated here as a process of behaviour formation that includes compliance with rules, orderliness, responsibility and self-control. Abdullah et al. (2024) show that language discipline requires training, continuous use and internalisation, so that use of the language gradually stops depending only on pressure from outside.

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor offers a relevant setting. Its education treats all of pondok life as a learning process built on the Five Principles (*Panca Jiwa*), and everything santri see, hear, feel, do and experience is regarded as educational media (Zarkasyi, 2005). Language is part of this system, together with rules, activities, habits, organisations and the relation between teachers and students. Campus 7 in Kalianda, South Lampung, follows the Gontor system, including the language and discipline activities held outside the classroom (Pondok Modern

Darussalam Gontor, 2024). Syaifudin et al. (2022) show that Arabic at this campus is managed through planning, organising, implementing and supervising, using direction, training, assignment, habituation, accompaniment and exemplary conduct (*uswah ḥasanah*). The same study records difficulties in the adaptation of new santri, limited awareness among some older santri, and a recapitulation of language violations. This does not mean the system has failed. It shows a distance between a well-designed system and individual discipline, which deserves closer study.

In a pesantren, language discipline matters for reasons beyond language learning. First, a language environment is collective. It exists only when most members use the language most of the time, so one santri's lapse lowers the exposure and the social pressure that others rely on. Individual discipline is therefore what keeps the environment itself working. Second, in the Gontor system discipline is itself an educational aim: rules, routines and organisations are intended to form character, and the official languages are one of the daily practices through which this happens (Zarkasyi, 2005). Using Arabic regularly and responsibly, including when no one is watching, is thus both a language outcome and a character outcome. Third, a pondok can enforce rules but cannot supervise every santri at every moment, so the long-term strength of the environment depends on whether santri come to use the language by their own choice. This is why the study asks how discipline forms, and not only how much Arabic santri speak.

The study draws on three groups of concepts, each tied to one objective. For Objective 1 (implementation), the language environment is analysed through the view that learning needs continuous input and socially supported interaction (Krashen, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978). For Objective 2 (dimensions of discipline), discipline is analysed through Tu'u's (2004) components, which we operationalise as four dimensions: compliance, consistency, responsibility and self-control. For Objective 3 (how the system enhances discipline), the movement from external control to internal control is analysed through habit formation by reinforcement (Skinner, 1957), the progression from moral knowing to moral feeling and moral action (Lickona, 1991), and self-regulation as the interaction of personal factors, behaviour and environment (Bandura, 1986). Self-regulation is understood here as continued use of Arabic that rests on the santri's own goals and awareness and not on the presence of supervisors. These concepts also guided the coding themes (implementation, dimensions of discipline, process of enhancement) described in the Method section.

Earlier studies mostly link *bi'ah lughawiyyah* to speaking skills (Setiyadi et al., 2023; Silviani et al., 2026; Maki et al., 2026), to a particular extracurricular activity (Abdullah et al., 2024) or to programme management (Syaifudin et al., 2022). They have not specifically analysed the whole language environment as an educational system that forms discipline, nor how santri move from compliance with rules towards self-control. This study addresses that gap. Its objectives are (1) to describe how *bi'ah lughawiyyah* is implemented at Gontor Campus 7, (2) to analyse the dimensions of santri's Arabic language discipline, and (3) to explain how the system enhances that discipline, from compliance with rules to self-regulation.

Method (منهج)

Research Design

The study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This fits a problem that concerns the process by which a language environment shapes discipline: how rules are applied, how santri experience habituation, how supervision is carried out and how the educational setting contributes. Qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon in its natural setting, with the researcher as the main instrument, and emphasises meaning more than generalisation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moleong, 2021; Sugiyono, 2022). A descriptive design allowed the researchers to portray the setting without manipulating it (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018).

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Campus 7 in Kubu Panglima, Tajimalela, Kalianda, South Lampung. The campus runs a boarding system in which santri live in the pondok around the clock. Its formal curriculum (Kulliyyatu-l-Mu'allimin Al-Islamiyyah, KMI) includes Arabic subjects, and the language system extends to daily life. In 2026 the campus had 496 santri and 163 teachers. The site was chosen because it combines intensive language use, a structured *bi'ah lughawiyyah* system and informants with direct experience of it.

