



Mapping the Problems and Solutions of Teaching Maharah Kitabah at the University Level

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify issues in Mahārah Kitābah instruction at the university level and to formulate practical solutions to improve students' Arabic writing skills. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with 15 students from the Arabic Language Education Program at Al-Azhaar Nusantara Islamic University in Lubuklinggau as research subjects. Data were collected through interviews and documentation, then analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques involving data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results indicate that Mahārah Kitābah plays a strategic role in Arabic language learning as it serves as an indicator of comprehensive language proficiency. The challenges in teaching Mahārah Kitābah can be classified into three main aspects: linguistic, pedagogical, and students' academic backgrounds. Linguistic challenges include difficulties in mastering nahwu, sharaf, vocabulary, and imla'. In the pedagogical aspect, the study found a predominance of theoretical learning, limited teaching materials, and a lack of writing practice and feedback. Meanwhile, differences in educational backgrounds also influence students' initial abilities. This study offers solutions in the form of strengthening writing practice, implementing Project-Based Learning and Collaborative Learning, providing continuous feedback, and utilizing educational technology to improve the quality of Mahārah Kitābah instruction.

Keywords: Mahārah Kitābah, Arabic language learning, learning challenges, writing skills, higher education

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi problematika pembelajaran Mahārah Kitābah di perguruan tinggi serta merumuskan solusi yang dapat diterapkan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi menulis bahasa Arab mahasiswa. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan subjek penelitian 15 mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Universitas Islam Nusantara Al-Azhaar Lubuklinggau. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis deskriptif melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Mahārah Kitābah memiliki peran strategis dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab karena menjadi indikator penguasaan keterampilan berbahasa secara komprehensif. Problematika pembelajaran Mahārah Kitābah dapat diklasifikasikan ke dalam tiga aspek utama, yaitu aspek linguistik, pedagogis, dan latar belakang akademik mahasiswa. Kendala linguistik meliputi kesulitan dalam penguasaan nahwu, sharaf, kosakata, dan imla'. Pada aspek pedagogis ditemukan dominasi pembelajaran teoritis, keterbatasan media, serta minimnya praktik menulis dan umpan balik. Sementara itu, perbedaan latar belakang pendidikan turut memengaruhi kemampuan awal mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menawarkan solusi berupa penguatan praktik menulis, penerapan Project-Based Learning, Collaborative Learning, pemberian umpan balik berkelanjutan, serta pemanfaatan teknologi pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran Mahārah Kitābah di perguruan tinggi.

Kata kunci : Mahārah Kitābah, pembelajaran bahasa Arab, problematika pembelajaran, keterampilan menulis, pendidikan tinggi.

ABSTRAK (Bold, TNR 10)

mastering language theory rather than intensive writing practice. Students spend more time learning the rules than actually applying them in writing. Additionally, limited class time, lack of variety in teaching methods, and minimal process-based evaluation also affect the effectiveness of writing skills learning (Naiborhu et al., 2024).

From the perspective of learning achievements in universities, students are expected to be able to produce scientific papers in proper Arabic. However, in reality, many students still haven't fully reached this competence. This situation shows a gap between the ideal conditions of maharah kitabah learning and what actually happens in practice (Munawarah & Zulkiflih, 2020).

This gap indicates that learning maharah kitabah requires a comprehensive evaluation and mapping (Zulaeha & Musdalifah, 2022). Previous studies mostly focused on the effectiveness of kitabah learning methods, such as collaborative writing, project-based learning, and genre-based learning. However, research that specifically maps out the problems of maharah kitabah learning at the university level and connects them with contextual and practical strategic solutions is still relatively limited (Aulia et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by comprehensively mapping various problems and possible solutions.

