

## Integrating Traditional Islamic Pedagogy and Communicative Language Teaching: The Use of the *Muhādatsah* Method in Arabic Speaking Instruction

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### Abstract

Arabic language competence is essential in pesantren education for understanding classical texts, engaging in religious discourse, and academic communication. Despite emphasis on grammar and translation, many students lack active speaking skills (*mahārah al-kalām*). This study examines the implementation of the *muhādatsah* method at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School, Lamongan, analyzing student responses and its impact on speaking skills. Using a qualitative classroom action research design over two cycles with third-semester students, speaking performance was assessed via a rubric covering fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and communicative confidence. Data were collected through observations, interviews, field notes, and pre- and post-assessments, analyzed descriptively with simple score comparisons. Findings indicate that systematic *muhādatsah* practice improved fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence, fostering engagement. Despite small sample size and context-specific limitations, *muhādatsah* is effective for enhancing Arabic speaking skills in pesantren contexts.

**Keywords:** Islamic boarding school, communicative language teaching, *mahārah al-kalām*

## Integrasi Pedagogi Islam Tradisional dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Komunikatif: Penerapan Metode Muhādatsah dalam Pembelajaran Keterampilan Berbicara Bahasa Arab

### Abstrak

Kompetensi berbahasa Arab sangat penting dalam pendidikan pesantren untuk memahami teks klasik, berpartisipasi dalam diskusi keagamaan, dan komunikasi akademik. Meskipun pembelajaran menekankan tata bahasa dan terjemahan, banyak siswa masih kurang dalam keterampilan berbicara aktif (*mahārah al-kalām*). Penelitian ini menganalisis penerapan metode *muhādatsah* di Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, Lamongan, menilai respons siswa dan dampaknya terhadap keterampilan berbicara. Penelitian menggunakan desain classroom action research kualitatif selama dua siklus dengan mahasiswa semester tiga. Kinerja berbicara dinilai melalui rubrik yang mencakup kefasihan, pengucapan, kosakata, tata bahasa, dan percaya diri komunikatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, catatan lapangan, serta asesmen sebelum dan sesudah pembelajaran, dianalisis secara deskriptif dengan perbandingan sederhana. Hasil menunjukkan penerapan *muhādatsah* secara sistematis meningkatkan kefasihan, pengucapan, kosakata, dan kepercayaan diri siswa. Meskipun terbatas sampel dan konteks, metode ini efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Arab di pesantren.

**Katakunci:** sekolah berasrama Islam, pengajaran bahasa komunikatif, *mahārah al-kalām*

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## A. Introduction

Arabic language proficiency occupies a central position in the educational system of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), functioning not only as a linguistic medium but also as an epistemological tool for accessing Islamic knowledge. Mastery of Arabic enables students to comprehend classical Islamic texts (*kutub al-turāth*), engage in religious discourse, conduct *da'wah*, and participate in academic communication within Islamic scholarly traditions. For centuries, pesantren have played a vital role in preserving and transmitting Arabic-based Islamic sciences, making Arabic an indispensable component of their curriculum and educational identity.

Traditionally, Arabic instruction in pesantren has been dominated by grammatical approaches, particularly *nahw* and *ṣarf*, combined with translation-based methods. These approaches are effective in developing receptive skills such as reading comprehension and grammatical awareness; however, they often provide limited opportunities for students to practice active language use. As a result, many pesantren students possess strong theoretical knowledge of Arabic grammar yet struggle to communicate orally in real-life contexts. This imbalance between receptive and productive skills, especially in speaking (*mahārah al-kalām*), has become a persistent challenge in Arabic language education within pesantren environments.

Recent educational discourse emphasizes that language proficiency should be understood as communicative competence rather than mere grammatical accuracy. Scholars in foreign language pedagogy argue that effective language learning requires learners to actively use the target language in meaningful and contextualized interactions.<sup>1</sup> In the context of Arabic as a foreign language, limited speaking competence has been shown to negatively affect students' ability to participate in discussions, express ideas, and apply linguistic knowledge in authentic religious, academic, and social settings.<sup>2</sup> These limitations highlight the

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<sup>1</sup> Jack C. Richards, "Exploring Emotions in Language Teaching," *Relc Journal* 53, no. 1 (2022): 225–39.

