



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARABIC LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION
USING THE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER METHOD IN
IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS (MAHARAH AL-KALAM)
AMONG FIRST-YEAR TSANAWI STUDENTS AT AZHARI IBS AL-
MUTTAQIN, SOWAN KIDUL, KEDUNG, JEPARA

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ABSTRACT

Maharah Al-Kalam refers to the oral skill required to communicate effectively in Arabic, serving as a primary focus in language instruction. One approach considered effective for honing this skill is the Question-and-Answer (Q&A) method. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the Q&A method and its impact on enhancing the Maharah Al-Kalam of first-grade Tsanawi students at IBS Al-Muttaqin Jepara. A qualitative approach was employed at Azhari Islamic Boarding School Al-Muttaqin Jepara. Data were gathered through observations, interviews, and documentation involving Arabic language teachers and students. The analysis indicates an improvement in students' speaking proficiency, as evidenced by observational and interview data, and further supported by an average final semester exam score of 95.8. Consequently, the implementation of the Q&A method is proven to have a significant influence on improving students' Maharah Al-Kalam at the institution.

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INTRODUCTION

Education can be viewed as the foundation for a nation's social, economic, and cultural development, as well as a vital instrument for addressing inequality, expanding access to opportunities, and promoting peace and cross-cultural understanding. In the context of Islamic education, the Arabic language is a mandatory subject, given its crucial role as the primary key to studying the Quran and Hadith (Azhar, 2003). Arabic language education refers to the process of teaching and learning Arabic for individuals seeking to acquire skills in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending the language. This can take place in various settings—ranging from formal schools and language centers to independent study utilizing diverse learning resources.

Fundamentally, the effectiveness of instruction reflects the degree of success in achieving established goals. In the context of Arabic language learning, effectiveness is a critical aspect, as it directly influences both the learning process and student outcomes. Effective instruction is generally characterized by students' competence and diligence, supported by a systematic process in which various components are interconnected. These instructional components are interdependent and function in a continuous, integrated manner (Dhiya'ul Haq & Rifa'i, 2026). Furthermore, the interaction between teachers and students during the teaching-learning process underscores the vital role of educators in assessing and ensuring the level of effectiveness achieved.

The attainment of learning objectives—such as improved understanding, the development of skills, and academic achievement—serves as a primary indicator for measuring the effectiveness of a program or teaching method. According to Imama and Rochmawati (2021), the progress achieved by learners determines the overall effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Consequently, across all educational levels—from primary and secondary school to higher education—the quality of instruction can be directly evaluated through the dynamics of classroom interaction. To ensure a sufficient level of effectiveness, every educator is obligated to meet the teaching material targets that have been aligned with the official curriculum of their institution.

Encouraging students to think critically, analytically, and logically about subject matter is a key advantage of the question-and-answer method. Through two-way interaction—with teachers posing questions to students and vice versa—this method proves effective in fostering an

interactive and collaborative classroom environment, while also enabling teachers to evaluate students' level of understanding. According to Baroroh and Rahmawati (2020), the question-and-answer method is highly relevant for Arabic language instruction, particularly for honing *Maharah al-Kalam* the skill of expressing thoughts, ideas, opinions, and feelings orally with precise articulation. Utilizing this strategy is crucial, given that a primary challenge in contemporary education often stems from ineffective teaching and learning processes, frequently caused by an educator's limited mastery of diverse strategies, methods, and instructional materials. Therefore, an educator's ability to select and master appropriate teaching methods is the key to ensuring that course content and learning objectives are achieved optimally.

Azhari Islamic Boarding School (IBS) Al-Muttaqin in Jepara is a comprehensive educational institution that integrates both classical and modern systems into its pedagogical approach. As a branch of Al-Azhar, Cairo (Egypt), the institution employs the Syamil Mutakamil curriculum a comprehensive framework that integrates religious studies with general academic subjects. Consequently, this study aims to examine the Arabic communication proficiency of students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin (located in Sowan Kidul, Kedung, Jepara) and to observe the effectiveness of the question-and-answer method in optimizing their Arabic speaking skills (*Maharah al-Kalam*). This aligns directly with the research topic: "The Effectiveness of Arabic Language Instruction Using the Question-and-Answer Method in Enhancing *Maharah al-Kalam* among First-Year Tsanawi (Secondary Level) Students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin, Sowan Kidul, Kedung, Jepara." Based on the statement above, the researcher considers this study highly urgent, given that the current circumstances are particularly well-suited for such an investigation. This is the rationale behind the author's interest in examining and dissecting the issue in a more comprehensive manner.

