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Arabic Speaking Skills Development through the Direct Method among New Santri in an Islamic Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of the Direct Method (Thariqah Mubasyarah) in improving the Arabic speaking skills of new santri at Mambaus Sholihin Islamic Boarding School. A quantitative quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group was employed. Sixty-four new santri were involved and divided into an experimental group (n = 32) and a control group (n = 32). The experimental group received sixteen Direct Method sessions over eight weeks, emphasizing Arabic-only classroom interaction, question-and-answer exchanges, demonstration, guided dialogue, vocabulary contextualization, and intensive oral practice, while the control group received conventional instruction. Speaking performance was assessed using an analytic rubric covering pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammatical accuracy, and comprehension. The groups showed comparable pretest scores (M = 55.90 vs. 54.26; p = 0.396). After treatment, the experimental group achieved a higher posttest mean (M = 76.08, SD = 10.77) than the control group (M = 66.13, SD = 8.32). The mean gain difference was statistically significant, t(62) = 5.15, p < 0.001, with a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.29). The findings indicate that the Direct Method was effective for accelerating the oral development of beginner santri, particularly through immediate target-language exposure, repeated interaction, and contextualized speaking practice. The study recommends integrating the Direct Method with sustained bi'ah lughawiyah and structured formative speaking assessment.

Keywords: *Arabic Speaking; Direct Method; Maharah al-Kalam; New Santri; Thariqah Mubasyarah*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menguji efektivitas Direct Method (Thariqah Mubasyarah) dalam meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Arab santri baru di Pondok Pesantren Mambaus Sholihin. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimen nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group. Sebanyak 64 santri baru terlibat dan dibagi menjadi kelompok eksperimen (n = 32) dan kelompok kontrol (n = 32). Kelompok eksperimen memperoleh enam belas sesi pembelajaran Direct Method selama delapan minggu dengan penekanan pada penggunaan bahasa Arab secara langsung, tanya jawab, demonstrasi, dialog terbimbing, kontekstualisasi kosakata, dan latihan lisan intensif, sedangkan kelompok kontrol mengikuti pembelajaran konvensional. Kemampuan berbicara diukur menggunakan rubrik analitik yang mencakup pelafalan, kosakata, kelancaran, ketepatan gramatikal, dan pemahaman. Skor pretest kedua kelompok relatif sebanding (M = 55,90 dan 54,26; p = 0,396). Setelah perlakuan, rata-rata posttest kelompok eksperimen (M = 76,08; SD = 10,77) lebih tinggi daripada kelompok kontrol (M = 66,13; SD = 8,32). Perbedaan gain score signifikan, t(62) = 5,15; p < 0,001, dengan ukuran efek besar (Cohen's d = 1,29). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Direct Method efektif mempercepat perkembangan kemampuan lisan santri pemula melalui paparan bahasa sasaran, interaksi berulang, dan latihan komunikatif kontekstual. Integrasi metode ini dengan bi'ah lughawiyah dan asesmen formatif berbicara direkomendasikan.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Bahasa Arab; Direct Method; Maharah al-Kalam; Santri Baru; Thariqah Mubasyarah*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most demanding productive skills in Arabic as a foreign language because learners must retrieve vocabulary, organize grammatical patterns, pronounce sounds intelligibly, process interlocutor input, and formulate responses under real-time pressure. In Indonesian pesantren, maharah al-kalam has an additional institutional function: Arabic is not only a subject but also a medium for interaction, religious learning, and the cultivation of a language environment. Recent studies show that limited vocabulary, low self-confidence, speaking anxiety, insufficient practice, and teacher-centered instruction remain recurring barriers to oral Arabic development among learners.(Islamiyati & Ammar, 2023) These barriers are particularly visible among new santri who enter pesantren with heterogeneous educational backgrounds and unequal prior exposure to Arabic.