Informants were selected by purposive sampling in four groups: (a) boarding-care staff, who explain policy and educational values; (b) teachers who act as language advisors; (c) language-section officers, who run programmes, supervision and rule enforcement; and (d) santri, the main informants, who experience the system directly. Table 2 shows the number of informants in each group and the selection criteria. To protect identity, informants are identified here by role only.

Table 2. Informants by category

Category	informan	Selection criteria	Purpose
Boarding-care staff	2	Deputy Vice Director & Boarding-Care Staff with >2 years of service	Policy, institutional vision, and educational values
Teachers acting as language advisors	8	Members of Language Advisory Council (LAC) active in daily supervision	Guidance, supervision, correction, and program evaluation
Language-section officers	10	Senior santri (Grade 6) serving in Central Language Improvement (CLI)	Programmes, supervision, enforcement
Santri	6	[grades, length of stay, mix of high and low observed compliance]	Programme execution, dormitory supervision, and enforcement via Language Court
Total	26	Representatives from Grades 1 and 3, mixed duration of stay, and varied observed compliance levels	Lived experience of the language system, peer dynamics, and self-regulation

Sample size was not fixed in advance. Data saturation was assessed during analysis: after each round of 8 interviews, the transcripts were coded and the new codes were compared with the existing code list. Data collection stopped when 3 consecutive interviews produced no new codes or themes under the three analytic themes, and when the santri interviews no longer added new patterns of compliance, consistency, responsibility or self-control. Saturation was checked for each informant category separately, so that the santri group, which is the main source on discipline, was not judged saturated on the strength of staff interviews. Data saturation for the santri group was reached slightly later due to the wider variation in individual compliance levels across different grades.

Data Collection

Three techniques were combined. Semi-structured interviews used a guide but allowed informants to develop answers from their own experience. Observation covered language programmes and the supervision of language use in the pondok. Documentation covered the language regulations for grades 1–4 and for grades 5–6, institutional profiles and other documents on the language guidance system. The study took place in the 2026 academic year in four stages: preparation, data collection, data analysis and report writing.

Interview guides: separate semi-structured guides were prepared for each informant category. The guides covered 12 core questions on (a) how the language system works, (b) the informant's experience of rules, programmes, supervision and consequences, (c) situations in which Arabic or Indonesian is used, and (d) reasons for continuing to use Arabic. Probing questions followed the informant's answers. Interviews lasted 30 to 60 minutes, were conducted in [Indonesian and Arabic], and were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed. The guides were reviewed by senior KMI supervisors at Gontor Campus 7 prior to field data collection.

Observation: an observation protocol recorded the setting, the language used, who was present, the presence or absence of supervisors, and the response to violations. Observation covered **ilqā' al-mufradāt, muhādatsah, dormitories, canteen, kitchen, and sports grounds**, over **18** sessions/days at **dawn, afternoon, and evening routines**. Field notes were written during or immediately after each session.

Documentation: documents analysed were **language regulations for grades 1–4 and grades 5–6, Gontor Campus 7 institutional profile, daily violation record books, and LAC/CLI work plans**, read against a checklist of the rules, programmes and supervision structure.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data were analysed with the model of Miles et al. (2020): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts, observation notes and documents were coded, grouped into themes (implementation, dimensions of discipline, and process of enhancement) and interpreted against the theoretical framework. Credibility was strengthened by source triangulation (comparing boarding-care staff, advisors, officers and santri), technique triangulation (comparing interviews, observation and documents) and member checking, in which interpretations were confirmed with informants.

Result (نتائج)

Implementation of Bi'ah Lughawiyyah

At Gontor Campus 7, *bi'ah lughawiyyah* is part of everyday life rather than a set of isolated activities. Two official languages, Arabic and English, are used in lessons, meals, asking permission, announcements and daily interaction. The regulations for grades 1–4 oblige santri to use the official languages and restrict other languages. Written materials in the pondok are also directed to the official languages, so santri are exposed to language visually as well as orally. Language guidance is organised in three tiers: teachers acting as language advisors who guide, supervise and correct; a language section whose officers share duties such as the core committee, rayon (dormitory) coordination, the Language Court (*Mahkamah Bahasa*), syllabus, courses and the language magazine; and rayon officers who supervise and model language use where santri live. Table 1 summarises the components found.