<sup>2</sup> Nafissatul Jamila and Isnol Khotimah, "Implementasi Pendekatan Komunikatif Integratif Dalam Pembelajaran Muhādatsah Di Ma'had 'Aly Nurul Jadid," *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 7, no. 1 (2024): 81–96.

urgent need for instructional strategies that move beyond form-focused instruction and prioritize communicative and interactional language use.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) have been widely adopted in international foreign language education to address similar challenges. CLT emphasizes interaction as both the means and the goal of language learning, encouraging learners to negotiate meaning, collaborate, and use language functionally. Numerous international studies have demonstrated that communicative and task-based approaches significantly enhance learners' fluency, confidence, and pragmatic competence.<sup>3</sup> However, the application of these approaches within traditional Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren requires contextual adaptation due to their unique cultural, religious, and institutional characteristics.

Within the pesantren context, one instructional approach that reflects the principles of CLT is the *muhādatsah* method. *Muhādatsah* is a communicative teaching strategy that emphasizes direct oral practice through dialogues, role plays, discussions, simulations, and structured conversational activities. Rather than isolating language forms, this method encourages students to use Arabic as a tool for interaction and meaning-making. Azmi notes that *muhādatsah* aligns closely with communicative pedagogy by promoting meaningful interaction, repetition in authentic contexts, and immediate feedback, all of which are essential for developing speaking competence.<sup>4</sup>

Empirical studies conducted in various madrasahs and pesantren indicate that the *muhādatsah* method contributes positively to students' speaking fluency, vocabulary development, motivation, and self-confidence. Regional studies in Southeast Asia and the Middle East suggest that structured oral practice can bridge the gap between grammatical knowledge and communicative performance in Arabic learning contexts. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature remains focused on general outcomes or experimental comparisons, with limited attention

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<sup>3</sup> Rod Ellis, "Task-Based Language Teaching," in *Research Questions in Language Education and Applied Linguistics: A Reference Guide* (Springer, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Azmi Islami et al., "Metode Muhadatsah: Pendekatan Komunikatif Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Era Globalisasi Di Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah," *Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic Boarding School 2*, no. 1 (2025).

given to the instructional process, learners' responses, and contextual dynamics within specific pesantren environments.

Moreover, existing studies on Arabic speaking instruction in pesantren often rely on quantitative measurements of effectiveness, leaving the learning process itself underexplored. There is a lack of in-depth qualitative research that examines how *muhādatsah* is implemented in real classroom settings, how teachers mediate communicative activities, and how students experience and respond to such pedagogical interventions. This gap suggests a need for process-oriented research that captures the complexity of language learning within pesantren-based education.

Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat in Lamongan represents a distinctive pesantren model that integrates traditional Islamic learning with modern formal education, including higher education programs. The institution is known for its strong Arabic language culture, structured daily language practices, and efforts to modernize instructional strategies while maintaining pesantren values. Compared to many traditional pesantren that emphasize passive learning, Sunan Drajat actively promotes language use in academic and social contexts, making it a relevant and strategic site for examining the contextualized implementation of communicative Arabic teaching methods.

Despite its prominent role, empirical research focusing specifically on Arabic speaking instruction at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat remains limited. Most existing studies on pesantren-based Arabic learning either generalize findings across institutions or focus on curriculum and policy aspects rather than classroom practices. Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of how communicative methods such as *muhādatsah* operate within this particular pesantren environment and how they contribute to students' speaking development.

This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the implementation of the *muhādatsah* method in Arabic language learning at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize outcomes, this research adopts a classroom action research approach to explore the learning process in depth. Specifically, the study aims to (1) describe the instructional process of

implementing *muhādatsah* in Arabic learning, (2) analyze students' responses and engagement with the method, and (3) evaluate changes in students' speaking skills following its application.

By situating the study within broader discussions on communicative and task-based language pedagogy while grounding it in the pesantren context, this research contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on Arabic language pedagogy by providing contextualized insights into communicative teaching in Islamic educational institutions. Practically, it offers evidence-based implications for Arabic language teachers and pesantren administrators seeking to enhance students' speaking competence without disregarding traditional educational values. In doing so, this study positions Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat as a meaningful case within the evolving landscape of pesantren-based Arabic education and highlights its contribution to contemporary foreign language pedagogy.

## B. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative Classroom Action Research (CAR) design following the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This design enables continuous improvement of instructional practices through iterative cycles.<sup>5</sup>

The research was conducted at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School, Lamongan, Indonesia, over a one-month period from December 1 to December 29.

