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An Arabic Learning Model for Strengthening the Arabic Language Proficiency of Secondary School Students: Inghimas Lughawi

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Abstract

Arabic learning as a foreign language is often associated with uncondusive environment and limited learning time. In education, the objective of language learning is achieved if the student is able to master the language skills. However, previous studies show that students are not able to use language skills in actual communication. Therefore, an environment model for Arabic language learning '*Inghimas Lughawi*' was introduced. The question are, what is the *Inghimas Lughawi* concept and what is the component that forms *Inghimas Lughawi*? To answer these questions, this study sets two objectives. First, to identify the *Inghimas Lughawi* concept. Second, to suggest components that form *Inghimas Lughawi*. Hence, library research is conducted on previous researches conceptually. Preliminary finding suggests that this model is able to create an effective language environment with broad language use.

Keywords: *Inghimas Lughawi*, Arabic language learning, language environment, language Teaching, language Games.

Introduction

Arabic is a unique language and rich in vocabulary. The Arabic language is also the most famous language among the other Sam languages (*As-samiyah*) which started in Arab land. Then when Islam spread throughout the world through the opening of the city by Islamic armies and international trading activities, Arabic language began to affect some mother tongue of other countries. Besides that, this language is also the language of worship among the Muslims and it is important to understand it as part of effort to feel the worship. Moreover, the main source of law and jurisprudence for Muslims is the Quran. The Qur'an is a revelation from Allah S.W.T which was sent to the prophet Muhammad S.A.W in Arabic has a high level language or style as well as grammatical perfection.

The arrival of Islam in Malaya in the 7th century AD by Arab traders who carried out business

opened up space for Arabic learning in Malaya (Jalil, 2014). Informal learning has led the use of Arabic vocabulary and terms in the Malay community at that time (Teh & Alias, 2008). This does not only effect the language but also in writing where the Arabic letters which named jawi scripts are a common practice to non-Arabs who embrace Islam to use the Arabic alphabet (Naquib, 1972). Basically, jawi script had exposed the Malay community with Arabic writing. Furthermore, the learning of al-Quran that has been emphasized since childhood has helped to master both Arabic alphabet and its pronunciation. In the early stage, arabic learning was formally pioneered by 'pondok' institutions, mostly run by educated ulamas from the middle east. Then, the teaching of Arabic began to expand into madrasah or religious schools (Samah, 2009). The teaching techniques in religious schools highlight the provision of more systematic teaching equipment such as textbooks and board (Nasir, 2010). This demonstrates the comprehensive nature of the teaching and learning aspect of Arabic. Afterwards, the Ministry of Education offers Arabic language education at primary, secondary and high school levels. At the secondary level, the objective of the Arabic language learning set is (Wizarah At-ta'lim Al-Maliziyah, 2009):

1. Listen and understand quotes and use them when speak.
2. Speak the correct Arabic language in certain situations.
3. Read various Arabic language materials and understand them.
4. Writes multiple Arabic language materials and understanding the contents.
5. Master Arabic writing skills with the right method.
6. Remember and memorize fundamental *sorf* methods.
7. Practice basic grammar and *balaghah* in Arabic and use it correctly.
8. Master the Arabic vocabulary no less than 1,500 words and use them in correct manner.

The objectives demonstrate that the mastery of language skills is the main focus of Arabic study at this stage. But the aspects of the skills have not been mastered by the students although they have studied the basics of Arabic language before continue study at university level where it is more challenging. (Ismail, Mat, & Pa, 2012; Husin, 2014; Awang, Hat, & Rouyan, 2014; Karim & Husaini, 2016; Sopian, 2016). In order to solve the problem of the language proficiency, a cumulative approach has to be carried out with the development of conducive environment for Arabic language learning. The environment model named *Inghimas Lughawi* will provide the widest opportunity and space for students to interact in the Arabic realm and virtual world (Ismail & Ismail, 2014). It is targeted with the application of *Inghimas Lughawi* model makes the students be more proactive to learn Arabic and increase self-motivation for self-learning.