Table 1. Components of bi'ah lughawiyyah at Gontor Campus 7

No	Component	Implementation found in the field
1	Official-language rules	Arabic and English are obligatory in daily life. Separate regulations exist for grades 1-4 and grades 5-6, senior santri are positioned as role models.
2	Organisational structure	Language advisors, language section and rayon officers form a layered guidance structure that reaches the dormitories.
3	Habituation programmes	*Ilqā' al-mufradāt* after the dawn prayer (about 05.15-05.45), with about three items a day from *Daily Vocabulary* and *Daily Conversation* and compulsory note-taking; *muhādatsah* on Tuesday mornings, Friday language activity, Arabic Drama Contest, Arabic magazine, *Taḥsīn al-Lughah* for upper grades.
4	Supervision	Almost continuous, carried out by rayon officers, language section and advisors in dormitories, canteen, dining areas and kitchen.
5	Enforcement	Violators are summoned, counselled and given consequences (for example a violator's vest, Language Court, or an Arabic essay). Violations are recorded in a record book, scored daily and reported to boarding care; evaluation is periodic.
6	Modelling	Teachers, officers and senior santri are expected to use the official languages consistently in front of junior santri.

The habituation programmes follow a repeated pattern. In *ilqā' al-mufradāt*, santri repeat earlier vocabulary, receive new items and repeat them again, while an officer checks their participation. In *muhādatsah*, a dialogue and its meaning are presented first and santri then practise it in pairs. Enforcement is meant to educate. Officers give advice before applying a consequence, record the violation, and follow up through evaluation, so that sanctions do not stand alone as punishment.

Dimensions of Santri's Arabic Language Discipline

Compliance. Compliance with the language rules was strongest in the early period, when violations were also most frequent. New santri still used Indonesian more often because their vocabulary and experience were limited, and one informant described being sent to the Language Court and writing a six-page Arabic essay. Some informants said their use of Arabic was still

driven by the obligation to follow rules and by the presence of supervisors, even though their language ability had grown.

Consistency. Consistency varied. Santri used Arabic more reliably with seniors and officers, or when supervised, and during language activities such as *ilqā' al-mufradāt*. Indonesian tended to return during sport, bathing, kitchen work, relaxed time with peers and in dormitories without supervisors. Senior santri were more likely to use the official language in relaxed time, while junior santri were limited by vocabulary.

Responsibility. Responsibility for the language environment was clearest among officers and senior santri, who supervised, corrected, recorded violations and set an example. It was not yet uniform. Inconsistent language use by some seniors was said to weaken the example set for juniors, and some santri still needed reinforcement to use Arabic without being pressed by officers.

Self-control. Self-control appeared when santri kept using Arabic without relying on supervisors. Two informants said their use had come to rest on personal motives: building the habit, keeping the vocabulary they had learned and preparing for later study, including study abroad. Others, including a Grade 3 santri whose vocabulary had grown, still depended mainly on rules and supervision. Development was therefore not determined by grade level or length of stay.

Process of Enhancing Discipline

The data show a staged but non-uniform process. Rules first set the standard for language behaviour. For new santri, this external obligation was the entry point to habit. Programmes and daily use then created repetition, with correction and consequences reinforcing the desired behaviour. Supervision kept the habit consistent, and the example of teachers, officers, senior santri and supportive peers made the norm visible and socially supported. Over time, some santri moved from use that depended on officers to use that rested on awareness and responsibility, and a few began to regulate themselves. Peers mattered in both directions: friends who kept to the official language made it easier, while Indonesian-speaking groups weakened consistency. Figure 1 summarises the pattern.