The participants were third-semester university-level students (mahasantri) enrolled in an Arabic speaking course (*mahārah al-kalām*) at Universitas Sunan Drajat. Purposive sampling was used to select participants relevant to the research objectives.

The CAR was implemented in cycles:

- a. Planning: Designing *muhādatsah*-based lesson plans, dialogue materials, observation sheets, speaking assessment instruments, and learning activities such as pair dialogues and role plays.

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<sup>5</sup> Torang Siregar, *Classroom Action Research-Based Learning Innovations: Kemmis and McTaggart Models*, 2025.

- b. Action: Implementing *muhādatsah* through guided dialogues, question-and-answer sessions, thematic conversations, and spontaneous speaking activities.
- c. Observation: Monitoring student engagement, fluency, vocabulary use, pronunciation accuracy, and confidence using structured observation sheets supported by audio and video recordings.
- d. Reflection: Evaluating outcomes, identifying challenges, and refining instructional strategies for subsequent cycles.

Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and speaking tests administered before and after each cycle. Qualitative data were analyzed descriptively following Miles, Huberman framework, while speaking test results were analyzed using simple quantitative measures (mean scores).<sup>6</sup> Data validity was ensured through methodological and source triangulation.

## C. Results and Discussion

### Implementation of the *Muhādatsah* Method

During Cycle I, *muhādatsah* activities focused on simple daily-life dialogues. Although students initially experienced difficulties related to limited vocabulary and lack of confidence, gradual improvement was observed. The average speaking score in Cycle I was 67.5, categorized as "fair."

The results of the students' speaking proficiency test in Cycle I are shown in the table below:

Assessment Aspect	Average Score	Category
Fluency	68	Fair
Pronunciation	70	Fair
Vocabulary	67	Fair
Speaking Confidence	65	Fair
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>Fair</b>

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<sup>6</sup> Qomaruddin Qomaruddin and Halimah Sa'diyah, "Kajian Teoritis Tentang Teknik Analisis Data Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Perspektif Spradley, Miles Dan Huberman," *Journal of Management, Accounting, and Administration* 1, no. 2 (2024): 77-84.

In Cycle II, enhanced activities such as small-group discussions, role plays, and contextual conversations were introduced. Students demonstrated notable improvements in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and confidence. The average speaking score increased to 82.5, categorized as "good."

The results of the students' speaking proficiency test in Cycle II are shown in the table below:

Assessment Aspect	Average Score	Category
Fluency	82	Good
Pronunciation	80	Good
Vocabulary	83	Good
Speaking Confidence	85	Very Good
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>82.5</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Students' Responses to the *Muhādatsah* Method

The findings indicate that students responded positively to the implementation of the *muhādatsah* method, particularly in terms of learning motivation, classroom engagement, and speaking confidence. Classroom observations and interview data revealed that the dialog-based and interactive nature of *muhādatsah* created a learning atmosphere that encouraged active participation and reduced learners' anxiety when speaking Arabic. Several students reported feeling more comfortable expressing ideas orally because the activities emphasized meaning-making rather than grammatical perfection.

This condition is consistent with Krashen's<sup>7</sup> affective filter hypothesis, which posits that lower anxiety and higher motivation facilitate language acquisition. More importantly, the improvement in students' affective disposition was not merely incidental but structurally embedded in the learning design. The repetitive use of short dialogues, peer interaction, and contextual topics allowed students to gradually internalize linguistic patterns while receiving immediate feedback from both peers and instructors. This finding supports Richards' (2006)<sup>8</sup> assertion that communicative classrooms promote learner autonomy and engagement through purposeful interaction. Compared to traditional grammar-

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Krashen, "Second Language Acquisition," *Second Language Learning* 3, no. 7 (1981): 19–39.

<sup>8</sup> Haifa Fareed Abdulmajeed Albadry, "Using Mobile Technology to Foster Autonomy among Language Learners" (Newcastle University, 2018).

focused instruction commonly practiced in pesantren, *muhādatsah* provided students with authentic opportunities to use Arabic as a communicative tool rather than as an object of analysis.

