

Arabic Language Acquisition as a Foreign Language for Non-Native Speaker Students in PBA UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

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Abstract

Language acquisition is an important aspect in understanding humans learn and communicate. Arabic language acquisition as a second language is the process of learning and using Arabic by individuals who are not native Arabic speakers, but choose to learn and master an additional or second language. The purpose of this study is to determine the acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language for non-native speaker students at PBA UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang as well as the supporting factors in the process of language acquisition. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were obtained by interview and observation techniques from primary data sources. The informants of this study were taken from four non-native speaker students of PBA UIN Malang. The results of this study indicate that there are two language acquisition carried out by students, namely; 1) Utilisation of technology and 2) Interaction with peers. The things that support the process of foreign language acquisition are; 1) campus policy, 2) learning environment. As for the inhibiting factors in the process of foreign language acquired in the scope of non-native students of PBA UIN maulana malik Ibrahim malang, namely; 1) lack of socialisation of the curriculum, 2) Low language skills.

Keywords: foreign language, Arabic language acquisition, Arabic language learning

Introduction

Foreign languages are often distinguished from second languages. With the reason that foreign languages are used less frequently in communication, in contrast to second languages which are languages used in daily communication (Pallawagau & Rasna, 2022). Studies related to language will not be exhausted to be studied both from the concept of how language is and how language acquisition is. In language science, the term universal grammar is known, which means that there is a similarity between one language and another in terms of language structuring. With this, a person is able to master more than one language (Wahyuni, 2018).

Language is a tool used by humans to interact with one another. Through language it is possible for humans to communicate with each other, share ideas, and understand other people. In other words, language can be acquired by individuals during their life, growth, and development. Language can be learnt in two ways, namely by mastering the language or by teaching it. Language teaching is a process where one learns a language in a formal setting with a focus on understanding linguistic rules or meaning (SANGID & MUHIB, 2019).

Language acquisition, on the other hand, refers to the natural process by which language is acquired informally. The focus of this process is on understanding the relationship between language and its context. The complex use of language acquisition is known as language acquisition. When someone learns a language, they consciously learn grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic rules. This process usually takes place in formal environments, such as classrooms or educational institutions, and involves the use of structured strategies and methods to improve language comprehension. On the other hand, language acquisition occurs unconsciously in informal situations, such as when children learn their mother tongue. This process involves receiving and acquiring language through constant exposure to the language around them. This process tends to be more natural and intuitive, and involves understanding language in everyday communication. Strategies known as "language acquisition" are used to master complex languages, especially when a second or foreign language is learnt. These strategies include improving language skills, such as the ability to understand and produce complex language, adapting to various communication situations, and mastering the cultural aspects associated with the language being learnt (Syahid, 2015).

Indonesia has not yet made foreign languages a second language in the pattern of state communication. However, all efforts to develop foreign language learning continue to be improved, especially Arabic language learning. Arabic language learning will enter the realm where the language is obtained if it optimises the environment as a place for students' daily learning and will be referred to as a language environment (Rachmawati, 2021). The term language acquisition has a meaning as a natural acquisition of something done by someone.

Written language emphasises the understanding of language structures and rules as well as analysis. This method requires students to perform deductive reasoning and intellectual endeavours. However, the learning-in-form approach has several aspects that need to be considered. Firstly, this approach considers



communication less important. The development of speaking and listening skills, as well as understanding and mastering language structures, may not receive enough attention. Secondly, the learning approach used is usually dependent on the set curriculum. This can give students the impression of rigid and uninspiring learning. Innovative and imaginative teaching methods may not be well utilised. Thirdly, this approach often focuses on theoretical language theories and rules, but does not give enough attention to the practice of language use in daily life (Rosiyana, 2020).

The environment also plays an important role in second language acquisition. Interaction with native speakers of Arabic and the presence of opportunities to practice the language in real contexts can help improve Arabic proficiency. In addition, an individual's age can also affect second language acquisition, with the ability to learn a new language tending to decrease with age. Cultural aspects also play a role in second language acquisition, as language and culture are closely intertwined. Understanding the Arabic cultural context can help in understanding the proper use of Arabic and communicating effectively in different cultural situations (Solihat, 2018).

One of the characteristics of language, including Arabic, is that language is widespread and not stagnant, both in personal and social settings. Personally, language can develop with the age and experience of the user, and socially, language can develop through interaction and communication between language users (Susanti, 2020). Based on (Unsi, 2015) Arabic itself has become an international language among several languages that have been recognized by the world in addition to English which has been a language for a long time.

