

The Implementation of a PAIKEM-Based Drama Project to Improve Maharah Al-Kalam

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of a drama project based on the PAIKEM learning model in Muhadatsah instruction, evaluate its effectiveness in improving students' Maharah al-Kalam (Arabic speaking skills), and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation in Class XI.2 of Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Mukminin Makassar. This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in two cycles. Data were collected through observation, tests, and documentation. The findings indicate that the implementation of the PAIKEM-based drama project created a more active, communicative, and enjoyable learning environment while significantly improving students' Maharah al-Kalam. The students' mean score increased from 78 in the pre-cycle to 81 in Cycle I and 89 in Cycle II. Likewise, the percentage of classical learning mastery improved from 33% in the pre-cycle to 70% in Cycle I and reached 93.9% in Cycle II. The most notable improvement was observed in the paralinguistic aspects of speaking, particularly students' self-confidence, intonation, and facial expressions when communicating in Arabic. The successful implementation of the drama project was supported by students' enthusiasm, effective group collaboration, and the use of engaging instructional media. However, differences in students' Arabic language proficiency and limited instructional time remained the main challenges during the implementation. In conclusion, the implementation of the PAIKEM-based drama project was effective in improving students' Maharah al-Kalam while also enhancing their participation, confidence, and willingness to communicate orally in Arabic.

Keywords: Arabic Learning; Maharah Al-Kalam; PAIKEM; Project Drama

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan mendeskripsikan bagaimana implementasi proyek drama berbasis model PAIKEM di kelas XI.2 Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Mukminin, mengevaluasi efektivitas pelaksanaan pembelajaran Muhadatsah dengan implementasi proyek drama berbasis model PAIKEM, dan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor pendukung dan penghambat dalam implementasi proyek drama berbasis model PAIKEM di kelas XI.2 Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Mukminin Makassar. Metode pengumpulan data pada penelitian ini adalah dengan melalui observasi, tes, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi proyek drama berbasis model PAIKEM mampu menciptakan suasana pembelajaran yang lebih aktif, komunikatif, dan menyenangkan. Selain itu, implementasi proyek drama berbasis model PAIKEM memberikan pengaruh peningkatan kemampuan Maharah al-Kalam peserta didik. Pada tahap pra siklus, rata-rata nilai peserta didik sebesar 78 dengan persentase ketuntasan klasikal sebesar 33%. Pada siklus I, rata-rata nilai meningkat menjadi 81 dengan persentase ketuntasan sebesar 70%. Selanjutnya, pada siklus II rata-rata nilai peserta didik meningkat menjadi 89 dengan persentase ketuntasan klasikal mencapai 93,9%. Peningkatan yang paling dominan terlihat pada aspek paralinguistik, khususnya pada aspek kepercayaan diri, intonasi, dan ekspresi peserta didik dalam berbicara menggunakan bahasa Arab. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa proyek drama berbasis model PAIKEM mampu meningkatkan kemampuan Maharah al-Kalam peserta didik serta meningkatkan partisipasi dan keberanian peserta didik dalam menggunakan bahasa Arab secara lisan.

Kata-kata kunci: Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab; Maharah al-Kalam; PAIKEM; Proyek Drama

INTRODUCTION

Language is an arbitrary and conventional system of sounds that connects the world of sounds with the world of meaning. It is both systematic and systemic, as its elements are organized according to structured rules and function as an interconnected system of communication. Speaking competence (*Maharah al-Kalam*) is one of the most essential language skills in Arabic language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, opinions, emotions, and experiences effectively in real-life situations. Unlike receptive skills, speaking requires learners to actively produce language while simultaneously applying appropriate vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation, and communicative strategies. *Maharah al-Kalam* is the ability to express thoughts and feelings orally in a meaningful interaction that encourages response and mutual understanding. Therefore, developing speaking competence should become one of the primary objectives of Arabic language instruction.

The success of speaking instruction is determined not only by learners' mastery of linguistic components but also by paralinguistic aspects such as intonation, facial expressions, gestures, and self-confidence. These elements strengthen the intended message and facilitate effective communication between speakers and listeners (Huzaiifi et al., 2024). Consequently, Arabic speaking instruction should provide learning experiences that encourage students to communicate naturally rather than merely memorize vocabulary and grammatical patterns.