The transition into a pesantren language environment can therefore be linguistically demanding. New santri are expected to understand classroom instructions, respond to basic questions, participate in daily dialogues, and progressively use Arabic in routine communication. When instruction relies heavily on translation or rule explanation, beginners may acquire declarative knowledge without developing rapid oral access to the language. A speaking-oriented pedagogy requires frequent opportunities to hear meaningful Arabic, associate expressions directly with objects and actions, imitate accurate models, and produce language interactively. This pedagogical need corresponds closely with the principles of the Direct Method, commonly termed Thariqah Mubasyarah in Arabic language education.

The Direct Method teaches the target language through the target language itself. Meaning is conveyed through demonstration, realia, pictures, gestures, contextual questions, and teacher-student interaction rather than through systematic translation. Vocabulary is introduced in situ, grammar is approached inductively, and oral interaction precedes extended written explanation. In beginner classrooms, these characteristics are expected to reduce dependence on the first language and strengthen direct associations between Arabic forms and communicative meanings. (Abrar, 2026) found that the implementation of al-Thariqah al-Mubasyarah in a pesantren context prioritized oral competence through classroom and extracurricular language use.(Insyafiah et al., 2025) (Azis, 2020) similarly argue that the Direct Method provides a communicative foundation for developing maharah al-kalam when learners are consistently required to respond in Arabic.

Recent empirical findings provide stronger support for this approach. (Rochmat et al., 2023)used an experimental design with beginner students at Darussalam Gontor and reported a significant increase after Direct Method treatment(Al Mukarom et al., 2023). found that a Direct Method treatment combined with question-ball media improved Arabic speaking performance in an experimental setting. also reported improvement in speaking proficiency when Direct Method principles were integrated with instructional video, highlighting the value of comprehensible input, visualization, and active oral participation(Illananingtyas, 2025).(Syabrina & Salamuddin, 2024),studying a modern pesantren, noted that direct-method practices encouraged active speaking, contextual learning, confidence, and learner participation, although teacher expertise remained an important condition.

Evidence from Mambaus Sholihin itself makes the present study particularly relevant. (Qomaruddin & Haq, 2023) investigated the Direct Method in the muhadatsah program at Mamba'us Sholihin and reported clear improvement across classroom action research cycles. Their study demonstrated the practical compatibility of direct-method instruction with the institution's language program. However, the research focused on an action-research setting and did not specifically test new santri through a controlled quantitative comparison. New santri constitute a distinctive population because they are in the earliest stage of adaptation to the pesantren's Arabic routines, have uneven prior competence, and may be more sensitive to instructional methods that either facilitate or obstruct initial oral participation.

A further contextual consideration is the role of bi'ah lughawiyah. Arabic speaking development is more likely to be sustained when classroom practice is reinforced by language exposure beyond the lesson. Research on Arabic programs in pesantren indicates that structured conversation, vocabulary routines, peer interaction, and an institutional language environment can expand opportunities for oral practice (Mahsunah et al., 2023)(Maf'udah et al., 2025) The Direct Method may therefore function especially well in a boarding-school setting because the communicative patterns rehearsed in class can be reused in dormitory, dining, organizational, and other daily contexts. Yet the existence of a supportive environment does not eliminate the need to measure whether a particular classroom method produces an identifiable improvement over ordinary instruction.

From a quantitative perspective, effectiveness should be demonstrated through measurable change and comparison. Improvement within one class is informative but cannot by itself rule out maturation, repeated testing, general adaptation to the pesantren environment, or concurrent language activities. A quasi-experimental design with an experimental and comparison group provides a more rigorous basis for

estimating whether Direct Method instruction contributes additional gains in speaking performance. The current study therefore measured pretest-posttest change in pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammatical accuracy, and comprehension, dimensions commonly used in analytic speaking assessment.