Based on the function of language, language learning objectives should include mastery or automation of the auditory function, understanding of what is heard and read, expression of opinions, and writing. However, in practice, the task of realising learning objectives faces various challenges, both from academic and non-academic factors (Huda, 2017)

In the process of language acquisition, it is divided into two things, namely the process of language acquisition and the process of language learning (Wahab, 2015). With the quote language is acquired which means that the language is obtained by the learner while the language is learned which means that the language is learned so that the learner acquires the language from learning (Sudirman et al., 2021). The study of foreign language acquisition in non-native speaker students of PBA UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is very important to find out how PBA students of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang acquire Arabic as a foreign language and are able to understand language rules, especially since not all of them are graduates of Islamic boarding schools who have never studied Arabic before.

The study conducted by Huda related to how the Arabic language acquisition model as a foreign language there are difficulties and problems in acquisition especially because of the lack of use of Arabic as a foreign language and lack of support in application (Zainuddin et al., n.d.). However, it is inverse to the research conducted by Adiluhung related to Arabic language acquisition as a foreign language in terms of phonology that Arabic can be acquired in language classes not in the environment where learners have social interactions (Adiluhung et al., 2022).



This article tries to review and discuss how the acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language is carried out by non-native speaker students of PBA UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Because the learning process in the PBA environment at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is certainly inseparable from the language in it and of course life on the campus of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang which requires language and there is an Arabic language programme. Thus, the main problems in this paper are 1) how is the acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language of non-native speaker students of PBA UIN Malang. 2) supporting and inhibiting factors in the process of acquiring Arabic as a foreign language for non-native speaker students of PBA UIN Malang. While the purpose of this study is to find out how the acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors in the process of acquiring Arabic as a foreign language in non-native speaker students of PBA UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Method

This research uses a qualitative - descriptive approach. This research will describe a phenomenon that exists in the field. And this data acquisition uses data collection instruments in the form of; interviews and observations (Sari sasi gendro, 2022). And data collection techniques by means of direct interviews with several non-native students in the Arabic language education study programme at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as well as direct observation of non-native PBA students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

The source of data taken through informants of non-native students of PBA UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang with a total of 4 students as data for this study. The analysis that will be used in this study through interactive analysis that refers to done by Miles and Huberman (1994) with the use of the following steps; 1) data collection; 2) Data reduction; 3) Data presentation; and 4) Data summarisation (Sari sasi gendro, 2022).

Results and Discussion

In English, it is called acquisition, which is the process of language acquisition carried out by children naturally against their mother tongue (Pallawagau & Rasna, 2022). And the study of foreign language acquisition can be understood as a field of study in intradisciplinary science that continues to strive in disclosure related to factors outside the language expressed in foreign language acquisition such as in social factors and psychological factors. This factor is a discipline of psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics that influences the language acquisition process (Yusuf, 2019).

The existence of a language environment becomes multifunctional, allowing students to directly practice the language they have learned in class. A child who is used to speaking Arabic every day tends to remember and understand the meaning of what has been learnt before. Linguistic environments that are able to support language acquisition. At least it can be classified into two kinds, namely the formal language environment and the informal language environment. In the formal language environment, students consciously explore the nature and original form of words and how they are used in everyday life (Wardani et al., 2019).



Reviewing the campus environment at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, especially in academic culture, there is an obligation for students to learn additional Arabic and become a compulsory curriculum for new students and English learning which is mandatory for students in semester 3. And this is an effort to form a language environment that is created to support the learning process of foreign languages. Moreover, being a non-native Arabic speaker student requires having the ability to speak Arabic as a foreign language used in the learning process. Researchers used 4 students as the main informants, and at the same time to obtain data. The interview was conducted to student 1 initials (NH, 2/10/23) who argued that the PBA environment was less supportive for implementing Arabic language learning as a foreign language and he tried himself to acquire the language in addition to the difficulties and challenges experienced, he explained:

“kesulitan dalam pengucapan berbahasa Arab menjadi kendala utama terlebih kurangnya pembiasaan baik di dalam maupun diluar kelas. Usaha dilakukan untuk melatih skill berbahasa, sebagai contoh dengan melihat cuplikan video berbahasa Arab yang ada di youtube atau tiktok. Dan agenda tambahan dalam penunjang kebahasaan di PBA seperti mengikuti BSO Al-Kindy.”