### **Improvement in Speaking Skills**

Analysis of students' speaking performance between Cycle I and Cycle II demonstrates consistent improvement across all assessed components, namely fluency, pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary range, grammatical appropriacy, and communicative confidence. The evaluation was based on an analytic speaking rubric applied during pre- and post-performance tasks, allowing for systematic comparison of students' progress across cycles. While the analysis employed simple quantitative comparison rather than inferential statistics, the score increases were supported by converging qualitative evidence from observation notes and reflective interviews, strengthening the credibility of the findings. Among the assessed components, speaking confidence showed the most notable improvement. This suggests that the *muhādatsah* method is particularly effective in addressing affective barriers that often hinder oral performance in foreign language learning contexts. Unlike task-based approaches that require complex problem-solving or extended output, *muhādatsah* activities emphasized manageable, structured exchanges that scaffolded students' speaking gradually.

This finding resonates with Brown (2007),<sup>9</sup> who emphasizes that fluency development is closely linked to learners' willingness to communicate, especially in supportive instructional environments. Furthermore, improvements in vocabulary use and pronunciation accuracy can be attributed to the cyclical and repetitive nature of *muhādatsah* activities. Through frequent exposure to commonly used expressions and immediate corrective feedback, students were able to refine their oral production over time. This aligns with Harmer's (2007) argument that repetition within meaningful contexts plays a critical role in developing spoken language competence.<sup>10</sup> However, compared to audio-lingual

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<sup>9</sup> Alice Covelli, *The Teacher's Role in Motivating Preschool Children to Learn English as a FL in a Classroom Environment: An Exploratory Study*, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Hadi Shokri, "Investigating the Effect of Harmer's ESA Elements on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners: A Task-Based Approach," *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies* 5, no. 03 (2017): 48–60.

drills, *muhādatsah* offers a more flexible and context-sensitive framework that balances repetition with communicative purpose.

The comparison of students' speaking ability results between Cycle I and Cycle II demonstrates a clear improvement across all assessed aspects.

Assessment Aspect	Cycle I	Cycle II	Improvement
Fluency	68	82	+14
Pronunciation	70	80	+10
Vocabulary	67	83	+16
Speaking Confidence	65	85	+20

These results indicate that the structured and repeated implementation of the *muhādatsah* method significantly enhanced students' Arabic speaking skills.

### Critical Engagement with Previous Studies and Pedagogical Approaches

When compared with previous empirical studies on Arabic speaking instruction in pesantren, the findings of this study reinforce existing evidence that communicative practice-based methods are more effective than form-focused approaches in developing oral proficiency. However, this study extends prior research by providing a process-oriented account of how speaking skills evolve through iterative classroom cycles. Unlike experimental studies that isolate instructional variables, the classroom action research design captures the dynamic interaction between instructional strategies, learner responses, and contextual constraints. In relation to alternative pedagogical approaches such as task-based language teaching (TBLT), *muhādatsah* demonstrates particular suitability for pesantren contexts where structured routines and collective participation are culturally valued. While TBLT emphasizes open-ended tasks and learner autonomy, *muhādatsah* offers clearer linguistic scaffolding, which appears to be more accessible for learners with limited speaking experience. This contextual compatibility may explain why improvements were observed across multiple speaking components within a relatively short instructional period. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with caution. The observed improvements are based on a small participant group and teacher-led assessment, which may introduce subjective bias. Despite these limitations, the convergence of rubric-based evaluation, observational data, and learner reflections suggests that the *muhādatsah* method contributes meaningfully to the development of Arabic

speaking skills in pesantren-based education. Future research employing larger samples and mixed-method designs is recommended to further validate and extend these findings.

## Discussion

### Reconsidering the *Muhādatsah* Method within Communicative Arabic Language Pedagogy

The findings of this study demonstrate that the *muhādatsah* method facilitates active use of Arabic through structured oral interaction, aligning with contemporary perspectives that conceptualize language as a tool for communication rather than merely a system of grammatical rules. This orientation resonates with communicative language teaching (CLT), which prioritizes meaning-focused interaction, learner engagement, and functional language use.<sup>11</sup> However, while the results affirm the effectiveness of *muhādatsah*, a critical discussion requires moving beyond theoretical alignment to interrogate *how* and *why* this method operates effectively within specific educational and sociocultural contexts.

From a pedagogical standpoint, *muhādatsah* provides learners with repeated exposure to spoken Arabic in a semi-authentic environment, enabling them to practice linguistic forms in meaningful exchanges. This finding supports Brown's argument that speaking competence develops primarily through sustained oral practice.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all communicative practices yield the same learning outcomes. Unlike open-ended communicative tasks emphasized in task-based language teaching (TBLT), *muhādatsah* tends to rely on structured dialogues and guided interaction. While this structure may scaffold learning for beginners, it may also constrain learners' opportunities for spontaneous language production, suggesting a pedagogical trade-off between control and communicative freedom.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jack C. Richards et al., "Language Teaching Research Quarterly," *Language Teaching Research* 33 (2023): 4–67.

