

Arabic Language Learning Methods to Improve Maharatul Kalam at the Amal Jama'I Islamic Boarding School in Bojong Cikembar (Communicative Language Teaching Approach)

Nidaul Jannah¹, Farida Nur Rahma², Meitha Kartika Herdiyanti³, Annisa Tsabita⁴, Akiela Zhafiera Fitri⁵

¹²³⁴⁵ Institute of Muslim Scholars

* Email correspondence; nidauljannah@edu.mc.ac.id, faridanr@edu.mc.ac.id, meithaherdiyanti@edu.mc.ac.id, annisats926@gmail.com, Akielazhafierafitri@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the application of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in improving the speaking skills (maharatul kalam) of students at the Amal Jama'i Cikembar Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School. The study used a qualitative approach with a narrative-descriptive method. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, documentation, and triangulation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The results showed that the application of CLT was carried out systematically through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of learning oriented towards real communication. Learning took place interactively with dialogue, discussion, and role-play techniques, and placed students as active subjects, while the teacher acted as a facilitator and motivator, and used the language of instruction using Arabic. The result was a significant increase in students' speaking skills, vocabulary mastery, and self-confidence. Supporting factors included a conducive language environment and language habituation programs, while obstacles included differences in students' abilities, limited time, and learning media. Overall, CLT proved effective in improving maharatul kalam and the affective aspects of students in learning Arabic.

Keywords

Arabic Language Learning, Maharatul Kalam, Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School



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INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a means of communication between individuals, as humans live collectively in social groups bound by various factors such as kinship, emotional closeness, shared goals, hopes, sorrow, feelings, and other social ties (Silvia 2019). Arabic is the language used in writing the Quran and is the primary medium for Muslims to understand their religious teachings. In Indonesia, the position of Arabic is increasingly valued, both in learning and teaching contexts, as society has

(Nidaul Jannah et al)

recognized its urgency and relevance to their religious and worldly lives (Huda and Sakbiati 2021). Management in Arabic language teaching plays a very strategic role because it supports teachers in optimally achieving educational goals (Mufarokah, Amrullah, and Mufidah 2022).

Learning is a process of interaction between students and educators, as well as various learning resources within a single learning environment. Learning is essentially an effort designed to help students learn optimally (Afriati 2023). Islam and Arabic are like two sides of the same coin; understanding Islamic teachings comprehensively requires Arabic language skills. However, if Arabic is categorized as a foreign language, its position is more of a communication tool and not an absolute prerequisite for understanding Islamic religious knowledge (Mandalika 2023). Arabic is one of the fields of study widely integrated into educational curricula, particularly in Islamic institutions. Arabic is taught from early childhood through elementary and secondary levels, such as RA, MI, MTs, MA, and even continuing through to higher education (Mubarok, Nizam, and Fitriani 2022). Al-Imam Asy-Syafi'i (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that Arabic is the most extensive and richest language in terms of vocabulary (Yanmar and Mahmud 2023).

Mastery of Arabic language (Maharah al-Kalam) is the skill of speaking Arabic well, correctly, and in accordance with the rules. This ability plays a very important role for students studying Arabic, especially for those who want to deepen their understanding of the Qur'an. Mastery of Arabic language (Maharah al-Kalam) is one of the four language skills (Maharah al-Lughawiyah) that must be mastered by every Arabic language learner (Amin 2023). Mastery of Arabic language can be understood as the ability to produce articulate sounds or pronounce words used to convey ideas, opinions, desires, and feelings to others. In a broader sense, speaking is a system of audible and visual signs that involves the work of a number of body muscles to convey thoughts in order to meet communication needs (Alam and Asyrofi 2023). The selection of Arabic language learning strategies cannot be done haphazardly, but must be tailored to the language skills that are the focus of learning (Mandalika 2023).

In general, problems in Arabic language learning can be classified into linguistic and non-linguistic issues. Linguistic aspects include difficulties in learning the qowa'id (Islamic sciences), such as nahwu (the Arabic grammar), sharf (the Arabic grammar), and tarkib (the Arabic language). Meanwhile, in the non-linguistic aspect, the biggest challenges lie in low student motivation and inappropriate teaching methods used by teachers. Essentially, the learning process is an effort to

empower the physical and psychological aspects of a person to develop a superior and effective personality (Mandalika 2023).