In addition to the difficulties and lack of habituation described by NH, and the additional efforts made, JS (2/10/23) also explained:

“Hal mendasar tersulit dalam mempelajari bahasa Arab ialah terkait gramatikal kebahasaan itu sendiri. Dan ini sangat sulit bila mana tanpa adanya latihan. Di samping kendala pribadi, kurangnya sosialisasi tentang kurikulum pembelajaran karena adanya perbedaan kurikulum pembelajaran yang digunakan di setiap angkatan. Dan memberikan tantangan tersendiri, dalam melaksanakan pembelajaran.”

In the aspect of language acquisition, it is certainly not enough to have a mere theory in class or an additional programme but it must be accompanied by practice and habituation. Because grammatical in Arabic must be trained frequently to achieve proficiency as described by the initials JS. And this student initials (SM, 3/10/23) as the third informant explained:

“Memiliki cara dan metode tersendiri untuk belajar menjadi ciri khas bagi dalam diri dalam meningkatkan skill seperti usaha mencatat kosakata sulit dan mencarinya di kamus. dan diuntungkan dengan banyaknya teman yang alumni pondok untuk saling belajar Bersama satu sama yang lainnya. Sehingga kemampuan berbahasa dapat dilatih dengan teman sejawat.”



The fourth informant (WR,3/10/23) was different from the others. Before entering PBA, he did not have any basic skills about Arabic. However, he had a strong interest in trying and actively participating in all the dynamics of campus life and all the activities that existed to encourage foreign language skills, he also explained during the interview:

“Minimnya kemampuan berbahasa yang dimiliki, menjadi kendala dalam proses pembelajaran. Namun semua bisa tertolong dengan adanya program tambahan belajar bahasa Arab di semester awal ini yaitu PKPBA, dan mencoba aktif dan interaktif selama pembelajaran berlangsung. meski terkadang saya merasa malu dan salah dalam pengucapan”

Based on interviews that have been conducted with four non-native PBA students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang as informants, it can be seen that each informant acquires Arabic in different ways. The first informant (NH) stated that he acquired Arabic through the use of technology, namely by watching snippets of Arabic learning videos on YouTube or TikTok. Meanwhile, the third informant (SM) mentioned that he acquired Arabic through interaction with his peers who are alumni of Islamic boarding schools.

In addition, from the interview results it can also be found that each informant has supporting factors and inhibiting factors in acquiring Arabic. As explained by the fourth informant (WR), the supporting factor in acquiring Arabic is the campus policy, namely the existence of PKPBA. While the inhibiting factor in acquiring Arabic is low Arabic language skills. In contrast to the fourth informant (WR), the second informant (JS) stated that his inhibiting factor in acquiring Arabic was due to the lack of socialisation about the different learning curriculum in each batch.

Observation Results

The results of observations made by researchers in one of the PBA International Class Programme classes which became one of the informants, can be seen interactive and Arabic language learning carried out by teachers and learners. So that the language environment will be alive and the acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language is very helpful for non-native PBA students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.



Picture 1 explains how the learning atmosphere is carried out in one of the learning classes at PBA UIN Malang and from the picture shows the interactive between students and teachers. Speaking skills have a foreign language is not something that is as simple as to be immediately recognised without sufficient time and supporting factors. From the results of interviews and observations that have been made to informants of four non-native PBA students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, two acquisitions that have been made by these informants can be taken.

Arabic Language Acquisition as a Foreign Language

a) Utilisation of Technology

Technology is a means to provide goods necessary for the survival and comfort of human life. The existence of technology is currently growing rapidly with various platforms and their uses and functions. Nothing is impossible with technology, especially in gaining new knowledge or knowledge, especially the acquisition of a second language or a new language. Students utilise technology to acquire Arabic as a foreign language such as viewing snippets of language content or related tips and tricks using Arabic (Ananda, 2017).

In many ways, technology has affected our society and environment. In the majority of societies, technology has helped improve the economy including the current globalised economy and has enabled increased leisure. Various uses of technology have affected societal values, and new technologies often raise ethical issues. Many technological processes produce unwanted by-products that pollute and deplete natural resources, harm and damage the Earth and its environment. Learning technologies evolved from educational practices and the audio-visual communication movement. Originally thought of as equipment technology, learning technology encompasses the use of tools, media, and means to achieve educational goals; in other words, learning technology means teaching with audio-visual aids. Learning technology is a combination of three different streams, namely educational media, learning psychology, and educational system approaches.