The ultimate goal of *Maharah al-Kalam* instruction is to enable learners to express ideas fluently, accurately, and confidently using appropriate Arabic expressions in various communicative contexts (Kuswoyo, 2017). To achieve this objective, speaking activities should involve meaningful interaction through discussions, dialogues, speeches, storytelling, simulations, and role-playing, allowing students to construct language through authentic communication (Aziz, 2020). Such activities encourage learners to use Arabic as a functional communication tool instead of treating it solely as an academic subject.

Despite its importance, improving students' Arabic speaking competence remains a challenging issue in many educational institutions. Previous studies have reported that students frequently experience difficulties in expressing ideas orally because of limited vocabulary, inadequate pronunciation, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, and insufficient opportunities to practice speaking in meaningful situations (Dian Islamiyati, et al., 2023). These challenges often result in passive classroom participation and prevent learners from achieving the expected communicative competence.

A similar situation was identified at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Mukminin Makassar. Preliminary classroom observations indicated that although Arabic was routinely taught, many eleventh-grade students still demonstrated limited speaking performance. Most students relied heavily on memorized dialogues, hesitated when communicating spontaneously, and lacked confidence during oral presentations. Learning activities were generally teacher-centered and emphasized repetition rather than authentic communication, reducing opportunities for students to actively develop their speaking skills. As a result, students' fluency, pronunciation, confidence, and expressive delivery had not yet reached the expected level.

One instructional approach that potentially addresses these challenges is the PAIKEM learning model (*Pembelajaran Aktif, Inovatif, Kreatif, Efektif, dan Menyenangkan*). PAIKEM emphasizes active participation, creativity, collaboration, and enjoyable learning experiences that encourage learners to become actively involved throughout the instructional process. Rather than positioning students as passive recipients of information, this model facilitates experiential learning in which learners construct knowledge through meaningful activities and collaborative interaction.

Integrating PAIKEM with a drama project provides broader opportunities for students to practice Arabic in authentic communicative contexts. Drama activities require learners to interpret situations, interact with peers, express emotions, and communicate meaning through both verbal and non-verbal language. This learning process simultaneously develops linguistic competence and paralinguistic performance, including pronunciation, fluency, confidence, intonation, and expressive communication. Furthermore, project-based drama encourages collaborative learning, problem-solving, creativity, and sustained engagement, making speaking practice more meaningful than conventional dialogue memorization.

Several previous studies have demonstrated that active learning models, project-based learning, role-playing, and drama activities contribute positively to students' speaking achievement. Nevertheless, most previous research has examined these approaches separately, focusing either on project-based learning or drama as instructional techniques. Limited attention has been given to the implementation of a PAIKEM-based drama project within Arabic language learning, particularly in classroom action research involving Islamic senior secondary education. Moreover, previous studies have rarely examined improvements in

both linguistic and paralinguistic dimensions of *Maharah al-Kalam*, including students' confidence and expressive performance during oral communication. This limitation indicates the existence of a research gap that deserves further investigation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to investigate the implementation of a PAIKEM-based drama project to improve the *Maharah al-Kalam* of eleventh-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Mukminin Makassar. Specifically, the study seeks to examine how the implementation process contributes to improving students' Arabic speaking competence and to identify the extent to which the learning model enhances both linguistic and paralinguistic aspects of speaking performance.

METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four cyclical stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Classroom Action Research was selected because it enables teachers and researchers to identify classroom problems, implement instructional improvements, evaluate learning outcomes, and continuously refine teaching practices through reflective cycles.

The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Mukminin Makassar during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of 33 eleventh-grade female students (Class XI.2) who were selected because preliminary observations indicated that their Arabic speaking competence had not yet reached the expected learning outcomes despite regular classroom instruction.

The study was implemented in two action cycles following a preliminary observation and pre-test. Each cycle consisted of four stages. During the planning stage, the researcher prepared lesson plans, learning materials, observation sheets, speaking assessment rubrics, and a drama project based on the PAIKEM learning model (*Pembelajaran Aktif, Inovatif, Kreatif, Efektif, dan Menyenangkan*). During the acting stage, students participated in collaborative learning activities involving script development, role assignment, rehearsal, and drama performance using Arabic as the medium of communication. The observing stage involved monitoring students' learning participation, speaking performance, classroom interaction, and implementation of the learning model through structured observation sheets. Finally, the reflection stage was conducted to evaluate the strengths and limitations of each cycle and to determine necessary improvements before implementing the subsequent cycle.

