The Role of the Language Environment in Improving Arabic Learning Abilities

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Abstract

One factor that influences and determines the success of the learning process is the environment, and the language environment is no exception. A quality language environment is significant for the success of someone learning a second language, in this case, Arabic. In this paper, the author wants to discuss the role of the language environment in improving Arabic learning skills. This research uses qualitative research. The qualitative research approach is a research and understanding process based on a methodology that investigates a social phenomenon and human problem. The results of the study show that the language environment plays an essential role in improving Arabic language skills because the language environment is designed in such a way that it is similar to the original environment so that there is an appreciation and supportive attitude towards learning Arabic from related parties so that it creates student motivation in learning Arabic. There are ten strategies to develop an Arabic learning environment, namely the formulation of a mission, strong commitment, reviewing the Arabic curriculum, determining Arabic language compulsory days, Arabic seminars, nuanced Arabic competitions, providing adequate Arabic language media, dormitory concepts with Arabic nuances, cooperation between institutions and the provision of rewards for achievers.

Keywords: *Language Environment, Learning, Arabic*.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Language is the only human culture that can never be separated from all activities and movements and humans throughout their existence as cultured and social creatures. There is no human activity without language. Even in dreaming, humans use language (Habibah, 2016). Language plays an essential role in human life because it is a reciprocal communication. Ahmad Madkur said that language is the main instrument for human collaboration and a means of communication with each other. History and human civilization began with the emergence of spoken language, not written language (Madkur, 1991).

Language is the key to science. Holding the language master key means having the world window lock. Because a million pieces of knowledge and a thousand civilizations that were created exist and are spoken, even history will not materialize if there is no language (Switri et al., 2022). Language is the only key to opening the path of enlightenment for humanity's future. Language is a tool to spill the heart and one's thoughts on the other person. Language is the essential medium for humans to interact with other people (Rizqi, 2017).

Learning Arabic cannot be avoided because of the urgency of Arabic for today's world community. There are many reasons why non-Arabs learn Arabic, such as religious motivation, especially for Muslims because the language of the holy book of

Muslims is Arabic, non-Arabs will feel foreign when visiting the Arabian peninsula if they do not master Arabic, and there are many works by scholars. Classical and even developed until now still use Arabic (Thu'aimah, 1989).

No doubt learning Arabic is studying science for something big because many sources of knowledge use Arabic (Unsi, 2015). In Indonesia, Arabic is not only studied as a religious language but also a language of learning. Besides being taught to preserve local culture, Arabic is also studied to understand and interpret verses of the Qur'an, hadith, and Arabic texts. In today's era, people are very interested in learning Arabic and know the importance of learning Arabic. Baharun argued that Arabic is the language of the Koran and religion and is a universal language. Therefore, it is not surprising that nowadays, people are busy understanding and studying it, especially in Indonesia, where the Indonesian population is predominantly Muslim (Baharun, 1980).

As the language of science, so is the case with religion and other sciences. Religious knowledge includes Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Tawhid, and many other sciences written in Arabic. Some other sciences, including history, economics, politics, and other social sciences, use Arabic (Anshor, 2009). This is because Arabic is the language of worship in Islam (the language of the Qur'an). an), and is also a religious language for all Muslims in the world which is estimated to number more than one billion people or 20% of the earth's population, which spreads in 60 countries around the globe (Arsyad, 2002). In addition, Arabic is also one of the official languages of the United Nations (United Nations) (Muradi, 2014).

There are several main learning objectives in learning Arabic; one of the most important is that students can pronounce correctly and communicate well (Nalole, 2018). Thu'aimah argues that the fundamental goal of learning Arabic for non-Arabic speakers is to improve the ability to speak well and communicate with other people using Arabic speaking and expression skills (Thu'aimah, 1989).

Education in terms of language learning, the language environment is seen as vital because it is a vehicle for language acquisition for language learners. The language environment needs to be formed to hone language skills naturally (Abdullah et al., 2020). In his research on the importance of the language environment, Muhbib stated that creating a language environment can familiarize and familiarize active language skills, which are the future project of language (Muhbib, 2008).