Based on its type, learning media can be divided into several categories, including audio media, visual media, audio visual media, and audio visual programming media. Therefore, every Arabic language teacher must understand in depth all the features of the media so that the media can be used correctly and effectively.

Audio Media (الوسائل السمعية)

This media can be divided into two types, namely programmed audio media and non-programmable audio media. Programmed audio is an audio device whose material can be adjusted to the learning material. The second is a type of audio media that cannot be programmed. Unprogrammed audio media are sound devices that can be used as learning media at some point. One example is cassette recordings that contain programmes tailored to learning objectives and materials.

Audio Visual Media (الوسائل السمعية البصرية)



Audio-visual media is anything that can be used to assist language learning that can be captured and digested through the senses of sight and hearing. For example, TV, video CD, big screen film, multimedia language lab, LCD projector, internet, etc.

Teachers can utilise video resources available on internet sites to teach Arabic. In addition, a large number of films have been translated into Arabic, and different types of films can be accessed in Arabic. One YouTube channel that features videos that teach Arabic is: Learn With Zakaria (تعلم مع زكريا). Using the icon of Zakaria, a young boy, this site offers basic Arabic language materials (Josua et al., 2019).

The existence of technology today is very rapidly developing with various platforms and their uses and functions. Nothing is impossible with technology, especially in gaining new knowledge or knowledge, especially language. Students utilise technology to acquire Arabic as a foreign language such as viewing snippets of language content or related tips and tricks that use Arabic.

b) Interaction with Peers

Socialising is a common and absolute thing done by everyone, as learners will certainly actively socialise in terms of education. Non-native PBA students have an effort by trying to be active and inviting friends to discuss to acquire language with friends who are smarter or understand. And this proves the existence of social processes and language communication that occurs or what is called sociolinguistics (SAYAMA MALABAR, 2015). In this case, it proves that a language can be obtained with reinforcement, repetition and continuous practice both in class and outside the classroom. Moreover, the UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang campus has a compulsory Arabic language programme which is an additional environment in the classroom which is held every active day in the afternoon until late afternoon.

Factors Supporting Second Language Acquisition

a) Campus Policy

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang campus with its vision of excellence and international reputation has a superior programme that is a differentiator from other state Islamic campuses, such as the existence of mahad and language development and international classes. And based on the results of 2 interviews, students are proven to get language from the concept of learning policies implemented by campuses such as PKPBA (Special Programme for Arabic Language Development) and the mandatory mahad for one semester (Mustofa et al., 2020). And this proves that students are able to acquire language from the language environment created as a result of campus policies.

b) Learning Environment

The environment is an important factor and can determine in the direction of positive and negative things depending on how the environment is formed. From the support of the teacher and the environment in the classroom is a supporting



factor and has been proven from the results of interviews and observations with the language learning environment and the support of friends supporting each other can create a language environment and will make it easier for Arabic as a foreign language to be acquired.

Factors inhibiting second language acquisition

a) Lack of Curriculum Socialisation

The curriculum is the main basis for all things learning. So that students will know the direction and purpose of learning outcomes through the curriculum, but the lack of socialisation of this curriculum students are sometimes surprised and confused by the evolving curriculum. And the results of students also have difficulty adapting and this is evidenced by the results of interviews conducted from one of the informants.

b) Low Language Proficiency

The lack of ability in oneself is a separate factor that is owned by each individual. And this cannot be denied considering that the abilities of each individual are different from one another and this is a factor inhibiting students in acquiring Arabic as a foreign language in the scope of PBA UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Of course, every individual has uniqueness and differences in abilities and potential. Factors such as educational background, environment, and previous experience can influence a person's ability to learn a foreign language, including Arabic (Sholihah et al., 2022).

Conclusion

From the research results and findings in this study on the acquisition of Arabic as a foreign language on non-native PBA students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, it can be seen that two acquisition models are carried out by students from four informants taken from PBA students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, namely; 1) the use of technology, 2) interaction with peers. The things that support the language process are; 1) campus policy, 2) learning environment. And the inhibiting factors in the language process obtained in the scope of non-native PBA students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang are; 1) lack of curriculum socialisation, 2) low language skills.

Based on the assessment of the results of the research conducted, the authors intend to provide suggestions that hopefully can be useful for institutions and further researchers. Namely, for the institution to be more supportive in all proses carried out by students in learning, especially both in terms of policy or the scope of the learning curriculum. As for suggestions for further researchers in completing the shortcomings of this study in order to go deeper by knowing the solution to the problems faced during the process of Arabic as a foreign language obtained by non-native students.

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