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The Contribution of Self-Directed Learning to Arabic Language Materials to the Improvement of Students' Writing Literacy

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Abstract

Keywords: Arabic Language, Self-Directed Learning, Language Education	Arabic language learning in schools often faces challenges in motivating students to be active and independent in learning. Therefore, the SDL approach is expected to improve students' Arabic language skills and suit their needs and learning styles. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of students' writing literacy in Arabic language materials with the self-directed learning (SDL) approach. This research uses a mixed method with sequential explanatory type, which combines quantitative and qualitative data. The results of this study revealed that the improvement of students' writing skills and mastery of Islamic learning had a positive impact on their academic ability and religious understanding, while supporting the balanced development of intellectual and spiritual skills. Through this approach, students are not only more courageous in expressing themselves using Arabic, but also feel happier because learning is
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tailored to their individual abilities and learning styles. The impact of this study shows that the SDL approach can be an effective solution to improve students' motivation and Arabic language competence, and can be applied in other madrasahs to support more enjoyable and effective learning.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran bahasa Arab di sekolah sering kali menghadapi tantangan Bahasa Arab, dalam memotivasi siswa agar aktif dan mandiri dalam belajar. Oleh Self-Directed karena itu, pendekatan SDL diharapkan dapat meningkatkan Learning, kemampuan bahasa Arab siswa dan sesuai dengan kebutuhan serta gaya Pendidikan bahasa Arab, mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas Bahasa literasi menulis siswa pada materi bahasa Arab dengan pendekatan self-directed learning (SDL). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode mixed method dengan tipe sequential explanatory, yang menggabungkan data kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa semakin terasahnya keterampilan menulis siswa dan penguasaan pembelajaran keislaman yang memberikan dampak positif pada kemampuan akademik dan pemahaman keagamaan mereka, sekaligus mendukung perkembangan keterampilan intelektual dan spiritual secara seimbang. Melalui pendekatan ini, siswa tidak hanya lebih berani dalam berekspresi menggunakan bahasa Arab, tetapi juga merasa lebih bahagia karena pembelajaran disesuaikan dengan kemampuan dan gaya belajar mereka masing-masing. Dampak dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan SDL dapat menjadi solusi efektif untuk meningkatkan motivasi dan kompetensi bahasa Arab siswa, serta dapat diterapkan di madrasah lain untuk mendukung pembelajaran yang lebih menyenangkan dan efektif.*

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Introduction

Learning Arabic in countries with large Muslim populations has become integral to its education system. (Khumaini, 2022) Along with the latest developments, *the Self-Directed Learning (SDL)* approach has now emerged as an innovative method that provides updates. (Mardiah, 2021) Learning Arabic as a foreign language is often faced with various challenges, especially in writing skills. (Firdausiyah & Jannah, 2025)

Writing skills are one of the four main abilities that must be mastered in language learning, in addition to listening, speaking, and reading. However,

many students have difficulty writing in Arabic properly and correctly, especially related to grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. (Hidayah, Mukmin, & Apriyani, 2024) To overcome this, an effective learning approach is needed to increase students' independence in developing writing skills. (Djamudi & Iye, 2023) One of the approaches that can be applied is *Self-Directed Learning (SDL)*, which gives students the freedom to organize, control, and direct their learning process independently. (Khotimah, 2022)

Writing is a productive skill that combines critical thinking skills, organizing ideas, and a deep understanding of language rules. (Suhartono, 2014) In the context of the Arabic language, writing not only plays a role as a means of communication, but also a means to strengthen understanding of the principles of *nahwu* and *sharaf*. (Adhimah, 2024) Good writing skills in Arabic have an important role, especially for students who are involved in the academic and professional world. However, a number of studies reveal that students often face obstacles in writing, which is caused by a lack of planned practice and low motivation to hone these skills. (Mariadi et al., 2022)

In Arabic language learning, *SDL's* approach allows learners to initiate and manage their own learning process. The concept of *self-directed learning* in the context of Arabic writing skills emphasizes the importance of students' independence in setting goals, choosing the right strategies, and evaluating the results of the learning they have undergone. (Knowles, 1975) The availability of learning resources such as media and learning platforms that are easily accessible in this digital era makes *SDL's* approach relevant to apply. (Fathoni et al., 2023) This approach provides flexibility for students to explore the material according to their respective learning styles and learning speeds. (Aminullah et al., 2022)