This is in line with the behavioristic learning theory, which states that the process of language acquisition obtained through environmental engineering and the existence of habituation activities repeatedly can make them proficient in language skills. According to Krashen, all discourses produced, both spoken and written by language learners, come from the language system they already have as a result of language acquisition. The language system obtained through learning is only a monitor that functions to edit and improve language discourse from acquisition effects (Krashen, 1992). In this regard, the language environment can be referred to as an external and internal factor in language acquisition, especially here Arabic, because it can motivate learners to improve Arabic language skills and encourage them to

practice Arabic in their daily lives. So that their Arabic language learning can be successful as intended (Rosyid & Baroroh, 2019).

From the description above, we can see the importance of creating an environment to support the process of learning Arabic, especially speaking Arabic. Because in this case, Dulay explained that the quality of the language environment is essential for a learner to be successful in learning a new language. Therefore, the most appropriate way to master a new language is to practice continuously, without stopping, so that one-day habits will be formed as when learning the primary language. And these habits can be carried out by creating an Arabic environment.

B. METHOD

This type of research uses a qualitative descriptive approach that the author uses in library research, namely collecting books related to the object of research or library research. Moong defines qualitative research as scientific research that aims to understand a phenomenon in a natural social context by prioritizing a deep communication interaction between researchers and the phenomenon under study (Moloeng, 2007). In qualitative research, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of closeness to people and research situations so that researchers gain a clear understanding of reality and real-life conditions. The purpose of research through this qualitative approach is to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject, such as behavior, motivation, action, and others, holistically and descriptively in the form of words and language in a natural context and by utilizing various natural methods (Gunawan, 2013).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Language Environment

The environment is a practical interactive and communicative media that is obtained naturally. The environment is also known as one of the media in learning and a source of knowledge. Such as the social environment, which is one means of interaction of a person with other people around him. The language environment is everything that the learner hears and sees about the new language being studied (everything the language learner hears and sees in the new language). The quality of this language environment is essential for learners to learn a second language successfully. The quality of the language environment is very decisive in achieving the success of learning a new language (foreign language) being studied; when they master a few reading skills but listening and speaking skills will remain low because they are dealing with a new language. Therefore, a good language environment is an environment that can provide the most comprehensive opportunity for learners to get something related to the language they are studying (Purba, 2013).

The innate human potential is not specific but is general and can develop into various realities due to interactions with the environment. Learning is the process of changing behavior caused by experience and practice. The learning process can take place with minimal possibility without going through experience and training. The

incident is the interaction between humans and their environment; a person learns in exchange. From these experiences, he gets definitions, attitudes, awards, habits, skills, and so on (Anidar, 2017).

The principle of the environment in teaching emphasizes the integration of children with their environment. What is learned is not limited to what is in the textbook or the teacher's explanations in the classroom. Many things are discovered in the child's environment, for example, language, natural conditions, religion, way of life, animal husbandry, industry, transportation, etc. Second language learning recognizes several determining factors, namely: (1) motivational factors, (2) age factors, (3) formal presentation factors, (4) first language factors, and (5) environmental factors. And these environmental factors have an essential role in the success of learning a second language (Chaer, 2009).

According to Krashen, the language environment can be divided into: (a) a formal environment such as in the classroom in the teaching and learning process, and is artificial, and (b) an informal or natural environment (Chaer, 2009). The formal environment includes all aspects of formal and non-formal education, especially in the classroom or laboratory. This formal environment can provide input to students in the form of language acquisition (language skills) or language systems (knowledge of language elements), depending on the teacher's learning method. In general, there is a tendency for the formal environment provides more knowledge about language systems than language discourse. According to Daulay, the formal environment is one of the environments in language learning that focuses on mastering the language rules that are being learned consciously. Krashen states that the formal environment of this language has the following characteristics: (1) it is artificial, (2) it is part of the overall language teaching in schools or the classroom, and (3) in which learners are directed to carry out language activities that display the rules of language that are consistent with the language. He has learned and given feedback by the teacher in the form of correcting errors made by the learner (Chaer, 2009).