<sup>12</sup> Sandra Lee McKay and James Dean Brown, *Teaching and Assessing EIL in Local Contexts around the World* (Routledge, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Ellis, "Task-Based Language Teaching."

## Comparing *Muhādatsah* with Alternative Pedagogical Approaches

A critical comparison between *muhādatsah* and other communicative approaches highlights its contextual strengths and limitations. In TBLT, learners engage in problem-solving tasks that require negotiation of meaning and strategic language use.<sup>14</sup> Such tasks promote learner autonomy and authentic communication, yet they may pose challenges in pesantren contexts where students are accustomed to teacher-guided instruction and collective learning routines. In contrast, *muhādatsah* offers a culturally compatible model that balances interaction with instructional structure, making it more accessible for learners transitioning from grammar-focused instruction.

However, form-focused instruction (FFI), which emphasizes explicit grammar teaching, remains dominant in many pesantren. While FFI contributes to grammatical accuracy, its overuse can limit communicative competence.<sup>15</sup> The findings of this study suggest that *muhādatsah* helps mitigate this limitation by providing opportunities for meaningful output. Yet, the method itself does not systematically address grammatical development unless integrated with focused feedback strategies. This raises an important pedagogical implication: *muhādatsah* should not be positioned as a replacement for grammar instruction but as a complementary practice within an integrated instructional framework.

## Students' Responses and the Role of Classroom Culture

Students' positive responses toward *muhādatsah* reflect not only the effectiveness of the method but also the influence of classroom culture. In pesantren-based education, learning environments are often characterized by strong teacher authority, collective discipline, and moral values rooted in Islamic tradition. Within such settings, students may initially hesitate to speak due to fear of making mistakes or violating norms of respect. The structured and supportive nature of *muhādatsah* appears to reduce this anxiety by normalizing oral participation and framing errors as part of the learning process.

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<sup>14</sup> Michael H. Long, "In Defense of Tasks and TBLT: Nonissues and Real Issues," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 36 (2016): 5–33.

<sup>15</sup> Sandra Fotos and Hossein Nassaji, *Form-Focused Instruction and Teacher Education* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

This finding aligns with recent studies emphasizing the role of classroom climate in second language acquisition.<sup>16</sup> A supportive learning environment can lower learners' affective barriers, increasing their willingness to communicate. Nevertheless, it is important to critically acknowledge that positive responses may also be influenced by novelty effects or social desirability bias, particularly in religious educational contexts where students may feel obliged to respond favorably to instructional innovations introduced by authority figures.

### **Affective Factors and Learner Backgrounds**

The increase in students' confidence observed in this study supports the relevance of affective dimensions in language learning, as emphasized by Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. More recent research, however, suggests that affective factors interact dynamically with learner identity, motivation, and sociocultural background.<sup>17</sup> In pesantren contexts, learners' prior experiences with Arabic often limited to reading classical texts may shape their attitudes toward speaking. For some students, *muhādatsah* may represent a liberating pedagogical shift, while for others, it may pose cognitive and emotional challenges.

Moreover, differences in learners' proficiency levels and personality traits can influence how they benefit from communicative methods. Introverted learners or those with weaker linguistic foundations may require additional scaffolding to fully engage in *muhādatsah* activities. This suggests that the method's effectiveness is not uniform across learner populations and must be adapted to accommodate diverse learner needs.

### **Evaluating Speaking Improvement: Methodological Considerations**

The observed improvement in students' speaking ability following the implementation of *muhādatsah* indicates that systematic conversational practice contributes positively to oral proficiency. This finding is consistent with recent empirical studies highlighting the role of interaction and output in language

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<sup>16</sup> Zoltán Dörnyei, *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition* (Routledge, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Ali H. Al-Hoorie et al., "The Ideal L2 Self versus Ability Beliefs: Are They Really Distinct?," *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 2024, 1–19.

development.<sup>18</sup> However, the evaluative basis of “improvement” in this study relies primarily on rubric-based classroom assessment, which, while pedagogically appropriate, may lack the objectivity of standardized proficiency measures.