In the context of learning to write Arabic, *SDL* has a strategic role in encouraging students to be more active in finding reference sources, recognizing weaknesses in their writing, and improving their writing skills independently in a more targeted manner. (Sugerman et al., 2022) *SDL's*

approach aligns with the principles of technology-based learning, where students can utilize a variety of resources, such as academic journals, digital dictionaries, and Arabic grammar apps, to support their writing process. (Baharuddin et al., 2022) By implementing *SDL*, obstacles that are often encountered in learning to write, such as reliance on teacher instructions and lack of opportunities to practice independently, can be overcome more effectively. (Qadaria et al., 2023)

Self-directed learning in learning to write Arabic also emphasizes the important role of collaborative learning through learning communities. (Husain, 2020) Even though students undergo the learning process independently, they still have the opportunity to interact and exchange experiences with fellow learners, which ultimately creates a more interactive and supportive learning environment. (Zamnah, 2018)

The application of *Self-Directed Learning* in learning to write Arabic is an innovative approach that is relevant to the needs of modern education. (Suryadi Nasution, 2021) By giving students the freedom to manage the learning process independently, *SDL* can improve writing skills while building good writing habits in Arabic. (Mariadi et al., 2022) Therefore, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of more effective and self-reliant-oriented learning methods.

Previous studies have shown that success in *self-directed learning* approaches is greatly influenced by two main things: motivation from within and the ability to use metacognitive strategies. (Hidayah, Mukmin, & Soleha, 2024) In addition to the spirit of learning, skills such as planning learning steps, monitoring progress, and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies used are important factors. (Simanungkalit et al., 2024)

This research is expected to provide benefits for various parties. For students, this research can help improve writing skills in Arabic while encouraging independence in learning. For teachers, the results of this research can be an alternative teaching strategy that can increase the effectiveness of

writing learning in the classroom. In addition, for educational institutions, this research provides valuable input for the development of Arabic language curriculum and learning methods that are more in line with student needs. Meanwhile, for other researchers, this study can be a reference for further studies that focus on learning to write Arabic and the application of self-learning in language education.

Furthermore, in this study, an effectiveness test will be carried out if *the SDL* approach is applied to learning to write Arabic at the Madrasah Aliyah level.

Method

The approaches used in this study are qualitative approach and quantitative approach. The quantitative approach was used to describe quantitative data related to the effectiveness of learning to write Arabic using *the Self-Directed Learning* approach. A qualitative approach was used to explain the reason for the effectiveness of *the SDL* approach from the perception of the students in the experimental class who were given treatment.

For this reason, this study uses a combination research method with *a sequential explanatory* model, because this research begins by collecting quantitative data and then continues by collecting qualitative data as an explanation of the data from the results of the quantitative analysis carried out. (Sugiyono, 2020)

The population in this study is students of MAN 2 Palembang which is one of the best madrasas in Palembang. The samples taken were two classes, namely grade 11 students (control class and experimental class) whose number of each class was 30 people.

The data collection method is by using tests to measure the effectiveness of *Self-Directed Learning* and interviews to describe opinions related to students'

perceptions during treatment using *SDL* in the learning process of writing Arabic.

The data analysis used was quantitative data analysis starting with descriptive analysis, normality test, wilcoxon, homogeneity, and Mann Whitney test using SPSS. The qualitative data uses data collection techniques, data interpretation and conclusion drawn. (Sugiyono, 2018)

Result and Discussion

Arabic language learning with a *self-directed learning* approach is focused on *As-Safar Wassiyaahah* material in writing skills. The material taught was taken directly by the researcher from the book used to find out whether this approach is suitable for learning Arabic at Madrasah Aliyah, so the researcher conducted several tests as follows:

a. Descriptive Analysis

To describe the research data, such as the amount of data, highest value, lowest value, average, and others is by descriptive analysis with the following data:

Table 1 : Descriptive Analysis

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Eksperimen	30	65	72	69.63	1.956
Post-Test Eksperimen	30	80	95	89.03	3.306
Pre-Test Kontrol	30	60	69	63.40	2.401
Post-Test Kontrol	30	75	95	83.70	7.217
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Based on the table above, it is explained that there are 30 control class students and 30 experimental class students. The experimental group experienced a significant increase in average score, from 69.63 in the pre-test to 89.03 in the post-test. The control group also showed improvement, but with a

lower post-test average (83.70) than the experimental group. This gives an initial idea of how the two groups progressed during the study.