This study addresses three questions. First, is there a significant improvement in Arabic speaking ability among new santri taught through the Direct Method? Second, is the improvement significantly greater than that achieved through conventional instruction? Third, how large is the instructional effect? The novelty of the study lies in its focus on beginner santri at Mambaus Sholihin, its controlled quantitative comparison, and its measurement of effect size rather than relying only on descriptive improvement. Accordingly, the study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Thariqah Mubasyarah for improving the Arabic speaking ability of new santri and to formulate pedagogical implications for beginner-level Arabic instruction in a pesantren language environment.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative quasi-experimental approach using a nonequivalent pretest-posttest control-group design. The design was selected because the participating new santri had already been organized into intact instructional groups and could not be individually randomized without disrupting the pesantren program. Two comparable beginner groups were selected: one served as the experimental group and received Direct Method instruction, while the other served as the control group and followed the regular Arabic speaking instruction used in the program.

The study involved 64 new santri at Mambaus Sholihin Islamic Boarding School. Thirty-two santri were assigned to the experimental group and 32 to the control group. Group comparability was evaluated through a speaking pretest before treatment. The mean pretest difference was not statistically significant, indicating that the two groups began the study at a broadly comparable level of oral Arabic ability. The participants were beginners in the institutional language program and had entered the pesantren during the same academic intake.

The treatment was conducted for eight weeks with two instructional sessions per week, producing sixteen sessions of approximately 70 minutes. In the experimental group, the teacher consistently applied Direct Method principles. Classroom instructions were delivered in Arabic; new vocabulary was introduced through objects, pictures, gestures, demonstrations, and situations; question-and-answer sequences moved from controlled to freer responses; grammar was embedded in examples and elicited inductively; and each meeting included guided dialogue, pair practice, and short communicative performance. Translation was avoided except when required to prevent serious misunderstanding. The control group covered comparable themes and vocabulary but used the regular explanation-practice format in which Indonesian mediation, vocabulary translation, written exercises, and teacher explanation were more prominent.

Arabic speaking ability was assessed through an individual performance test administered before and after the intervention. Each student completed three tasks: responding to five contextual questions, performing a short guided dialogue, and delivering a two-minute monologue on a familiar topic. Performance was scored using an analytic rubric with five equally weighted dimensions: pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammatical accuracy, and comprehension/appropriateness. Each dimension was scored from 1 to 20, giving a maximum total score of 100. The instrument was reviewed by three Arabic language education specialists for content relevance and clarity. Two trained raters independently scored the performances; inter-rater agreement was checked during instrument piloting and was considered adequate for research use.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means, standard deviations, and gain scores were calculated for each group. Normality of gain scores was examined using the Shapiro-Wilk test, while homogeneity of variance was tested using Levene's test. A paired-samples t-test was used to evaluate within-group pretest-posttest improvement, and an independent-samples t-test was used to compare gain scores between groups. Statistical significance was set at alpha = 0.05. Cohen's d was calculated to estimate the magnitude of the treatment effect. Ethical procedures included institutional permission, explanation of the study to participants, anonymization of test records, and use of scores only for research analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The analysis began by comparing pretest and posttest performance in the two groups. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics. The experimental group began with a mean score of 55.90 (SD = 7.52), while the control group had a mean of 54.26 (SD = 7.88). The difference was not statistically significant, $t(62) = 0.86$, $p = 0.396$, indicating acceptable baseline comparability. After eight weeks, the experimental group reached a

mean posttest score of 76.08 (SD = 10.77), whereas the control group reached 66.13 (SD = 8.32).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Arabic Speaking Scores

Group	n	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)	Mean Gain (SD)
Experimental	32	55.90 (7.52)	76.08 (10.77)	20.17 (6.39)
Control	32	54.26 (7.88)	66.13 (8.32)	11.88 (6.49)

Both groups improved from pretest to posttest, but the magnitude of improvement differed substantially. The experimental group gained 20.17 points on average, compared with 11.88 points in the control group. The gain pattern suggests that ordinary exposure to the pesantren language program also contributed to development, while the Direct Method added a stronger instructional effect through intensive target-language interaction.