Language learning challenges encompass three factors: linguistic, sociocultural, and methodological. Of these, methodological factors are the most crucial, as successful learning depends heavily on the appropriateness of the methods used to meet the learner's specific needs (Mubarok, Nizam, and Fitriani 2022). To address the various problems in Arabic language learning, the author has focused on this phenomenon in order to contribute to finding a method that can hopefully be part of the solution to learning Arabic effectively. There is an Islamic boarding school in West Java that strives to be a forum for implementing Arabic language skills in the form of maharatul kalam (literacy) so that its students are able to speak well. Therefore, this paper will examine the effectiveness of the learning strategies and methods implemented at the Islamic boarding school and the factors that influence them. Therefore, research on Arabic language learning methods in improving maharatul kalam at the Amal Jama'i Cikembar Islamic Boarding School in Sukabumi is relevant to examine the extent to which the strategies and methods applied can have a significant impact on the ability of male and female students to speak Arabic..

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a narrative-descriptive approach. The narrative approach emphasizes the presentation of data in the form of stories or narratives that reflect the experiences of the research subjects, while the descriptive approach aims to describe problems, situations, or phenomena systematically and accurately without any manipulation of the variables being studied (Fiantika et al. 2022, 87–88). Descriptive in the context of qualitative research is interpreted as an effort to describe and explain events, phenomena, and social situations that are the object of study (Waruwu 2023). This research was conducted at the Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School located in Bungur Pandak Hamlet, Bojong Village, Cikembar District, Sukabumi Regency.

The research data was obtained from the primary informant, the head of the Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School, through interviews documented in written notes, recordings, and photographs. Furthermore, data was also collected from supporting informants such as the asatidzah (supervisors) and dormitory supervisors. Secondary data sources came from Islamic boarding school documents, including the curriculum, activity agendas, regulations, and other archives, and were supported by relevant literature. Data collection techniques used included observation, interviews, documentation studies, and triangulation (Fiantika et al.

(Nidaul Jannah et al)

2022, 14). The data analysis technique in this study employed the theory of Miles & Huberman.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arabic Language Learning Methods

Broadly speaking, learning methods can be grouped into two types: conventional (traditional) methods and unconventional (modern) methods. Conventional methods are teaching methods commonly used by educators and have long been applied in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, unconventional or modern methods are relatively new learning approaches, not yet widely implemented, and are generally only used in a few educational institutions that have adequate facilities, learning media, and competent teaching staff. (Haq, Mulyanni, and Soleh 2023) In learning foreign languages, especially Arabic, the communicative approach plays a crucial role. Methods used in this approach include the direct method, conversation method, natural method, and the silent teacher method. Meanwhile, for learning Arabic grammar, grammar-translation, mimicry, and memorization methods can be used. For practicing listening skills, the audio-lingual method is an effective choice. (Muyasaroh and Setiyawan 2024).

Contemporary learning methods have developed since the 1970s in response to second language teaching research and the need for innovation. One example is Total Physical Response (TPR), which emphasizes comprehension before language production through command instructions and physical responses. This method is effective for developing speaking skills in beginners and reducing psychological stress, but is limited in the early stages and less suitable for reading and writing skills. (Haq, Mulyanni, and Soleh 2023) The grammar-translation method is often also known as the classical method (*al-thariqah al-qadimah* or *al-thariqah at-taqlidiyyah*). The learning process in this method is carried out by analyzing sentence structures from a grammatical perspective (*qawa'id*) while simultaneously translating them. This method combines grammatical and translation approaches, making it considered more ideal than using either method alone. The weaknesses of each method are mutually covered and complemented through their simultaneous application: grammar material is taught first, followed by translation exercises, so that the two stages occur in parallel and support each other. (Mustafa 2020) This method aims to enable students to read literary works in the target language, with the main focus on developing the ability to read, write, and translate into another language. (Syahril, Nurshafnita, and Nasution 2023).