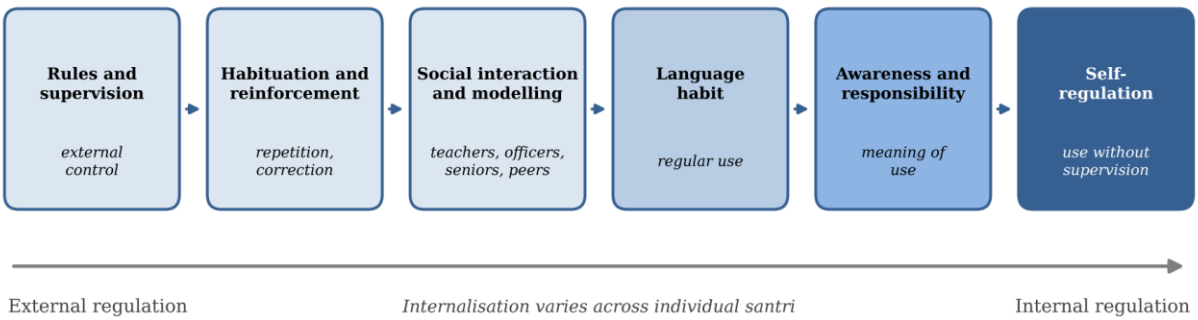


Figure 1. Developmental pattern of language discipline formed through bi'ah lughawiyyah

Discussion (مناقشة)

Bi'ah Lughawiyyah as an Integrated Educational System

The findings show that *bi'ah lughawiyyah* at Campus 7 is better understood as an educational system than as a collection of language activities. It combines rules, programmes, supervision, enforcement and modelling, and it operates in the dormitory, canteen and kitchen as well as the classroom. This agrees with Krashen (1981), who treats the environment as a source of continuous, understandable input, and with Vygotsky (1978), for whom ability develops through interaction with others who give help, direction and experience. Daily vocabulary, conversation, announcements and exchanges with advisors, officers, seniors and peers supply both input and social support. The findings also match Prasetyo and Ginanjar (2026), who describe an effective environment as built step by step through vocabulary, guided interaction, obligation, supervision and evaluation, and Maki et al. (2026), who identify teacher supervision and consistent habituation as supporting conditions. The present study adds that these elements do more than supply practice. They also form behaviour that is regular, obedient and accountable.

Discipline as a Developmental Process

The four dimensions found (compliance, consistency, responsibility and self-control) correspond with Tu'u's (2004) view that discipline includes orderliness, responsibility and the ability to control one's own behaviour, not only obedience. The importance of rules in the early period is consistent with Nurwahyudin and Supriyanto (2021), who place language discipline within the strategy for instilling discipline in Gontor santri. Habit formation through repeated use, correction and consequences can be explained by Skinner's (1957) account of behaviour shaped by stimulus, response and reinforcement. The Language Court, violation records and warnings fit this account, and they resemble the reward and punishment mechanisms that Sujatmiko and Lestari (2025) report for strengthening santri's language discipline. In this study, however, consequences were joined to advice, evaluation and guidance, which keeps them educational. The finding that discipline differs between santri who are supervised and those who are not, and does not follow grade level, shows that the process is still under way and is individual. Institutions should therefore not treat the number of violations or the length of stay as sufficient indicators of discipline.

From Compliance to Self-Regulation

The movement from external control to personal awareness can be read through Lickona's (1991) account of character, which combines moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action. Santri first know that Arabic is a pondok rule. Repeated experience then helps them understand its value, and some begin to act on it even when not observed. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory explains the later stage: people are not only shaped by their environment but can regulate their behaviour through the interaction of personal factors, behaviour and environment. Santri who keep using Arabic without supervision, because of their own goals, show the beginning of such self-regulation. The example set by teachers and officers supports internalisation, as santri see the rule performed by the people who enforce it. This resembles the finding of Abdullah et al. (2024) that programmed, continuous activities help santri form language habits, but the

present study goes further by tracing how external regulation can turn into self-regulation within the whole system.

Externally Enforced Discipline and Internally Motivated Use

The findings show a real tension in how the system works. Rules, the Language Court and supervision produce the compliance that begins the process, and for new santri this external obligation was the entry point to habit. But the same mechanisms may also keep some santri at the level of compliance. Informants who said their use was still driven by the obligation and the presence of supervisors, including a Grade 3 santri whose vocabulary had grown, had the ability to speak Arabic but did not yet use it from their own motive. Compliance that depends on being watched shows up as exactly the pattern we observed: Arabic with officers and seniors, and Indonesian in unsupervised time. Self-determination theory describes this as the difference between behaviour regulated by external pressure and behaviour that has been internalised as one's own (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The two informants who linked their use to building the habit, keeping vocabulary and preparing for study abroad illustrate the second kind.