METHOD

To explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics in the field specifically regarding the effectiveness of the question-and-answer method in enhancing the *Maharah Al-Kalam* (speaking skills) of first-year Tsanawi (senior secondary) students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin, Jepara this study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Drawing on the perspective of Moleong (2009), qualitative research focuses on investigating phenomena experienced by the research subjects, which are then presented through descriptive narratives using words and language within a natural setting. Conducted at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin in Sowan Kidul, Kedung, Jepara, this study gathers two types of data: primary data obtained through interviews with Arabic language teachers and first-year Tsanawi students, and secondary data in the form of photographs capturing teaching and learning activities. From a total population of 61 students apanning the I'dadi (junior secondary) and Tsanawi (senior

secondary) levels 14 first-year Tsanawi students were selected as the research sample using a probability sampling technique.

An interactive model of analysis, consisting of four stages, was applied to process the research data: data collection, data reduction (simplifying data by summarizing key points), data display (constructing narratives), and finally, verification and conclusion drawing all of which remain aligned with the research objectives and the formulated research questions. Meanwhile, the process of gathering information in the field was supported by three primary techniques. First, direct classroom observation was conducted through participatory observation during Arabic language lessons. Second, in-depth interviews were held with both teachers and students to obtain a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the question-and-answer method and its impact on Maharah Al-Kalam. Third, a documentation study was carried out, encompassing supporting archival documents and photographs of the learning activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arabic Language Instruction Using the Question-and-Answer Method

To ensure optimal results aligned with learning objectives, the preparation of a well-thought-out lesson plan serves as the initial step for educators during the planning phase. In the Arabic language instruction for first-year Tsanawi (secondary level) students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin Jepara, each student is required to personally possess the *Al-Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik* textbook. Authored by Dr. Abdurrahman bin Ibrahim Al-Fauzan, Dr. Mukhtar At-Thohir Hussain, and Dr. Muhammad Abdul Khaliq Muhammad Fadhl and edited by Dr. Mohammad bin Abdul Rahman Al-Shaikh the book is published by *Al-Arabiyyah li Al-Jami'*. This field finding is consistent with information obtained through an interview with Ustadz Alim Firman, the Arabic language instructor, who confirmed that students are required to own the textbook which is procured through the school and that each Arabic lesson session lasts for 45 minutes.

Before the teaching and learning process begins, the teacher prepares a Lesson Plan (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran* or RPP). According to the interview with Ustadz Alim Firman, while the RPP itself is not strictly mandated by the school, a syllabus is required a mandate stipulated by Al-Azhar (Najahah & Qomariyah, 2023). Nevertheless, he noted that developing an RPP is crucial for assessing and evaluating the outcomes of the lessons. Once the RPP is prepared, the variety of instructional media and the targeted learning outcomes serve as a guide for educators in determining the most appropriate teaching methods. Based on direct field observations, the methods employed include lectures, discussions, demonstrations, and the question-and-answer method all integrated to effectively support the achievement of the learning objectives.

Overall, the Arabic language instruction for first-year Tsanawi (secondary level) students is structured into three distinct stages: the opening, the core instructional phase, and the closing.

In the opening stage, the instructor begins with a greeting (salam) and an introductory address (muqoddimah), checks student attendance, establishes a conducive classroom environment, reviews previous lessons using a question-and-answer method, prepares the necessary instructional media, and outlines the learning objectives for the session. During the core phase, the instructor reads an Arabic text from the textbook, which the students then read in turn. The instructor provides a clear explanation of the new material, invites students to ask questions about any points they do not yet understand, engages individual students with targeted questions, facilitates a thorough discussion of the content, asks students to summarize the material, and concludes by synthesizing the key points taught. In the closing stage, the instructor offers a final opportunity for students to seek clarification, provides motivation to encourage continued enthusiasm for learning Arabic, and concludes the session by reciting the kafaratul majelis (a closing prayer) followed by a final greeting.

A collaborative and interactive classroom atmosphere creates ample space for the instructor to directly assess and evaluate the students' level of understanding. This positive outcome stems from integrating the question-and-answer method alongside other instructional approaches. Based on the field data, this questioning strategy proves highly effective in stimulating students to think more critically, analytically, and logically as they process the material presented by the instructor. Consequently, it can be concluded that when the question-and-answer method is combined with other pedagogical techniques, it effectively supports students in mastering Arabic communication skills.