Assumption testing supported the use of parametric analysis. Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated that gain scores did not significantly deviate from normality in either the experimental group ($W = 0.959$, $p = 0.265$) or the control group ($W = 0.955$, $p = 0.194$). Levene's test showed homogeneity of variance, $F = 0.05$, $p = 0.827$. Therefore, paired- and independent-samples t-tests were used for hypothesis testing.

Table 2. Inferential Tests of Speaking Improvement

Comparison	Mean	Difference	df	p	Interpretation
Experimental pre-post	20.17	17.85	31	<.001	Significant
Control pre-post	11.88	10.36	31	<.001	Significant
Gain: experimental vs. control	8.30	5.15	62	< .001	Significant

The paired-samples analysis showed that the experimental group's improvement was statistically significant, $t(31) = 17.85$, $p < 0.001$. The control group also improved significantly, $t(31) = 10.36$, $p < 0.001$. The critical test, however, was the between-group comparison of gain scores. The experimental group's gain was significantly higher by 8.30 points, $t(62) = 5.15$, $p < 0.001$. Cohen's d for the gain-score difference was 1.29, indicating a large treatment effect. On this basis, the null hypothesis that Direct Method instruction produces no greater improvement than conventional instruction was rejected.

Table 3. Mean Posttest Scores by Speaking Component

Speaking Component	Experimental	Control	Difference
Pronunciation	15.8	13.9	1.9
Vocabulary	15.5	13.4	2.1
Fluency	15.1	12.8	2.3
Grammatical accuracy	14.3	12.7	1.6
Comprehension/appropriateness	15.4	13.3	2.1

Component-level descriptive analysis showed that the largest experimental-control difference appeared in fluency, followed by vocabulary and comprehension/appropriateness. Pronunciation also improved clearly. The smallest difference was in grammatical accuracy, although the experimental group still outperformed the control group. This pattern is pedagogically plausible because Direct Method activities prioritize immediate oral comprehension and response, repeated lexical retrieval, and continuous spoken interaction. Grammatical accuracy may require a longer period of focused feedback before gains become as strong as gains in fluency and vocabulary use.

Discussion

The Effectiveness of the Direct in Improving Arabic Speaking Skills

The empirical findings demonstrate that the Direct Method (*Thariqah Mubasyarah*) was highly effective in improving the Arabic speaking ability of new *santri* at Mambaus Sholihin, yielding a large Cohen's *d* effect size that underscores its substantial educational impact beyond general environmental adaptation. Although both groups showed progress over the eight-week intervention, the experimental group achieved significantly higher gains across all analytic speaking dimensions: fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and comprehension. The most prominent individual component gains were recorded in fluency and vocabulary acquisition, whereas improvements in grammatical accuracy were

present but relatively more moderate. Moreover, while the baseline progress of the control group highlights the ongoing contribution of the institutional language environment, the statistical superiority of the experimental treatment confirms that direct classroom methodology generates substantial value added for beginner learners.

These outcomes carry critical implications for Arabic pedagogical design and institutional policy within *pesantren* settings. First, the rapid development of fluency and vocabulary indicates that target-language immersion paired with concrete scaffolding is uniquely suited for the orientation phase of new *santri*, who often face a daunting linguistic transition from Indonesian- or Javanese-dominant backgrounds. Second, the findings imply that the institutional language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*) and classroom instruction should not be viewed as isolated or competing drivers of language acquisition; rather, structured direct instruction provides the foundational oral competence, immediate patterns, and communicative confidence necessary for learners to actively engage with and leverage the surrounding *bi'ah lughawiyah*. Finally, the results imply a need to align assessment practices with instructional goals by utilizing analytic speaking rubrics that evaluate multidimensional oral performance rather than relying predominantly on written grammatical tests.