There's also the so-called direct method, which uses a foreign language as the medium of instruction without the aid of the mother tongue. Understanding is built

through visuals, demonstrations, and direct speaking practice. This method is effective in developing speaking skills, although it may initially be difficult for students.(Mustafa 2020)The direct method is based on the principle that learning a second language parallels the way one learns one's first language. This method does not use the mother tongue as a tool, and grammar is taught through contextual use. Furthermore, this method emphasizes the development of speaking and listening skills as equally important as reading and writing skills.(Syahril, Nurshafnita, and Nasution 2023)

Then there's the Audio-Lingual Method. This method is a development of the direct method to address students' difficulties in understanding the material. This method emphasizes learning through listening and imitation, with minimal use of the native language. The material is presented in dialogue form, emphasizing mimicry and memorization, and grammar is taught partially through repetition. Media such as language laboratories and audiotapes are used to help students imitate the pronunciation of native speakers.(Mustafa 2020)Another method, the reading method, emphasizes reading ability as the primary goal, meeting the needs of foreign language learners and facilitating the learning process. Good reading skills enable students to learn independently. There's also the Eclectic Method, a blended approach that combines two or more methods. This approach is effective when teachers understand how to use various methods and can choose and apply the ones that best suit the needs of the learning program. It's important to ensure that the combined methods have the same goal for optimal results.(Syahril, Nurshafnita, and Nasution 2023).

Another method is Community Language Learning (Learning Language in Groups). This method aims for students to master the target language to the point of approaching native speaker ability. The learning process is carried out in a community or group, involving interaction between students and teachers as well as between group members. Learning is structured according to the stages of human development in learning language, namely: (1) the stage of complete dependence like a baby, (2) the stage of beginning to break away from dependence, (3) the stage of being in a separate situation, (4) the stage of maturity, and (5) the stage of freedom. The teacher's role is to create situations that are appropriate to these five stages to support the learning process.(Afriati 2023).

There's also something called the Mim-Mem Method (Mimicry-Memorization Method). The Mim-Mem Method, derived from the words mimicry and memorization, is an approach that emphasizes memory strengthening through

(Nidaul Jannah et al)

repeated practice. Learning is conducted through demonstrations and drills on grammar, sentence structure, pronunciation, and vocabulary, either by the teacher or by a native speaker acting as a drill master. Students imitate the sentences read aloud until they are mastered, while grammar lessons are delivered indirectly through example sentences. (Afriati 2023).

1. Maharotul Kalam

In learning Arabic, students are expected to master one of the basic skills that is important for the smooth running of the learning process in class, namely *Maharah Al-Kalam*. (Suryani, Amir, and Balqis 2022). *Maharotul kalam* or speaking skill is the ability to convey ideas and thoughts to a conversation partner. *Maharotul kalam* is the ability to produce sounds or words as a means of expressing thoughts, including ideas, opinions, desires, or feelings, to a conversation partner. (Fauzi 2023) In the context of Arabic language learning, this skill aims to enable students to communicate effectively orally in Arabic. More broadly, speaking is a system of audible and visual signs, utilizing various body muscles to convey thoughts and meet communication needs. In the context of Arabic language learning, this speaking skill aims to enable students to communicate effectively orally in Arabic. (Alam and Asyrofi 2023) To develop the *Maharah Al-Kalam* (literacy), students need to practice using Arabic in various situations, both formal and informal, both spoken and written. They must also practice improving their intonation and pronunciation to communicate accurately and effectively. (Amen 2023). According to Mrs. Syahidah, *Maharah Al-Kalam* is the main skill in learning Arabic, which emphasizes the ability to pronounce words with correct and precise intonation and pronunciation. (Asmara and Mustofa 2024).

Mastery of the *Maharah Al-Kalam* must be supported by a strong vocabulary. This means that an Arabic learner will not be able to develop speaking skills without an adequate vocabulary. (Munthe, Bambang, and Hanafi 2022) In Islamic boarding schools, students are typically trained to speak Arabic, using Arabic as the language of instruction in daily activities, such as class, group discussions, and social interactions within the boarding school. Marlius and his colleagues emphasize that the presence of an Arabic-speaking environment is crucial for supporting the development of Arabic language skills. (Amen 2023).