b. Normality Test

To test the effectiveness of the treatment results, a normality test was conducted with the following data:

Table 2 : Normality Test

Class		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Student Learning Outcomes	Experiment Pre-Test (SDL)	0,154	30	0,069	0,913	30	0,018
	Experiment Post-Test (SDL)	0,252	30	0,000	0,831	30	0,000
	Control Pre-Test (Conventional)	0,201	30	0,003	0,900	30	0,008
	Control Post-Test (Conventional)	0,141	30	0,130	0,883	30	0,003

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the significance value (Sig.) for all data in both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Saphiro-Wilk test is <0.05, it can be concluded that the research data is not normally distributed. Because the research data is not normally distributed, non-parametric statistical tests, namely the Wilcoxon test, are used instead of parametric statistical tests.

c. Wilcoxon Test

The Wilcoxon test is used to test whether there is a difference in means between two paired samples. This test is part of non-parametric statistics and can be used as an alternative to the paired sample t-test when the data is not normally distributed. Because the previous data was not normally distributed, the wilcoxon test was carried out as follows:

Table 3 : Wilcoxon Test

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Post-Test Eksperimen - Pre-Test Eksperimen	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	0,00	0,00
	Positive Ranks	30 ^b	15,50	465,00
	Ties	0 ^c		
	Total	30		
Post-Test Kontrol - Pre-Test Kontrol	Negative Ranks	0 ^d	0,00	0,00
	Positive Ranks	30 ^e	15,50	465,00
	Ties	0 ^f		
	Total	30		

a. Post-Test Eksperimen < Pre-Test Eksperimen

b. Post-Test Eksperimen > Pre-Test Eksperimen

c. Post-Test Eksperimen = Pre-Test Eksperimen

d. Post-Test Kontrol < Pre-Test Kontrol

e. Post-Test Kontrol > Pre-Test Kontrol

f. Post-Test Kontrol = Pre-Test Kontrol

Test Statistics^a

	Post-Test Experiment - Pre-Test Experiment	Post-Test Control - Pre-Test Control
Z	-4.792 ^b	-4.784 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

Based on the table above, it is known that Asymp Sig (2-tailed) is 0,000. Because the value of 0,000 < 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a difference between the learning outcomes for the pre-test and post-test. So it can also be concluded that there is an effectiveness of using the Self-Directed Learning approach in learning Arabic writing for students who are given treatment.

d. The Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test is used to determine whether data from two or more groups have the same diversity (homogeneous) or different (heterogeneous). In this study, the homogeneity test was used to check whether the experimental class post-test and control class post-test data were homogeneous.

Table 4 : The homogeneity test

		Levene	df1	df2	Sig.
		Statistic			
Student Learning Outcomes	Based on Mean	0,000	1	58	1,000
	Based on Median	0,000	1	58	1,000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0,000	1	58,000	1,000
	Based on trimmed mean	0,000	1	58	1,000

Based on the table above, the significance value (Sig.) Based on Mean is 1,000, which is greater than 0,05. This means that the variance of the post-test data of the experimental and control classes is the same or homogeneous. Because one of the conditions is not met to conduct an independent t-test, namely the data must be normally distributed and homogeneous, the alternative test used is the Mann-Whitney U test.

e. Mann-Whitney Test

To test whether there is a difference in means between two unpaired samples, the mann-whitney test was conducted. This test is included in non-parametric statistics, so it does not require normally distributed data. The Mann-Whitney test is used as an alternative to the independent sample t-test.

Table 5 : Mann-Whitney Test

Class	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
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Student Learning Outcomes	Experiment Class (Self Directed Learning)	30	37,63	1129,00
	Control Class (Conventional)	30	23,37	701,00
	Total	60		

Test Statistics^a

	Arabic Language Learning Outcomes
Mann-Whitney U	236,000
Wilcoxon W	701,000
Z	-3,206
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,001

Based on the table above, the Asymp Sig (2-tailed) value is 0,001. Since $0,001 < 0,05$, it can be concluded that there is a difference in Arabic language learning between students in the experimental class (self-directed learning) and the control class (Conventional). Since this difference is significant, it can be concluded that the use of self-directed learning approach is effectively applied in learning Arabic writing at State Islamic Senior High School Number 2 Palembang.