Data were collected using four research instruments: observation, speaking tests, interviews, and documentation. Observation sheets were employed to record students' participation, engagement, confidence, and classroom interaction throughout the learning process. Speaking tests were administered as a pre-test and post-test to evaluate improvements in students' *Maharah al-Kalam*. The assessment rubric measured four performance indicators: fluency, pronunciation, self-confidence, and intonation or expressive delivery. Interviews were conducted with the Arabic language teacher and selected students to obtain qualitative information regarding students' learning experiences, perceived challenges, and responses toward the implementation of the PAIKEM-based drama project. Documentation, including photographs, lesson plans, students' worksheets, assessment records, and field notes, was collected to support and validate the research findings.

The collected data consisted of qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed using the interactive model of data analysis, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, quantitative data obtained from the speaking tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics by calculating students' average scores and classical learning mastery. Students' speaking performance was evaluated based on the predetermined assessment rubric, while learning mastery was determined by comparing individual achievement with the school's Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 80. The implementation of the classroom action was considered successful when at least 80% of the students achieved the minimum mastery criterion and demonstrated noticeable improvement in both linguistic and paralinguistic aspects of Arabic speaking performance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The implementation of the PAIKEM-based drama project was carried out through two action cycles following a preliminary observation and pre-test. The learning activities emphasized active participation, collaborative learning, creativity, and authentic Arabic communication through drama performances. Students worked collaboratively to understand the script, rehearse their roles, improve pronunciation, and

perform the assigned drama in front of the class.

The results indicated a gradual improvement in students' Arabic speaking competence throughout the implementation of the classroom action. Improvements were observed not only in students' speaking scores but also in classroom participation, confidence, and willingness to communicate using Arabic.

Table 1 presents the comparison of students' learning outcomes during the pre-test, Cycle I, and Cycle II

Table 1. Improvement of Students' Arabic Speaking Achievement

Stage	Mean Score	Classical Master
Pre Test	78	33%
Cycle I	81	70%
Cycle II	89	93.3%

The pre-test results showed that students' speaking competence had not yet reached the expected learning outcomes. Only 33% of the students achieved the school's minimum mastery criterion (KKM = 80), indicating that most students still experienced difficulties in speaking Arabic confidently and fluently.

After implementing the first cycle, students demonstrated noticeable improvement. The average speaking score increased from 78 to 81, while classical mastery rose from 33% to 70%. Students became more willing to participate in classroom interaction and showed greater confidence during drama rehearsals and performances. Nevertheless, several students still relied heavily on memorized scripts and occasionally hesitated when speaking spontaneously.

Further improvement was observed during Cycle II after revising the learning activities based on the reflection conducted in Cycle I. The average speaking score increased to 89, while classical mastery reached 93.9%, exceeding the predetermined success criterion. Most students were able to perform their roles more naturally, communicate with greater fluency, and demonstrate improved pronunciation, confidence, intonation, and expressive delivery. The most substantial improvement was observed in the paralinguistic aspects of speaking, particularly in students' self-confidence, intonation, and expressive delivery. Through drama-based learning activities, students became more confident in performing before an audience, more actively engaged in delivering dialogues, and more capable of expressing conversations with appropriate intonation and expressions that reflected the communicative context. Meanwhile, the linguistic aspects, including pronunciation and speaking fluency, also showed improvement, although the gains were less pronounced than those observed in the paralinguistic dimensions. These findings suggest that drama-based learning has a greater impact on enhancing students' communicative confidence and oral performance, whereas the development of linguistic competence requires more sustained and continuous practice.

The implementation of the PAIKEM-based drama project revealed several factors that influenced students' learning outcomes throughout the classroom action research. These factors not only affected the implementation process but also contributed to the improvements observed in students' Arabic speaking competence.

One of the major supporting factors was the Islamic boarding school environment. Having lived in the boarding school for approximately five years, the students had been consistently exposed to Arabic through daily language activities. Although most students were still more accustomed to understanding Arabic receptively than using it productively, this continuous exposure enabled them to comprehend the drama scripts more easily and adapt more quickly to Arabic-speaking activities. This condition facilitated students' participation during rehearsals and reduced the time needed to understand the learning materials.

Another important factor was students' active participation throughout the learning process. The implementation of the drama project transformed the classroom into a more interactive learning environment in which students were directly involved in group discussions, rehearsals, and performances. Their active engagement increased not only their participation during lessons but also their willingness to communicate using Arabic. This finding is consistent with the classroom observations, which showed a gradual increase in students' confidence and classroom interaction from Cycle I to Cycle II.