The informal environment is natural or natural, not artificial. This informal environment includes the language used by peers, the language of caregivers or parents, the language used by members of the learning ethnic group, which is used by mass media, and the language of the teachers, both in the classroom and outside the classroom. This is very influential on the second language learning outcomes of the learners. This is known from several studies by experts on the informal environment of peers, parents, teachers' language, and the language of foreign speakers. The language of communication with peers has a more significant influence than the language conveyed by the teacher. According to Daulay, providing a peer model in the second language being studied is very important in second language learning. Meanwhile, the utterances used by the teacher appear more straightforward and are often adjusted to the student's level of proficiency as opposed to speaking. The teacher's language influences or becomes a model for students but does not significantly affect peers' language. The adult language seems only to be a model in first language acquisition unless the person places himself as a teacher in a formal

environment. While the language of foreign speakers acts as (1) communication developer, (2) forming synergy with learners, and (3) as a learning model (Chaer, 2009).

Furthermore, Dulay (1982) states that four things from the language environment influence the acquisition of a second language, namely:

a. The nature of the target language The naturalness of the speech heard is believed to increase the development of second language communication skills. The survey conducted by Carrol, Upsun, and Mason on students majoring in foreign languages in the United States cited by Dulay (1982) was one of the first studies to show the advantages of the natural language environment over the formal language environment in second language acquisition. Students majoring in foreign languages in the United States are taking additional English courses and not taking additional courses. It turned out that at the end of the semester, the English skills of the two groups were almost the same.
b. The way the learner communicates. There are three types of communication in which learners participate: a). one way (one way) b). local two-way c). full two-way (full two-way) In one-way communication, the learner only reads or hears the second language but cannot respond. In limited two-way communication, the learner will listen to the second language, then respond nonverbally or not using the target language, such as nodding. Meanwhile, in full two-way communication, the learner speaks in the target language, acting as a receiver and sender of verbal messages.
c. The existence of concrete references The presence of concrete language references must also be considered. Therefore, the events raised as material must be events or things that can be seen, heard, or felt directly by the learner when the conversation is taking place. Such communication can ensure that the learner understands what he is saying in the second language. Thus, it can trigger the development and acquisition of the structure and vocabulary of the target language.
d. Target language model. In learning a second language, learners always choose a model that can produce good speech. Students can select this dual-language model from their language environment. The language model can be playmates, parents themselves, teachers/teachers, books and newspapers, radio or television broadcasters, and so on that can be found.

2. The Role of the Language Environment in Arabic Learning

Before discussing the creation of an Arabic language environment, it will first state the prerequisites for creating a language environment. To create an Arabic language environment, several prerequisites must be met, including:

a. There is a positive attitude towards the Arabic language and a solid commitment to advancing the teaching of Arabic from the parties involved.

b. Several figures in the educational institution environment can communicate in Arabic; if not possible, some native speakers act as a driving force as well as a creative team to create an Arabic language environment.
c. Availability of adequate allocation of funds to provide the necessary facilities and infrastructure to create an Arabic language environment.

The principles of creating an Arabic-speaking environment that needs to be used as the basis for developing an Arabic learning system are as follows: First, the principle of integration with the vision, mission, and orientation of Arabic learning. Creating an Arabic-speaking environment must be placed within the framework of supporting the achievement of Arabic language learning objectives and the fulfillment of a conducive atmosphere for the active use of the Arabic language. Second is the principle of priority scale and program gradation. Creating an Arabic-speaking environment must be carried out in stages by considering specific priorities. Third, togetherness and active participation of all parties. Psychologically, the social environment in language significantly affects the formation of foreign language awareness. Fourth are the principles of consistency and sustainability. The most challenging thing in creating a language environment is the attitude of character (*istiqomah*) from the language community itself. It may be that the creation of the intended environment is experiencing saturation. Therefore, it is necessary to have a varied and creative, sustainable program to create a conducive atmosphere: fifth, the principle of utilizing technology and multimedia.