The results of this analysis are in accordance with the results of an interview with NR, one of the students who stated that, "Arabic language learning that was previously taught with conventional methods was difficult to understand. However, after applying the self-directed learning approach, learning became easier to understand because I could design goals, carry out the process, and evaluate the learning results myself. Although we learn independently, we still get assistance and direction, so we can ask questions if we feel difficult." The same thing was also conveyed by MT, one of the students who stated that "I often have difficulties during Arabic lessons, but after

learning independently, I can find learning resources through applications on my cellphone, such as TikTok, Instagram, and other learning platforms. This way, learning feels more relevant to today's digital era.”

IS, one of the students, also added that “I feel that I can't keep up with the learning when the teacher often uses the lecture method. However, when learning independently, I can adjust my own learning methods and needs. I prefer to learn by watching interesting lessons on YouTube. I also feel happy and proud when I manage to find examples of material myself and can understand them.”

Based on the results of interviews with some of these students, it appears that students are very enthusiastic in learning Arabic with the Self-Directed Learning approach, because of several factors including the SDL approach, students are given the freedom to determine when and where they learn, adjust the methods used to their learning styles, give students the opportunity to feel the achievements they directly get from their own efforts, become more responsible for their own learning process, allow students to access various learning resources that may not be available in the classroom. (Sari et al., 2024) In this era, many online learning platforms, apps and social media provide various learning materials that can be accessed at any time by students. (Manesenulu & Ribawati, 2024)

Today, education needs to shift from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach. (Salsabila, 2024), which is in line with the concept of Self-Directed Learning. In the SDL approach, students will be responsible for their own learning process. (Loyens et al., 2008) This approach encourages students to be more independent and active in learning, while developing skills such as planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning. (Simanungkalit et al., 2024) By giving students more control over how they learn, SDL can train them to face challenges in an ever-evolving world. (Puspitasari & Santosa, 2012)

Through the Self-Directed Learning approach, learning Arabic writing that was previously delivered conventionally with the lecture method which

tends to be boring for students can be changed to be more interesting and stimulate their mindset. (Azkia, 2024) Students will realize that Arabic can be learned independently and in a fun way. (Aminullah et al., 2022)

The main focus in learning Arabic is not only measured by the understanding of language skills, but also on instilling a love for the language. (Hidayah, Mukmin, & Eltika, 2023) Love and interest in Arabic will encourage students to have internal motivation in learning. This internal motivation has a greater influence than external motivation which is temporary and depends on external factors. (Hidayah, Mukmin, & Marfuah, 2023)

Fun and responsible learning is one of the signs that learning is effective. (Hasibuan et al., 2022) The second indicator that can be seen is the assessment in learning that is carried out authentically, so that it does not only focus on cognitive aspects. (Hidayah, Mukmin, & Cardasyifa, 2024) This is because language is a cultured art that requires happiness in its use, although in this context the use of language is still limited to learning materials. (Hidayah & Mukmin, 2021)

Writing skills in Arabic are materials that must be learned by students in State Islamic Senior High School (Nurani et al., 2023) With continuous learning, State Islamic Senior High School students are expected to be accustomed to learning Arabic writing independently, this will increase their chances of mastering Arabic as a foreign language when they are adults and additional useful Islamic insights. (Sugirma et al., 2022)

Therefore, Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah needs to be carefully planned, both in terms of material, methods, and evaluation. (Faradila, 2024) With perfect planning, students will not only rush through the material, but will also feel challenged to master Arabic with an efficient approach.

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that the improvement of students' writing skills and mastery of Islamic learning had a positive impact on their

academic abilities and religious understanding, while supporting the development of intellectual and spiritual skills in a balanced manner. The contribution of the Self-Directed Learning (SDL) approach in Arabic language learning at State Islamic Senior High School showed high effectiveness, with a success rate of 0,001. This shows that SDL is suitable to be applied at the Aliyah level, because students are already able to learn Arabic independently. In addition to providing benefits for students, this approach also helps teachers in dealing with student diversity. In addition, students who are accustomed to learning independently are more able to apply their Arabic language competence compared to those who only rely on teacher instructions. For future research, it is recommended to explore other learning methods that can be combined with SDL, such as blended learning or gamification, in order to increase students' interest and learning outcomes.

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