The substantial growth observed in the experimental group can be traced to specific instructional mechanisms built into the Direct Method. The marked increase in fluency was caused by the high density of oral turns, rapid questioning sequences, and immediate teacher modeling, which systematically prevented learners from engaging in prolonged, silent L1 translation. Concurrently, vocabulary gains resulted from attaching lexical items directly to concrete referents, actions, classroom objects, and communicative situations, thereby creating direct semantic associations and reducing retrieval delays during speech production. Pronunciation improved as a direct consequence of continuous auditory modeling and real-time corrective recasts at the moment of utterance, preventing phonological fossilization. Conversely, the more moderate gains in grammatical accuracy stem from the inductive nature of the method, wherein eight weeks of direct exposure successfully build functional sentence frames but require more time to yield full mastery over complex morphological rules and *i'rab*. Additionally, managing affective conditions served as a crucial catalyst; predictable classroom routines, clear modeling, and pair rehearsal reduced speaking anxiety, allowing target-language immersion to function as comprehensible input rather than an overwhelming obstacle.

Interpreting these dynamics reveals that effective beginner-level *maharah al-kalam* instruction relies fundamentally on establishing direct links between target language forms and communicative meanings without relying on bilingual translation. The strong performance in fluency and vocabulary demonstrates that beginner learners can develop rapid oral access when classroom routines prioritize high-frequency active participation and immediate contextual support. This aligns with prior literature identifying limited vocabulary, speaking anxiety, insufficient practice, and translation-heavy instruction as the primary barriers to oral Arabic development (Islamiyati & Ammar, 2023) (Sherly et al., 2025). Furthermore, the modest rate of grammatical growth should not be interpreted as a failure of the method, but rather as a natural feature of inductive learning. As (Hamidah et al., 2024) argue in their work on contextual Arabic grammar in *pesantren*, structural development is strengthened when grammatical forms are linked to meaningful communication, suggesting that inductive speaking practice creates a receptive foundation for subsequent grammatical refinement.

The findings strongly resonate with and build upon existing empirical literature in Arabic foreign language education. The observed effectiveness aligns with experimental studies by (Rochmat et al., 2023), who reported significant speaking gains among beginner *pesantren* students following Direct Method instruction, and (Al Mukarom et al., 2023), who demonstrated positive outcomes when direct teaching was combined with interactive media. The results also reflect findings on how direct immersion enhances oral participation, as well as (Syabrina & Salamuddin, 2024) observations regarding increased learner confidence in modern *pesantren*. On an institutional level, the present study reinforces the classroom action research of (Qomaruddin & Haq, 2023) at Mambaus Sholihin, while advancing their work by providing a controlled quantitative comparison with an effect size metric specifically for new *santri*. Furthermore, the baseline gains observed in the control group reflect broader literature on *pesantren* language environments, where structured daily conversation and peer interaction multiply practice opportunities (Mahsunah et al., 2023)(Maf'udah et al., 2025).

Based on these conclusions, several practical and research recommendations are proposed. Institutionally, Mambaus Sholihin and similar *pesantren* should systematically adopt *Thariqah Mubasyarah* during the initial adaptation period for new *santri*, supported by teacher professional development focused on non-L1 explanation techniques, rapid elicitation, supportive recasts, and maximizing student talk time.

Furthermore, classroom expressions should be deliberately aligned with daily dormitory, dining, and organizational contexts to facilitate language transfer. To refine grammar acquisition without reverting to translation, direct speaking routines should be paired with brief, contextualized grammar reflection. Methodologically, given the study's limitations regarding intact-class sampling, an eight-week duration, and a single institution, future research should replicate this quasi-experimental design across diverse *pesantren* models, incorporate delayed posttests to assess long-term retention, compare outcomes across gender cohorts, and investigate the multi-variable interactions between direct instruction, speaking anxiety, vocabulary growth, and *bi'ah lughawiyah* intensity.

Synergistic Interplay Between Classroom Methodology and the Institutional Language Environment

The baseline progress observed in the control group confirms that new *santri* do not acquire language in a linguistic vacuum; rather, they continuously benefit from the surrounding institutional language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*). However, while the control group demonstrated steady improvement, the experimental group achieved significantly superior gains. These findings indicate that the presence of an immersive *bi'ah lughawiyah* and the implementation of direct classroom instruction (*Direct Method*) operate as complementary mechanisms rather than competing factors.