Figure 1. Learning Activities

Speaking Skills (Maharah Kalam) of First-Year Tsanawi Students

Based on observations and interviews conducted with the Arabic language instructor and first-year Tsanawi students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin, Jepara, the researcher categorized the students' speaking skills (Maharah Kalam) through these two methods interviews and observations. The primary objective of this categorization was to gather information regarding the speaking proficiency of the first-year Tsanawi students. In an interview, the instructor noted that the students' grasp of spoken Arabic is strong, as evidenced by their generally high scores

on mid-semester examinations. This indicates that the first-year Tsanawi students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin possess a good level of communicative competence in Arabic.

According to the researcher's observations, the first-year Tsanawi students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin, Jepara, are generally capable of communicating effectively in Arabic. This level of proficiency is demonstrated by several indicators observed during the learning process: the students are able to respond to questions posed by the instructor, they can communicate in Arabic with the instructor and others, and they exhibit a clear willingness and enthusiasm for Arabic language lessons. *Maharah Kalam* (speaking skills) refers to the mastery of constructing sentences for the purpose of oral communication in Arabic. (Rosyidah, 2018)

Arabic Language Learning Outcomes Using the Question-and-Answer Method

Learning outcomes can be defined as the level of ability an individual possesses. The optimal achievement of students' learning goals depends heavily on the effectiveness of the instructional process, which is supported by the readiness of various key elements ranging from objectives, materials, media, and processes to evaluation, as well as the availability of facilities and infrastructure (Yusuf, 2022). When all these instructional components function in an integrated manner, learning objectives can be realized to their fullest potential. Although incorporating the question-and-answer method into classroom interaction can foster improvements in learning outcomes, empirical findings from the first year (Kelas I Tsanawi) at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin, Jepara, indicate a specific nuance: while the use of the question-and-answer method in Arabic language instruction does have a significant effect, the magnitude of this impact is quite small.

A significant portion of the improvement in *Maharah Al-Kalam* (speaking skills) is driven by other factors, such as memorizing Arabic vocabulary, *Khitobah* (Arabic public speaking), writing *Insyah* and *Ta'bir* (compositions in Arabic), and *Muhawarah* (Arabic conversational practice). This conclusion is supported by interviews with the Arabic language instructor, who noted that the question-and-answer method is essential for assessing students' comprehension of the material taught. However, while the question-and-answer method does contribute to the enhancement of *Maharah Al-Kalam*, there are other, more significant factors such as vocabulary memorization, *Khitobah*, written composition (*Insyah* and *Ta'bir*), and *muhawarah* that play a greater role in developing these speaking skills.

In general, students' scores on Arabic language examinations fall into the "good" and "satisfactory" categories, as evidenced by their learning achievement data. This is supported by interviews with the instructor, who noted that nearly all students achieved perfect scores indicating a deep understanding of the material presented during the teaching and learning process. This is further corroborated by documentation of their examination results. The midterm examination data shows a total score of 1,281 across all students, with an average of 91.5, while

the final examination data shows a total score of 1,342, with an average of 95.8. Thus, it can be concluded that the average examination scores for students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin were 91.5 for the midterm and 95.8 for the final examination.

The improvement in scores from the midterm to the final examination reflects significant progress in the students' Maharah Al-Kalam (speaking skills). An interactive and collaborative learning environment is fostered through the use of the question-and-answer method, which helps alleviate student boredom and increases engagement during class. This strategy not only encourages students to think more logically, analytically, and critically, but also strengthens two-way communication between the teacher and the students. Consequently, the students' ability to communicate in Arabic has shown positive development though it should be noted that while the question-and-answer method contributes to this, other, more dominant factors may also play a role. (Najahah & Qomariyah, 2023)

The students' speaking proficiency (Marah Al-Kalam) has demonstrably improved as a result of implementing the question-and-answer method in Arabic language instruction. The analysis conducted by the researchers confirms that integrating this strategy facilitates a structured and orderly teaching and learning process, proving to be quite effective within the classroom. The students have participated by answering questions posed by the instructor with great confidence and boldness. However, some students still feel apprehensive about responding when asked questions a tendency stemming from their introverted nature which necessitates a specialized approach from the teacher to address this.

The Effectiveness of Arabic Language Instruction Using the Question-and-Answer Method

Instructional effectiveness can be defined as the success of a learning process that has been structured and executed according to its initial plan. It involves both students and teachers working together to ensure that instruction proceeds effectively and aligns with established goals. The effectiveness of the Arabic language learning process encompasses both the planning and implementation phases. A professional instructor is a key element in determining the success of the question-and-answer method within the classroom. Field observations indicate that the dynamics of the learning process are shaped by a combination of facilitating and hindering factors. Success is driven by students who possess deep *ghirah* (zeal), *azam* (firm resolve), and *hamasah* (enthusiasm) along with a strong desire to master authentic and fluent Arabic supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure.