Some previous studies have looked into learning maharah kitabah from various perspectives. Research by Munawarah and Zulkiflih (2020) showed that students' Arabic writing skills are influenced by their mastery of language rules and the intensity of writing practice provided during the learning process. Furthermore, a study by Zulaeha and Musdalifah (2022) emphasized the importance of applying process-based learning to improve students' writing quality. Another study by Naiborhu et al. (2024) found that students' difficulties with maharah kitabah are not only related to linguistic aspects but are also influenced by motivation and the learning strategies used by lecturers. Meanwhile, Aulia et al. (2024) focused more on the effectiveness of certain learning models in improving students' Arabic writing skills. These various studies have made important contributions to the development of maharah kitabah learning, but most of them are still focused on testing specific methods or learning models. Research that specifically maps out the problems of maharah kitabah learning comprehensively, covering linguistic, pedagogical, and psychological aspects of students and linking them to contextual solutions at the university level, is still relatively limited.

Based on previous research studies, it seems there is a research gap that needs further attention. Most of the studies still focus on the effectiveness of teaching methods or learning models in improving Arabic writing skills, while comprehensive reviews that map out various problems in learning maharah kitabah along with their causes and alternative solutions in the higher education setting are still very limited. In fact, a thorough mapping of these problems is really needed as a basis for formulating more effective learning strategies that fit students' needs.

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to map out the issues in learning writing skills (maharah kitabah) comprehensively by integrating linguistic, pedagogical, and psychological aspects of students, as well as formulating practical learning solutions that fit the university context.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to: (1) identify the various problems that arise in maharah kitabah learning at the university level; (2) analyze the factors that cause these problems, both from the students and from pedagogical aspects of learning; and (3) formulate contextual and practical strategic solutions to improve the effectiveness of maharah kitabah learning as well as students' academic writing competence.

With systematic mapping and comprehensive analysis, it is hoped that this research can provide a theoretical contribution to the development of Arabic language learning studies, especially in the aspect of writing skills, as well as offer practical contributions for lecturers and educational institutions in designing more effective, innovative learning strategies that focus on improving students' academic writing competence.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand, describe, and deeply analyze various problems that arise in maharah kitabah learning at the higher education level, as well as to identify solutions that can be applied to overcome these issues. Through this approach, the researcher tries to gain a comprehensive picture of the learning conditions based on the experiences and perspectives of the research participants.

The research subjects were students from the Arabic Language Education Study Program. Informants were selected purposively, taking into account their involvement in the Arabic writing learning process. Research data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to get an idea of how the writing skills learning was carried out in class. Interviews were used to explore information regarding various challenges faced by students and lecturers, the factors causing learning problems, and possible solutions. Meanwhile, documentation was used to complement the research data, including the Semester Learning Plan (RPS), teaching materials, student assignments, and other supporting documents.

Findings

Table 1.
Student Issues

Problems	Number of Students
Nahwu-Sharaf Difficulties	9
Lacking Vocabulary	2
Hard to Develop Ideas	3
Spelling Difficulty	9

A. The Importance of Mahārah Kitābah in Learning Arabic

Based on interviews with 15 students from the Arabic Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Nusantara Al-Azhaar Lubuklinggau, it was found that Mahārah Kitābah is seen as one of the most important skills in learning Arabic. Most of the informants said that writing skills form the foundation for mastering Arabic because they are directly related to the ability to understand language structure, use vocabulary, and convey meaning accurately.

Students think that Mahārah Kitābah is not just a tool for written communication, but also a measure of mastery of other Arabic language skills. According to them, good writing skills help students understand texts, organize ideas systematically, and improve their Arabic reading and speaking abilities. These findings show that Mahārah Kitābah holds a strategic position in learning Arabic at the university level. This skill is not just about technical writing ability, but also plays a role in developing students' critical, logical, and academic thinking.

B. Issues in Learning Mahārah Kitābah

Research results show that students still face various challenges in learning Mahārah Kitābah. These issues can be grouped into three main aspects: linguistic, pedagogical, and students' academic background. In terms of linguistics, students have difficulties applying rules of nahwu and sharaf, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and constructing effective sentences in Arabic. Additionally, mistakes are still found in punctuation, sentence structure, and coherence between paragraphs.

On the pedagogical side, students mentioned that the learning tends to focus more on theory rather than intensive writing practice. The limitations of learning media, lack of variety in teaching methods, and minimal continuous writing practice are factors that also affect students' writing abilities. Meanwhile, on the academic background aspect, students who have no experience studying in Islamic boarding schools tend to face greater difficulties compared to those who have a prior foundation in Arabic. These differences in initial abilities influence the speed and success of students in mastering Arabic writing skills.