Literary Highlights: The Basic Principles in Developing the *Inghimas Lughawi's* Model.

i. Concept: Language as a Communication Tool

The main function of the language is for communication. According to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009), language is not limited to grammar or rules but as a tool used to express and interpret meaning in building interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the main purpose of language learning is to develop communicative capabilities within students (Littlewood, 1981; Rollmann, 1994). The language skills were taught during classes to prepare the students to use the language in real communication (Van der, 2006). The concept of language as a means of communication is important because its negligence will lead the process of teaching deviates from its true purpose

of language teaching. This concept can show an effective and efficient teaching of Arabic language. This agenda will drive towards balanced and comprehensive Arabic language teaching that includes the structure and function, knowledge and skills as well as language learning and acquisition. Teaching will no longer ignores the communication activities, the appropriate social contexts and will definitely change the teaching pattern from teacher-centered to student-centered teaching.

ii. Language Skills

Nurturing integrated language skills in learning can extend the full potential of Arabic language students. The basic skills of the language are listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Nunan (1988) explains that student-centered teaching believe the acquisition of language as a process of acquiring language skills and not just the process of obtaining information about the language alone. Students must be given the widest opportunity to develop these language skills. Most of the teachers' teaching practices are less concerned with the application of language skills in Arabic language instruction (Ismail, Tamuri, Yusoff, & Othman, 2011). As a result, students cannot master language skills, especially productive skills such as speaking and writing. This is because students need to practice language through these two skills, while for listening and reading skills are called receptive skills, students only need to accept and translate language symbols into understandable meanings. In short, students need to be given a variety of language skills training by exposing them to situations that emphasize meaning efficiently and economically. Indeed, students need to get good results in the exam, but not necessarily the excel students in exams are good in communication. This matches with the opinion of Littlewood (2014) which explains that one who is communicates efficiently in a targeted language is not necessarily the one who is best in mastering the language structure but the most proficient of manipulating the language in conveying his message through speech or writing.

iii. Balancing between Structure, Function, Meaning and Context

Current teaching needs to be re-evaluated for improvement and to increase quality with the implementation of an integrated approach. In the introduction teaching on the aspects of language structure such as phonology, morphology, grammar, lexical and structural training should still be emphasized as it is the basis of language used to communicate (Littlewood, 2014). However, aspects of meaning, functionality, notion and its usage strategies are equally important, systematic and thorough elements of attention (Swan, 2005). The implementation of the lessons in each phase to ensure a balance between the structure and function has been explained by Yeldan (243) in the following diagram:

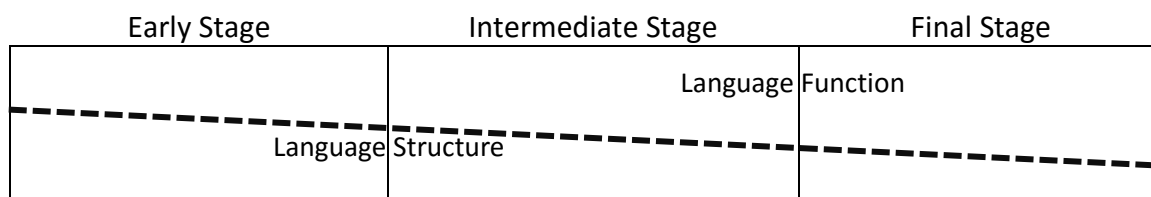


Diagram 2.1

Hence, teachers need to guide students to identify all the basic elements of the language in an integrated and balanced manner. Lectures, phonology, morphology and grammar items

need to be arranged for the construction of the sentence either verbally or writing based on its functionality. Therefore, student assignments need to be linked to: The acquisition of basic language units such as words, information, rules, concepts and so on. Linking verses based on their functions contained in the paragraph. Engage in other income, training and other mental operations by manipulating the basic units of the language. This integrated approach can give students a clear idea of the language content. Students can understand that in order to master their language, they need to enhance all aspects of social information and interaction where they should be aware of the language not only the cognitive needs to be practiced but also the communicative needs that will be used during interaction (Choudron, 1988).