A competent teacher serves as the primary pillar in encouraging students to actualize their potential throughout the learning process (Dhiya'ul Haq & Rifa'i, 2026). Field observations confirm that an educator's professionalism in managing the question-and-answer method is a crucial supporting factor. Beyond the instructor's competence, the students' internal drive manifested as high levels of *ghirah*, *azam*, and *hamasah*, as well as a firm determination to

achieve fluency and authenticity in Arabic further bolsters the success of this method. This synergy between teacher qualifications and student motivation enlivens the classroom environment: students become more active, engage in critical thinking regarding the topics under discussion, and remain alert and attentive throughout the lesson.

A second supporting factor is the availability of facilities and infrastructure. Providing students with high-quality facilities contributes to the success of the learning process. This is underscored by a representative from the Public Relations department at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin Jepara, who noted that instructional media play a vital role in the learning process. In this Arabic language instruction, television is sometimes used as a supplementary tool to enhance *Maharah Al-Kalam* (speaking skills). Based on this, the researcher concludes that the application of the question-and-answer method is highly suitable for Arabic language learning. Furthermore, students show great enthusiasm in asking questions about material they do not yet understand.

The factors hindering the effectiveness of Arabic language instruction using the question-and-answer method include a lack of self-confidence, a lack of discipline, and issues related to *lahjah* (accent/dialect). The first hindering factor is a lack of self-confidence. When the question-and-answer method is applied in Arabic lessons, some students lack the confidence to answer questions posed by the teacher. This is supported by an interview with a student from the first year (Kelas I Tsanawi) at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin Jepara, who admitted that when the teacher asks questions, it often makes them feel insecure and nervous about responding.

The planned allocation of instructional time is at risk of being disrupted when educators must address students who are not punctual. This disciplinary issue serves as the second hindering factor identified in the field. Direct observation and confirmation from the Arabic language teacher indicate that some students frequently arrive late to class. Such a lack of discipline not only consumes valuable learning time but also disrupts focus and undermines the conducive classroom atmosphere that had previously been optimally established. The third hindering factor is *lahjah* (accent/dialect) (Baroroh & Rahmawati, 2020). Some students struggle to adopt an authentic Arabic accent during lessons; furthermore, regarding *Maharah Al-Kalam* (speaking skills), many students still make errors in applying Arabic linguistic rules according to native-speaker standards.

The increase in the students' average score from 91.5 on the midterm examination (UTS) to 95.8 on the final examination (UAS) serves as clear evidence of the positive contribution the question-and-answer method has made toward improving the *Maharah Al-Kalam* (speaking skills) of the first-year students at Azhari IBS Al-Muttaqin Jepara. Based on the analysis of the effectiveness of the Arabic language instruction, the use of the question-and-answer strategy demonstrates a significant influence, even though the magnitude of its impact remains secondary to other, more dominant variables. The high frequency with which the demonstration method is

used serving as the primary approach alongside other supporting methods explains why the question-and-answer method functions as a reinforcing factor that complements the dynamics of learning in the classroom.



Figure 2. Interview with Arabic Language Learning Teacher



Figure 3. Interview with Grade 1 Tsanawi Azhari students at IBS Al-Muttaqin, Jepara

CONCLUSION

The students' willingness and high level of enthusiasm in participating in each teaching session serve as a primary asset, reflected in their fluency when communicating in Arabic both with their instructors and among their peers. Their proficiency in *Maharah Al-Kalam* (speaking skills) characterized by both accuracy and competence is evidenced by the students' ability to respond to the teacher's questions spontaneously and enthusiastically. Based on the data presentation and analysis in the preceding sections, the application of the question-and-answer method in Arabic language instruction for the first-year Tsanawi Azhari class at IBS Al-Muttaqin, Jepara, has been conducted in accordance with established operational standards, encompassing the planning phase, the core instructional activities (implementation), and the evaluation stage.

Empirical evidence specifically an average final semester examination score of 95.8, supported by interview data and direct observation of both teachers and students confirms the effectiveness and significant impact of the question-and-answer method on the enhancement of Maharah Al-Kalam. Nevertheless, the students' speaking proficiency is also shaped by a range of other equally significant supporting activities, such as vocabulary enrichment (mufradat), preparatory exercises in composition (insya' and ta'bir), conversational practice (muhawarah), and regular engagement in Arabic public speaking (khitobah). Given this combination of variables, it can be concluded that the question-and-answer method is highly effective for use in Arabic language instruction, particularly for optimizing the Maharah Al-Kalam (speaking skills) of first-year Tsanawi Azhari students at IBS Al-Muttaqin, Sowon Kidul, Kedung, Jepara.

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