The practical and communicative nature of drama-based learning also contributed substantially to the improvement of students' speaking performance. Rather than memorizing vocabulary or grammatical rules in isolation, students practiced Arabic through meaningful dialogues situated in realistic communicative contexts. This authentic language use enabled students to understand the functional use of Arabic more effectively and encouraged them to speak more naturally. As a result, improvements were particularly evident in students' confidence, expressive delivery, and communicative performance during drama presentations.

Collaborative group work further strengthened the effectiveness of the learning process. Throughout rehearsals, students supported one another in understanding dialogues, correcting pronunciation, and practicing their roles. This collaborative atmosphere reduced students' anxiety about speaking in front of others because responsibility for the performance was shared among group members. Consequently, students became more confident and demonstrated greater expressive ability during the final performances, which explains why the most significant improvement was observed in the paralinguistic aspects of speaking.

Despite these positive outcomes, several factors limited the effectiveness of the implementation. The most prominent challenge was the limited instructional time allocated to *Muhadatsah* classes, which consisted of only two 30-minute sessions per meeting. Drama-based learning requires sufficient time for script analysis, vocabulary discussion, rehearsal, character interpretation, and performance. Consequently, some students had limited opportunities to refine their pronunciation and speaking fluency through repeated practice. This limitation may explain why improvements in the linguistic aspects of speaking were less substantial than those observed in the paralinguistic dimensions.

Another challenge was students' dependence on written scripts during rehearsals. Many students focused on memorizing dialogues instead of understanding the communicative meaning behind the conversations. As a result, several students occasionally delivered their dialogues mechanically and paid less attention to intonation, expression, and spontaneous interaction. Nevertheless, this dependence gradually decreased as students became more familiar with the scripts and gained confidence through repeated practice.

Differences in students' language proficiency also influenced the implementation process. Variations in vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and speaking confidence meant that some students required considerably more guidance than others. To address this issue, heterogeneous group formation enabled higher-achieving students to assist their peers during rehearsals, while the teacher provided additional support to students who experienced greater learning difficulties. This collaborative learning strategy contributed to the overall improvement in students' speaking competence despite their differing initial abilities.

Overall, these findings indicate that the effectiveness of the PAIKEM-based drama project was influenced by the interaction between supportive learning conditions and practical classroom constraints. While the boarding school environment, collaborative learning, and authentic communicative practice accelerated the development of students' speaking confidence and performance, limited instructional time and variations in language proficiency remained challenges that primarily affected the development of linguistic accuracy and fluency.

Classroom observations also revealed positive behavioral changes throughout the research process. Students became increasingly active during discussions, collaborated effectively within their groups, and showed greater enthusiasm toward Arabic learning activities. The drama project created an enjoyable learning atmosphere that encouraged students to practice speaking more frequently without excessive fear of making mistakes.

Although the implementation produced significant improvements, several challenges remained throughout the research. Some students initially depended on written scripts during rehearsals, while differences in individual speaking abilities required additional guidance from the teacher. Furthermore, the limited instructional time made it difficult to conduct extensive rehearsals within regular classroom sessions.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of the PAIKEM-based drama project effectively improved students' *Maharah al-Kalam*. The continuous increase in students' average speaking scores and classical mastery across the two action cycles indicates that integrating active learning principles with drama-based activities provides meaningful opportunities for students to develop their communicative competence.

One of the most significant improvements was observed in students' self-confidence and expressive performance. At the beginning of the study, many students were reluctant to speak Arabic because they were afraid of making pronunciation or grammatical mistakes. However, collaborative rehearsals, repeated speaking practice, and supportive peer interaction gradually reduced students' anxiety and encouraged them to communicate more confidently. This finding supports the view that meaningful communicative activities promote greater learner confidence and facilitate oral language development.

The improvement in students' speaking competence can also be explained through the characteristics of the PAIKEM learning model. PAIKEM emphasizes active, innovative, creative, effective, and enjoyable learning experiences that position students as active participants rather than passive recipients of information. During the drama project, students were required to negotiate meaning, solve problems collaboratively, rehearse dialogues, and perform in authentic communicative situations. These activities provided considerably more opportunities for meaningful language production than conventional teacher-centered instruction.

The results are consistent with previous studies reporting that drama-based instruction enhances speaking competence by increasing learners' motivation, participation, and communicative confidence. Drama creates contextualized communication in which students use language for meaningful interaction rather than mechanical memorization. Consequently, learners become more engaged in the learning process and develop greater communicative competence.