C. Advantages and Disadvantages of Mahārah Kitābah Learning

The research findings show that learning Mahārah Kitābah has several advantages. Students stated that this course helps them understand the rules of writing Arabic letters correctly, improves their ability to compose in Arabic, strengthens their understanding of nahw and sharaf,

and develops their skills in writing khat (calligraphy). On the other hand, students also identified some drawbacks in the learning process. These drawbacks include limited learning media, less writing practice compared to theoretical material, difficulty in writing Arabic letters according to imla' rules, and low intensity of practice provided during lectures. Overall, the research findings indicate that learning Mahārah Kitābah has brought significant benefits to students, but it still requires the development of more innovative and practice-oriented learning strategies.

Discussion

Research findings show that Mahārah Kitābah plays a very important role in learning Arabic at universities. These findings are in line with the opinion of Munawarah and Zulkifli (2020), who stated that writing skills are productive skills that serve as indicators of overall mastery of the Arabic language. Writing ability not only requires mastery of vocabulary and grammar but also the ability to organize ideas logically and systematically.

This study also found that the main problems in learning Mahārah Kitābah lie in linguistic and pedagogical aspects. Students' difficulties in applying the rules of nahwu and sharaf indicate that mastering grammar is still a major challenge in learning Arabic. These findings support the results of Khairani et al. (2024), which showed that grammatical errors and limited vocabulary are the dominant factors hindering students' writing abilities.

Besides linguistic factors, this study found that a learning approach still oriented towards theory causes students to have fewer opportunities to develop their writing skills optimally. This situation highlights the importance of implementing process-based learning, which gives students space to practice, get feedback, and make revisions continuously.

Based on the research findings, some solutions that can be applied include using Project-Based Learning, Collaborative Learning, and providing continuous feedback. These methods allow students to be actively involved in the writing process, develop critical thinking skills, and gradually improve the quality of their writing. These findings align with the studies by Fariz et al. (2024) and Muslimah et al. (2024), which confirm that student-centered learning can significantly enhance Arabic writing skills. The implications of this research show that lecturers need to develop Mahārah Kitābah learning that is more contextual, communicative, and practice-based. Additionally, educational institutions need to provide adequate learning media and encourage the development of a curriculum that is more responsive to students' needs. Thus, learning Mahārah Kitābah is not just about mastering theory, but also about the ability to produce high-quality academic writing in Arabic..

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Mahārah Kitābah is one of the Arabic language skills that plays a strategic role in university learning. This skill not only serves as a means of written communication but also acts as an indicator of mastery in other language aspects, such as nahwu, sharaf, vocabulary proficiency, as well as systematic and academic thinking abilities. Therefore, the success of learning Mahārah Kitābah becomes one of the benchmarks for the overall success of Arabic language learning.

Research findings show that the problems in learning Mahārah Kitābah can be classified into three main dimensions: linguistic, pedagogical, and students' academic background. Linguistic problems include difficulties in applying nahwu and sharaf rules, limited vocabulary, spelling mistakes, and low ability to develop ideas systematically. On the pedagogical side, learning is still dominated by theory delivery, so students have limited opportunities to practice writing and receive continuous feedback. Meanwhile, differences in educational background, especially between students who have studied in pesantren and those who haven't, also affect students' initial ability to master Arabic writing skills.

Even though facing various obstacles, learning Mahārah Kitābah has a positive impact on improving writing skills, understanding Arabic grammar, as well as students' critical and academic thinking abilities. Therefore, improving the quality of learning needs to be done through strengthening writing practice, implementing project-based learning, collaborative learning, providing continuous feedback, and using more innovative learning media and technology.

The main contribution of this study lies in mapping out the challenges of learning Mahārah Kitābah comprehensively by integrating linguistic, pedagogical, and students' academic background aspects. These findings can serve as a basis for lecturers and educational institutions to design more effective, contextual learning strategies aimed at improving Arabic writing skills in universities.

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