iv. Living Language Environment

The success and excitement of Arabic learning is one of the most dependent on the environment. Environmental factors in learning are generally divided into three factors, namely physical, human and technical factors (Mok, 2012). In Arabic learning, the physical factor is learning facilities provided by the school include Arabic language rooms, Arabic word posters and Arabic language boards. Humanitarian factors involve social and emotional situations that can affect students' motivation. The activity of watching television / Arabic films, reading Arabic magazines and browsing Arabic websites also included in living social environment. While technical factors refer to teaching techniques used to stimulate the spirit and readiness of learning and conducive environment for students.

A study by Abdullah & Sulaiman (2015) points out that the conducive Arabic environment is another factor that affects students' Arabic language achievement besides the importance of Arabic language. The study also summarizes the active use of Arabic language is included in living Arabic language environment. Class-based activities, communication between teachers and students, high-level Arabic exposure is an enabling environment that encourages positive actions of students in Arabic. Among the activities outside the classroom are speech competitions, nasyid competitions, quizzes, khat and essays writing competitions, sketch competitions, debates competitions, Arabian camp, Arabic-language months, Islamic-Arabic night, broadcasts and publications.

Inghimas Lughawi:

In terms of language, 'Inghimas' or immersion means a person's full participation or concentration in a matter. Generally in the context of education, the term immersion is a process of experience or learning that students engage in and involves the environment and the participation of students in depth. The use of the term is not limited to language fields but it also used in other fields.

In the context of language education, *Inghimas Lughawi* is a method of providing either a natural or created environment for targeted language within a certain period of time. In this environment, students will face the target language. The outcome from this situation will be in two levels. The first level involves the target language method and grammar while the second level is practical activities through direct communication with native speakers (Aminah, 2014). According to Syusyah (2015), through this method students are exposed to language like someone is showered and watered. Language is like water that showering the whole body. Thus,

the atmosphere and learning sessions are filled with the proper use of the language through interesting teaching activities. There are several definitions of immersion that are often used in the context of language education which are (1) immersion refers to bilingual education where the student is "immersed" to second language learning atmosphere that aimed in mastering the students proficiencies for both first and second languages, (2) immersion is a teaching method that uses the second language in curriculum in a second language learning environment (Luan & Guo, 2011). Other than that, (3) immersion term also applies to students who are minority speaker learn the native language of majority students of a class. In addition, (4) immersion is used to refer to the environment of the learning process of language such as students studying one language in a conducive language environment. However, the four definitions have similarity. The first feature that has similarity is the concept and implementation of the program. Second, similarity in terms of objective. Met (1993) states that the main objective of the immersion program is to build a high level of understanding in a foreign language and to build a positive attitude of the students towards the native speaker of second language and their culture. In other words, the term *Inghimas Lughawi* consist of two major components, namely communicative environment and approach. Students live in an environment that encourages them to use second language and understand them through interaction.

This program is considered successful when combining the main concept of immersion (Chowan, 1997):

- 1) Use target language as intermediate language
- 2) Focus on understanding first before conversations
- 3) Teaching takes place in an effective communicative context such as activities and games
- 4) Use of visual aid, real material and involve sensory organ.
- 5) Evaluation is conducted periodically and frequent.
- 6) Program time is provided for reading and writing skills according to student level.
- 7) Learning activity takes place in a communicative context in an authentic situation

***Inghimas lughawi's* Components**

Communicative Approach

The communicative approach is a teaching that focuses on practicality of the language. This is important situations for students to enable them to use language effectively in meeting the needs of actual communication (Hiep, 2007). The goal of this approach is to master the communicative proficiency and focus on applying the language in learning activities (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). The principles illustrate a communicative approach in language teaching and can be applied to the whole learning procedure (Richard & Rodgers, 2014). Therefore, the communicative approach contains the principles that emphasize the use of language as a training so that students can increase their competency in communication.