Learning Arabic with its various characteristics, there are still multiple problems that usually arise in their learning for non-Arabs. These are divided into two issues: linguistic and non-linguistic. The process of learning Arabic in Indonesia has been considered undeveloped and less successful compared to English. Students have spent quite a long time learning Arabic, starting from Ibtidaiyah to Higher Education. Still, they have not been able to master the Arabic competency standards which have been set.

The artificial method is another method of creating a language environment, deliberately designed to provide a platform for language learners to communicate in the target language under study. The artificial language environment is intended to be similar to the original environment. Applying an artificial environment is another option that cannot be obtained from the authentic environment in foreign language learning.

Several conditions must be met to create an Arabic-speaking environment, namely:

a. Appreciation and supportive attitude towards learning Arabic from related parties such as institutions, students, teachers to education staff. Like and support has a significant impact on the development and development of language skills. This aspect will arise motivation and a sense of need that is very good.

b. Educational institutions and a helpful guide desire the model of development of the Arabic language environment. This guide is essential because it can unify the vision of developing an Arabic-speaking environment.
c. The existence of a native speaker lecturer is a person who can communicate actively. This can be optimized according to its function and role in coloring Arabic language coaching and development. They are the central guides and creative figures in creating an Arabic-speaking environment.
d. Providing sufficient funds, both to provide incentives for people who contribute to creating an Arabic-speaking environment and for providing supporting facilities and infrastructure.

The ideal Arabic-speaking environment is an environment that allows learners to enjoy, have fun, and be happy in learning Arabic so that the impression and "negative image" so far that "Arabic is difficult to learn" can be eliminated. Therefore, a strategy is needed to develop an Arabic-speaking environment, as for that strategy. The initial strategies that need to be taken to create an Arabic-language educational climate are as follows: First, the formulation of the vision, mission, and orientation of learning Arabic. Second is the strong commitment of Arabic language education staff and leaders to make environmental changes. Creating an Arabic language environment is impossible for a few people to do. All parties must have the same vision, mission, commitment, and concern in developing the Arabic language learning system so that the process of creating an Arabic language environment becomes a joint program that requires collective and creative efforts in its realization. Third, a thorough review of the Arabic curriculum intends that Arabic learning can be intensified. Fourth, there needs to be a policy from the leadership to determine special days, for example, Friday as an Arabic language mandatory day. Fifth, activities with Arabic nuances, such as discussions, lectures (by inviting native speakers, for example), seminars in Arabic, and publishing wall magazines and Arabic journals, need to be encouraged so that the community is accustomed to listening. In turn, teachers can further increase the portion of the use of Arabic as a language of teaching and learning in and outside the classroom. Sixth, competitions with Arabic nuances need to be regularly programmed, such as speech competitions, quizzes, writings, dramas, Arabic communication, debates, and so on, so that the community can improve their ability and ability to speak Arabic. Seventh, the provision of more adequate Arabic language facilities and media. Library facilities must also be equipped with Arabic newspapers, magazines, books, and dictionaries. Eighth, the concept of a more optimized dormitory for its function and strategic value in creating an Arabic-speaking environment. Ninth, increasing cooperation, both internally and externally, with related institutions. This kind of cooperation is essential, mainly because we now live in an era of globalization that requires us to get along with the world's nations, and one of the keys is mastering foreign languages, including Arabic. Tenth, it is necessary to tradition a kind of reward for students who have the potential to excel in Arabic to motivate them to continue improving their ability in Arabic.

D. CONCLUSION

The language environment is everything the learner hears and sees related to studying the second language. So important is the language environment factor in the success of language learning, especially in improving speaking skills. Therefore, efforts to create a language environment are the responsibility of all parties to the educational institution. Thus, all parties will feel the urgency of creating a language environment and wholeheartedly support all programs related to building a language environment. The Arabic environment has an essential role in developing Arabic language proficiency. The Arabic language environment is formed in two types of environments, formal and non-formal environments. The strategy is to provide competent Arabic administrators and carry out Arabic language activities by paying attention to the principles of language teaching.

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