Additionally, the emphasis on fluency and confidence may overshadow more nuanced aspects of speaking competence, such as pragmatic appropriateness or syntactic complexity. Recent research cautions that communicative approaches may prioritize fluency at the expense of accuracy if corrective feedback is insufficient.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, while *muhādatsah* enhances communicative courage, its long-term impact on linguistic development warrants further investigation.

### **Muhādatsah in the Context of Modern Islamic Education**

Within the broader discourse of modern Islamic education, *muhādatsah* represents an attempt to reconcile traditional pedagogical values with contemporary language teaching paradigms. Modern Islamic education emphasizes not only religious transmission but also learner-centered pedagogy, critical thinking, and communicative competence.<sup>20</sup> The findings of this study suggest that *muhādatsah* aligns with this vision by promoting active participation while respecting pesantren traditions.

However, modernization should not be understood as uncritical adoption of Western pedagogies. Instead, it requires contextual adaptation that considers institutional culture, religious values, and educational goals. In this sense, *muhādatsah* functions as a culturally responsive pedagogical practice that bridges classical Islamic learning and modern communicative approaches. Nonetheless, its successful implementation depends on teacher competence, curriculum integration, and institutional support.

### **Critical Reflection and Implications for Future Research**

While this study reinforces the theoretical and practical value of *muhādatsah*, it also highlights several limitations. The findings are context-specific and based on a relatively small sample, limiting generalizability. Furthermore, the

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<sup>18</sup> Shawn Loewen and Masatoshi Sato, “Interaction and Instructed Second Language Acquisition,” *Language Teaching* 51, no. 3 (2018): 285–329.

<sup>19</sup> Farahman Farrokhi et al., “The Effect of the Corrective Feedback on Iranian EFL Learners’ Speaking Accuracy and Breakdown Fluency,” *Journal of Language Horizons* 1, no. 2 (2017): 107.

<sup>20</sup> Robert W. Hefner, “Whatever Happened to Civil Islam? Islam and Democratisation in Indonesia, 20 Years On,” *Asian Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (2019): 375–96.

absence of a comparison group makes it difficult to isolate the effects of *muhādatsah* from other instructional variables. These limitations underscore the need for future research employing mixed-method designs, longitudinal analysis, and cross-institutional comparison.

In conclusion, rather than positioning *muhādatsah* as a universally effective method, this discussion argues for a nuanced understanding of its pedagogical potential and constraints. By critically examining how *muhādatsah* operates within real classroom dynamics and modern Islamic educational contexts, this study contributes to a more reflective and context-sensitive discourse on Arabic language pedagogy in pesantren-based education.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study concludes that the systematic and repeated implementation of the *muhādatsah* method contributes meaningfully to the improvement of students' Arabic speaking skills within the pesantren context. Based on classroom-based assessments and observational data across learning cycles, improvements were consistently identified in key speaking components, including fluency, pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary use, and speaking confidence. Although the evidence of "significant enhancement" is primarily derived from formative evaluation rather than standardized proficiency testing, the convergence of performance improvement and positive learner responses provides a reasonable indication of the method's pedagogical effectiveness. Beyond technical language gains, the findings highlight the role of *muhādatsah* in fostering an interactive and supportive learning atmosphere that encourages active student participation. In this respect, the method reflects the principles of modern Islamic education, which emphasize the integration of traditional religious learning environments with *learner-centered* and communicative pedagogical practices.

*Muhādatsah* serves as a culturally responsive approach that bridges classical pesantren traditions with contemporary language teaching paradigms, thereby contributing to the ongoing modernization of Arabic pedagogy in Islamic education. Nevertheless, this study is not without limitations. The absence of a control group, the reliance on classroom-based assessment instruments, and the

relatively limited research scope restrict the generalizability of the findings. These constraints suggest that the observed improvements should be interpreted cautiously and understood as context-specific rather than universally applicable. In light of these findings, it is recommended that Islamic boarding schools integrate the muhādatsah method into Arabic language curricula in a sustained and pedagogically balanced manner, complemented by explicit feedback and form-focused instruction when necessary. Future research is encouraged to employ experimental or mixed-method designs, extend the duration of instructional cycles, and examine the impact of muhādatsah on other Arabic language skills. Such efforts would further clarify the method's role in advancing communicative competence and supporting the broader transformation of Arabic language education within modern Islamic educational institutions.

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