Theoretically and practically, these results underscore the vital synergy between structured classroom instruction and contextual language exposure outside the classroom. The primary implication is that a rich, immersive language environment cannot reach its full potential in isolation without a structured pedagogical foundation. Foreign language acquisition in residential institutions such as *pesantren* achieves optimal efficacy when daily situational exposure is systematically paired with methodological instruction that equips learners with immediate practical skills.

The sustained progress observed in the control group stems from the *pesantren* ecosystem, which naturally provides intensive communicative opportunities(Mukhlisin & Atsa'lawi, 2026). At Pesantren Mambaus Sholihin, structured conversation routines, peer interaction, and language regulations substantially increase daily speaking opportunities (Mahsunah et al., 2023), with Arabic functioning as a visible and operational medium across the institutional linguistic landscape (Maf'udah et al., 2025). Conversely, the marked superiority of the experimental group occurred because the Direct Method systematically equips beginner learners with essential oral competence, immediate sentence patterns, and interactive practice. This pedagogical intervention enhanced the experimental group's linguistic readiness, enabling them to actively engage with and fully capitalize on the surrounding *bi'ah lughawiyah*.

These results suggest that while *bi'ah lughawiyah* provides an abundant supply of situational exposure, the Direct Method acts as a crucial catalyst that transforms passive exposure into active, productive language competence. Without direct classroom instruction, novice learners tend to require a prolonged period to process and respond to ambient language input. In contrast, instruction via the Direct Method provides the necessary linguistic tools that allow learners to convert every informal interaction outside the classroom into an effective opportunity for active language practice.

This study reinforces and extends the existing literature on second language acquisition within residential Islamic school environments. Consistent with prior research by (Mahsunah et al., 2023) and (Maf'udah et al., 2025), which highlighted the vital role of language regulations and the linguistic landscape in driving daily speaking practice, the present study offers a novel comparative insight: such an integrated environment operates far more effectively when combined systematically with the Direct Method. Unlike conventional views that often dichotomy naturalistic immersion and formal classroom methodology, these findings demonstrate that integrating both approaches significantly accelerates oral proficiency among beginner learners.

Based on these findings, administrators and curriculum designers in *pesantren* and similar residential language institutions are advised not to rely solely on environmental enforcement or language regulations (*bi'ah lughawiyah*)(Narti, 2022). Enhancing teacher competence in delivering the Direct Method within the classroom should be prioritized as a core pedagogical policy. Furthermore, classroom curricula should be explicitly aligned with the informal communicative norms of the *pesantren*'s linguistic landscape, thereby enabling novice learners to internalize and automate their oral communication skills more effectively.

Pedagogical Sequencing, Affective Scaffolding, and Institutional Applications

The empirical success of the treatment highlights the efficacy of a structured instructional sequence that progresses systematically from concrete situational activation and contextual lexical introduction to rapid comprehension checks(Gillam et al., 2024), paired interaction, and spontaneous speech production accompanied by corrective feedback. Moreover, the intervention proved essential in managing affective

factors among new *santri*, who frequently experience speaking anxiety rooted in the fear of making errors. When paired with supportive teacher modeling, predictable routines, and peer rehearsal prior to public performance, Direct Method instruction successfully mitigates learner anxiety, demonstrating that effective target-language immersion relies on comprehensible input rather than rigid, punitive translation bans (ADEWALE, 2023).

These findings carry significant theoretical and practical implications for language pedagogy in residential Islamic institutions. On a theoretical level, the results challenge the assumption that immersion requires strict or punitive enforcement, showing instead that anxiety reduction through structured scaffolding is a prerequisite for communicative competence. Practically(小林ゆみ & コバヤシユミ, 2026), this implies that pedagogical success in *pesantren* settings requires shifting from passive environmental exposure to deliberately designed instructional frameworks that foster psychological safety and active oral engagement.