Language Activities

The stated components are the one that involve with living environment of languages. Language activities that contain tasks are the basis of student-centered learning and not conventional method of teacher-centered education. Therefore, this teaching plays an important role in shaping the student learning process. According to Ellis & Shintani (2014), this approach encompasses the involvement of students in meaningful communication through the work

projects and can build student's communicative competence. Through the task-based teaching, students can be trained to apply knowledge learned with scaffolding support (Rashid, Ying, & Ahmad, 2009). It can develop students' skills especially in the use of authentic materials that provide students with language exposure like native speakers.

Contest is one of language activities. The contest consists of participation, assignments and goals; two or more participants completed the assignment independently or interactively and strive to achieve the same goals (Cheng, Wu, Liao, & Chan, 2009). The contest is also an activity where students can compare their performance with their opponents (Vandercruysse, Vandewaetere, Cornillie, & Clarebout, 2013). The challenge element in a competition has a positive impact on language learning. This will make the students vigorously pursue learning without being directed. They will act independently on the spirit and curiosity in accordance with their own creativity and thus increase the motivation of instinct (Comanaru & Noels, 2009).

However, open competition often involves comparing participants' competitiveness in public situations. To avoid the negative effects such as reducing the confidence, grouping approach that involves collaboration between group members is one of the steps that can be used. The members of the group will share their energy and idea in completing the assignment well. They will also support each other in any competition results obtained (Chen, Chou, Biswas, & Chan, 2012). In addition, the level or content of the competition should be taken into account in a competition. Contest content that matches the learning objectives of the classroom, the student and the time carried out has a positive effect during the competition. Additionally, the space provided for self-improvement process or pre-competition exercises will help preparing the student before participate in a competition (competition and student perceptions, the effect of using educational game on student achievement). The activities of language in the form of competition are:

i) *Kalam Irtijali*:

'Kalam Irtijali' or spontaneous speech is a student action to speak using the target language without seeing the text. Spontaneous speech refers to unplanned speech in the form of meaningful communicative and capable of responding to interlocutor (Ellis, 2006). Therefore, spontaneous conversation is an important and most reliable activity to evaluate existing learner's knowledge (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The importance of spontaneous conversation is not only within the scope of the language but is one of the benchmarks of successful academic communication by training students to think fast. Such activities encourage students to focus more on spontaneous speech than mistakes made during the talks. Additionally, unplanned speeches increase students' vocabulary and their existing linguistic resources. This suggests that this activity can support language learning as students will learn to speak and at the same time talk to learn.

Spontaneous conversations in foreign languages are often linked to student's worries to speak. However, studies show that spontaneous conversations performed as a language activity can reduce student's anxiety to speak (Yalcin & Incecay, 2014). Students feel more excited to speak when given the opportunity to say what they want informally (Ofsted, 2008). Moreover, activities that emphasize students to use target language according to actual situations cause students to speak creatively and go beyond learning topics by spontaneously building their own words.

Arabic questions found in Kalam Irtijal's activities are related to the experience and life of the students to enable students to answer their own spontaneously. After that, students need to understand the questions given and provide answers within the prescribed time frame.

ii) Munazharah Maftūḥah

The debate is generally a group activity in upholding the argument of the group by submitting the relevant evidence so that its arguments are accepted. Through debate activities, students can express their views freely about the ideas in mind and describe what they see or feel so they can talk without hesitate (Samah, Hamid, Sha'ari, & Mohamad, 2013). Furthermore, through debate activities, students can enhance their understanding of what has been learned, build critical attitudes towards the theories and train to present their opinions (Susilawati, 2013).