This raises a design question for the pondok. A system that relies mainly on sanctions risks teaching santri to avoid being caught instead of to value the language. This study cannot say how far this happens, because it did not measure motivation directly. It can say that consequences and supervision alone did not explain why some santri used Arabic freely, and that the consequences were more likely to support development when they were joined to advice, evaluation and a visible example. The practical implication is not to remove rules, which the data show are needed at the start, but to plan a gradual shift in emphasis: strong rules and supervision for new santri; more explanation of purpose, personal goals and responsibility for those who already comply; and roles that give santri ownership of the environment, as the officers and senior santri show.

The Dominance of Indonesian in Informal Interaction

The data show that Indonesian returns in sport, bathing, kitchen work, relaxed time with peers and dormitories without supervisors. These are the settings where supervision is thinnest and where peer norms matter most. They matter for the effectiveness of the environment for three reasons. First, they take up a large part of a santri's day, so a language environment that works in lessons and scheduled activities but not here supplies less exposure and practice than its design suggests. Second, a pattern of Indonesian in informal talk can spread: informants said that peer groups who spoke Indonesian weakened consistency, and that inconsistent seniors weakened the example for juniors. Third, informal talk is where santri would need to use Arabic for real purposes, and where junior santri were limited by vocabulary, so the gap is partly a language gap and not only a discipline gap.

The findings suggest practical strategies, which we offer as proposals to be tested and not as results of this study:

- Teach vocabulary for informal domains (sport, bathing, kitchen, free time) in the daily vocabulary and conversation programmes, so that juniors are not forced into Indonesian by lack of words.

• Extend supervision in a lighter form to informal settings, for example through rayon officers and peer language partners, with emphasis on correction and encouragement over punishment.

• Build peer norms: support groups of friends who keep to the official language, and recognise them, since peers worked in both directions.

• Strengthen the example of seniors in relaxed time, because senior santri were more likely to use the official language informally and their consistency affects juniors.

• Create informal activities that use Arabic naturally, such as sport commentary or kitchen-duty routines in Arabic.

• Monitor the settings and times where violations cluster, using the existing violation records, to decide where to direct supervision.

Taken together, the findings support the pattern in Figure 1: rules and supervision, habituation and reinforcement, social interaction and modelling, language habit, awareness and responsibility, and finally self-regulation. The pattern is not linear or uniform. Language ability, adaptation period, peer environment, personal motivation and the consistency of role models all affect how far a santri has moved. Its novelty lies in treating *bi'ah lughawiyyah* not only as an environment for acquiring Arabic but as a mechanism that forms disciplined language behaviour. Practically, pondok leaders can use it to direct supervision at situations where other languages still appear, such as sport and relaxed peer time, and to move guidance from compliance towards awareness. The study is limited to one campus and to qualitative evidence, so the pattern is offered as an interpretation of this context, not as a generalisation. Because the study did not systematically observe informal settings across all hours of the day, the account of Indonesian in informal interaction rests on informants' reports and **the 18 structured observation sessions conducted across dormitories, dining areas, sports grounds, and daily routine areas**.

Conclusion (خاتمة)

Bi'ah lughawiyyah at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Campus 7 is implemented as an integrated system of official-language rules, habituation programmes, layered supervision, enforcement with educational follow-up and modelling by teachers, officers and senior santri. Santri's Arabic language discipline, seen in compliance, consistency, responsibility and self-control, develops at different rates: some still rely on rules and supervision, some have formed habits, and some use Arabic from personal awareness. The system enhances discipline through the connection of its parts, moving from external control towards habit, awareness, responsibility and, in some santri, self-regulation.

The pondok may strengthen coordination among advisors, language officers, rayon officers and teachers, direct supervision to situations in which Arabic is still not used, and shift guidance from obedience towards awareness while keeping consequences educational. Future research could include informants from more varied grades and lengths of stay, examine how self-regulation in language develops and what supports consistency without supervision, and compare language environments in pesantren with different characteristics.

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