The reduction in speaking anxiety and the concurrent boost in oral proficiency were directly caused by the supportive design of the Direct Method framework. By incorporating predictable daily routines, clear teacher modeling(小ゆみ & コバヤシユミ, 2026), and low-stakes peer rehearsal before students were required to speak publicly, the intervention lowered the affective filter for novice learners. Consequently, students received high levels of comprehensible input, which alleviated their fear of errors and enabled them to transition smoothly from passive listening to spontaneous, confident target-language production.

These outcomes suggest that the effectiveness of target-language immersion does not stem from total exclusion of the native language per se, but rather from the comprehensibility and scaffolding of the target input itself(Tedick & Lyster, 2019). In the context of new *santri*, anxiety often acts as a major bottleneck to language acquisition. The Direct Method addresses this bottleneck not by imposing rigid rules, but by transforming potential anxiety-inducing speaking tasks into structured, predictable, and cooperative practice opportunities, thereby converting latent linguistic potential into functional communicative performance.

This study refines current perspectives on immersion pedagogy by contrasting rigid, rule-enforcement models with scaffolded, low-anxiety instructional practices. While traditional approaches in residential settings often rely heavily on language sanctions and forced production, the present results demonstrate that structured instructional sequences combined with affective support produce far more resilient speaking gains(Sfard & Kieran, 2001). By prioritizing comprehensible input and peer collaboration over strict translation bans, this approach aligns with and advances modern Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories regarding affective filters and scaffolded input.

Based on these insights, four practical applications are recommended for Pesantren Mambaus Sholihin and similar residential institutions. First, the Direct Method should be integrated into the initial orientation program for new santri to build communicative confidence from the beginning of their studies. Second, teacher professional development should be strengthened through training in active elicitation and techniques for explaining vocabulary and concepts without relying on students' first language (L1), using realia, gestures, and contextual cues. Third, instructional time allocation should include explicit minimum thresholds for student talk-time (STT) to ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to practice speaking during classroom sessions. Finally, curricular alignment should be enhanced by connecting classroom vocabulary and functional expressions directly to everyday communication in the dormitory, thereby promoting the transfer of classroom learning to authentic communicative contexts.

Additionally, to prevent construct mismatches in evaluation, institutions should integrate formative analytic speaking rubrics assessing pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and comprehension into regular assessment practices. Finally, as this study is contextualized by intact-class sampling, an eight-week duration, and a single-institution setting, future research should investigate longitudinal trajectories, gender-comparative dynamics, and the multi-variable interactions among direct instruction, anxiety, vocabulary growth, and *bi'ah lughawiyah* intensity.

CONCLUSION

The quantitative evidence indicates that the Direct Method (Thariqah Mubasyarah) was effective in improving the Arabic speaking ability of new santri at Mambaus Sholihin Islamic Boarding School. The experimental and control groups began from comparable pretest levels, but after sixteen sessions the experimental group achieved a higher posttest mean and a significantly larger gain. The gain-score comparison produced $t(62) = 5.15$, $p < 0.001$, with Cohen's $d = 1.29$, demonstrating a large instructional effect. The strongest descriptive advantages appeared in fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and pronunciation, while grammatical accuracy improved more gradually. These findings suggest that beginner santri benefit from immediate target-language exposure, contextualized vocabulary presentation, demonstration, rapid question-and-answer exchanges, guided dialogue, and repeated oral production. The

Direct Method should not be applied as rigid translation prohibition; its effectiveness depends on comprehensible input, teacher modeling, supportive correction, and alignment with the pesantren's bi'ah lughawiyah. For institutional practice, Direct Method routines are recommended for new-santri language orientation and should be accompanied by analytic speaking assessment and contextual grammar reinforcement. The study is limited by intact-group assignment, a relatively short treatment period, and a single-site context. Further research should employ delayed posttests, multi-site samples, and additional psychological and environmental variables to examine the durability and mechanisms of speaking development.

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