At language learning point of view, debate activities are not limited to language use only but students are able to master listening skills when they actively listen to the various views expressed. Then, the students will ask questions and present views based on the arguments. The response between the two groups resulted in logical communication with the opportunity to use knowledge to express ideas (Darby, 2007). Teamwork requires students to work individually and in groups to find information so that the views expressed do not overlap or contradict each other can also train self-esteem in language learning. *Munazharah Maftūḥah* or open debate is a debate where students are free to give their views and to counter the arguments of the opponent. Therefore, students are not restricted to formal debate habits.

iii) Tamsil

Tamsil or acting is a technique often used in language learning. According to Russo-Rastelli (2006), acting is a written dialogue involving responses and stimulation to build speaking skills, reading and writing. Students translate these writings into lively conversation and focus more on speech intonation according to their meaning. Dialogue is implemented between the characters in producing a storyline. In acting, each student will be given a certain role that involves the performance of student according to the situation. This gives students the opportunity to get an idea or imagine the action that will be taken when dealing with the same situation in real life (Winston, 2012). The character variations and relationships between the characters also help provide an authentic linguistic medium for participants to communicate and negotiate.

In addition, acting involves body languages. Physical activity performed giving communicative action on the body through some paralinguistic signals used (Winston, 2012). Thus, acting offers a diverse aspect to increase student interest. The results of the study by Din et al. (2014) show that this technique improves the ability to speak in Arabic, feels more confident and enriches the vocabulary at the end of the activity. In addition, studies conducted by Dunn, Bundy, & Woodrow (2012) show that acting can build a refugee's survival rate to settle in other countries, especially in building oral and written abilities. Studies conducted by Kao, Carkin, & Hsu (2011) also show that acting activity promotes questions between students and teachers where questions involves more frequent insights. Using an electronic source is suggested for preparation instead of just relying on teachers and texts in obtaining new information and expressing ideas (Anderson & Dunn, 2013). For *Tamsil's* implementation, students will watch an Arabic story and play it back according to the script that been provided.