Interestingly, the present study found that improvements in paralinguistic aspects—including confidence, intonation, and expressive delivery—were more substantial than improvements in linguistic aspects such as pronunciation and fluency. This finding suggests that drama activities contribute not only to language production but also to students' ability to communicate meaning effectively through verbal and non-verbal expression. Such improvements are particularly important because successful oral communication depends on both linguistic accuracy and communicative performance.

The more pronounced improvement in the paralinguistic aspects can be attributed to the communicative nature of drama-based learning. Throughout the rehearsal and performance stages, students were repeatedly encouraged to express emotions, interpret characters, and interact naturally with their peers. These activities gradually reduced their anxiety about speaking Arabic and fostered greater self-confidence in oral communication. In contrast, the development of linguistic aspects, particularly pronunciation and fluency, requires longer and more intensive practice because these skills involve continuous exposure to vocabulary, phonological accuracy, and spontaneous language production. Therefore, while the drama project effectively strengthened students' communicative performance within the duration of this study, sustained instructional practice remains necessary to further improve linguistic accuracy.

The classroom action process also revealed several practical challenges. Limited instructional time reduced opportunities for repeated rehearsals, while some students initially depended on written scripts before gradually transitioning to more spontaneous communication. Differences in students' language proficiency likewise required differentiated guidance throughout the implementation. Nevertheless, these challenges did not diminish the overall effectiveness of the learning model, as evidenced by the substantial increase in learning mastery achieved during Cycle II.

The findings also indicate that the effectiveness of the PAIKEM-based drama project was influenced by several contextual factors. The Islamic boarding school environment provided students with continuous exposure to Arabic, enabling them to comprehend dialogue scripts more efficiently and participate more actively in classroom interactions. Furthermore, collaborative group work and authentic communicative activities created a supportive learning atmosphere in which students could practice speaking without excessive fear of making mistakes. These conditions contributed to the substantial improvement observed in students' confidence, participation, and overall speaking performance.

Conversely, the implementation also highlighted several factors that limited the development of students' linguistic competence. The restricted instructional time available for *Muhadatsah* lessons reduced opportunities for repeated rehearsal and individualized feedback, both of which are essential for improving pronunciation and speaking fluency. In addition, students' initial dependence on written scripts and the variation in their language proficiency required differentiated instructional support throughout the learning process. These findings suggest that although drama-based learning is highly effective in promoting communicative confidence, its impact on linguistic accuracy may be further enhanced through longer instructional periods, additional speaking practice, and continuous teacher guidance.

Overall, the findings indicate that integrating the PAIKEM learning model with drama projects provides an effective instructional strategy for improving Arabic speaking competence in secondary education. The combination of collaborative learning, authentic communication, and enjoyable classroom activities successfully enhanced both linguistic and paralinguistic dimensions of *Maharah al-Kalam*, thereby enabling students to communicate more confidently and effectively in Arabic.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of a PAIKEM-based drama project to improve the *Maharah al-Kalam* of eleventh-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Mukminin Makassar through Classroom Action Research. The findings demonstrated that the implementation of the learning model effectively enhanced students' Arabic speaking competence, as reflected in the consistent improvement of students' learning achievement from the pre-test to the end of the second action cycle. In addition to improving speaking performance, the learning process fostered greater student participation, confidence, collaboration, and enthusiasm during classroom activities.

The integration of the PAIKEM learning model with drama projects provided authentic opportunities for students to practice Arabic in meaningful communicative contexts. The project encouraged learners to actively construct language through interaction, collaborative rehearsal, and performance, enabling them to improve both linguistic aspects, such as fluency and pronunciation, and paralinguistic aspects, including confidence, intonation, and expressive delivery. These findings indicate that enjoyable, student-centered learning activities can effectively facilitate the development of Arabic speaking competence.

This study contributes to Arabic language education by demonstrating that the integration of PAIKEM and drama-based projects constitutes an effective instructional strategy for developing communicative competence in secondary education. Unlike conventional speaking instruction that often emphasizes memorization, this approach promotes authentic communication through collaborative and contextualized learning experiences.

Nevertheless, the implementation also revealed several practical challenges, particularly limited instructional time and differences in students' speaking proficiency. Therefore, future studies are recommended to investigate the application of PAIKEM-based drama projects over longer instructional periods, in different educational settings, or with larger and more diverse participant groups. Further research may also explore the integration of digital media or technology-enhanced drama activities to support the development of Arabic speaking skills in contemporary learning environments.

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