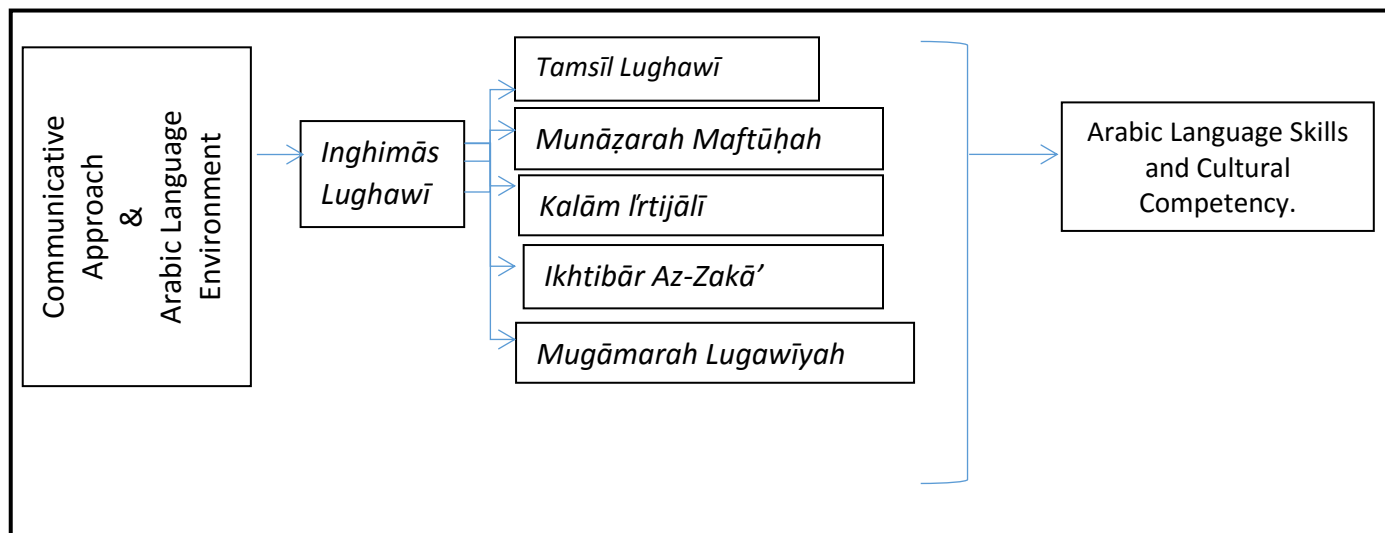
iv) Mughamarat Lughawiyah

Mughamarat Lughawiyah is an outdoor activity. This activity involves the search of hidden objects and completion of language tasks. Usually in such activities, some objects will be hidden for the participants to search. Each group will receive a list of names for that hidden object and the winner is judged by the number of objects found (Kim & Yao, 2010). Therefore, the game has been changed to support education in which the object is information, knowledge and facts. Students will seek out hidden information somewhere based on the questions or instructions given. They also need to complete the assigned language task at the specific checkpoint as a condition for the search. They are expected to complete the whole game when passing through the whole checkpoints and task as directed.

The selection of appropriate skills processes and strategies that can help meet current needs of the students is also a key point to highlight. The purpose of this activity in terms of element and function of the language are (The Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, 2000): 1) Students are able to identify and ask about places, 2) Students are able to describe and ask about activity procedures, 3) Students are able to give and ask directions and locations, 4) Students are able to state and ask about what they needs, 5) Students are able to give reasons and opinions, 6) Students are able to describe places and objects and 7) Students are able to express their needs in travel. Furthermore, the involvement of outdoor activities in this game has several advantages namely: 1) Challenges and fun in learning, 2) Students learn general and detail learning, 3) Students experience new things, 4) Outdoor learning has a positive impact on long-term memory because it involves a reaction and cognitive influencing learning enhancement and 5) Students can improve achievement, engagement and motivation for learning. Activities outside of the classroom can build higher social interactions. Students who learn outdoors able to describe about their experience outside the class, compared to students who only study in classroom tends to describe on what their teacher do (Szczepanski & Dahlgren, 2011). This shows that outdoors learning provides an active learning opportunity for students.

Presence of Arabic Native Speakers and Arabic Boards

Another component that help in forming living Arabic learning environment are the presence of Arabian facilitators' or teachers. Arabic native speakers are those who speak Arabic from birth, use Arabic as mother tongue and grow up in Arabic culture as their identity. For the best teaching, there are need qualified, experienced and proven language skills of facilitators to be selected to prove the teaching. (Kiczkowiak, 2014). The presence of Arabic native speakers gives the closest example to the students in recognizing the right techniques of speaking in terms of pronunciation (*makhraj*), language and custom. The participation between native speakers and students does not only offer vocabulary and grammar knowledge but also culture that plays a role in shaping knowledge of daily expressions in that language. Students will practice to speak with existing vocabulary while interacting and referring language problems to them. It plays an important role in the development of Arabic language proficiency. On the other hand, the use of Arabic board gives the students' knowledge directly into the environment through visual display. Words of vocabulary displayed can explain the knowledge wrote in the book visually. The study shows that through visual display, students and teachers can improve their knowledge (Crawford, 2016).

Proposed Model: *Inghimas Lughawiy* Model**Diagram 3.1****Conclusion**

Arabic language education as a foreign language at the school level requires a persistent effort from both side; the teacher and students. The Arabic phenomenon as a foreign language makes it very less exposure in the social context of society. Thus, the school environment plays a major role as a social context in shaping the students' Arabic language proficiency. The Arabic learning atmosphere is inadequate but the expected environment is in the use of language. In this case, students need a created environment so that they can use language independently. Teaching theoretically in the classroom makes the students only take the Arabic language just to memorize and express it in the exam without giving them the opportunity to build language skills to achieve language purpose as a means of communication. The *Inghimas Lughawiy* model involving continuous language activities and the Arabic language environment is expected to provide a conducive atmosphere in Arabic learning and thereby stimulate student enthusiasm and motivation.

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