2. Amal Jama'I Cikembar Islamic Boarding School

Law No. 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) marks a significant milestone in the recognition, affirmation, and facilitation of Islamic boarding schools, which have long flourished in Indonesia. This regulation was born

from a long process, as previous recognition in the National Education System Law and Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 did not fully reflect the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools as structured, tiered educational institutions equivalent to formal education.(Panut, Giyoto, and Rohmadi 2021)The term Islamic boarding school refers to a place used to accommodate students.(Fananie and Purnama 2023)Arabic is one of the languages that is a characteristic of the subjects studied at Islamic boarding schools.(Huda, Alim, and Mujahidin 2023).Husaini explained that the implementation of education brings various benefits, including increased faith, piety, and noble morals, as well as the formation of knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, competent, and cultured individuals in an effort to enlighten the nation, as stipulated in the law. This is in line with and highly consistent with the values of Islamic teachings.(Nuradi et al. 2021).

Historically, the Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School was officially registered as a legal educational institution and began accepting students openly in 2019. The establishment of this Islamic boarding school was the result of a deliberation by the extended family of KH. Ocim Rosmullah in response to the educational needs of the local community. This was motivated by high public demand and government support, considering that the Bungur Pandak Hamlet area, Bojong Village, Cikembar District, Sukabumi Regency does not yet have easy access to formal educational institutions.(A. Jama'i 2023). Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School is under the auspices of the Amal Jama'i Foundation with Operational Permit Decree Number 30732 of 2022 and Islamic Boarding School Statistics Number 5100032021247(Jannah 2026b).

The vision of Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School is to produce pious and virtuous graduates who have memorized the Qur'an, master Arabic, and are able to face the challenges of the times. Its mission focuses on environmental management, strengthening infrastructure, improving the quality of teaching staff, and systematically managing student development programs. The excellence of this Islamic boarding school lies in the development of tahsin and tahfidz Al-Qur'an with a chain of command, strengthening Arabic language, Islamic boarding school education, formal education, and fostering daily activities based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. The leadership of the Islamic boarding school is held by Ust. Abdul Latif, Lc., Alhafidz, with KH. Ocim Rosmullah as the elder who provides strategic direction and maintains scientific values.(A. Jama'i 2023)The operational structure is supported by a team of *asatidzah* (leaders of the Islamic boarding school) who coordinate various areas, such as Islamic boarding school administration, Arabic

(Nidaul Jannah et al)

language, Quran memorization, and student care. Formally, the Islamic boarding school provides education equivalent to Islamic junior high schools (MTs) and Islamic senior high schools (MA) to ensure academic recognition. Meanwhile, student development is carried out through a 24-hour intensive care system to foster discipline, independence, and character in daily life.(PTAA Jama'i 2023).

3. Application of Method Communicative Language Teaching in Improving *Maharatul Kalam*

a) Understanding and Planning CLT-Based Learning

The Communicative Language Teaching approach is a learning approach that emphasizes the use of language in real communication situations.(Shofuro and Manshur 2025). Based on the results of interviews with the person in charge of Arabic at the Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School, Abdul Fattah Rosmullah, data was obtained that the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)-based learning method has been systematically designed with an orientation towards developing students' communication skills (*Maharatul Kalam*). Teachers understand CLT as an approach that emphasizes the use of language in real contexts, not just mastery of grammatical rules. This is as expressed by Abdul Fattah that "Communicative Language Teaching is a language learning approach that emphasizes communication skills, not just understanding the rules(AF Rosmullah 2026).

In terms of planning, teachers structure learning activities by linking the material to the students' daily lives. The themes covered are contextual, such as dormitory activities, social interactions, and learning activities. This approach enables students to understand and use language functionally.(Jannah 2026)This planning reflects the principle of contextualized learning in CLT, which emphasizes the importance of the relationship between language and the real situations in which it is used.(Aswad et al. 2024)

b) Implementation of Communicative Learning in the Classroom

During the implementation phase, Arabic language learning is conducted interactively, placing students as active participants in the learning process. Teachers utilize various communication techniques, such as pair dialogues, group discussions, and role-play. As Abdul Fattah explained, activities that allow students to practice speaking include pair dialogues or small group discussions.(AF Rosmullah 2026)These activities demonstrate the application of the principles of meaningful interaction and authentic communication, which are at the core of the CLT approach.(Aswad et al. 2024)Through these activities, students not only learn language structure but also use it directly in communication. The interactions that

occur during learning are also two-way, even multi-way, creating an active and dynamic learning environment. Students are encouraged to ask questions, answer questions, and express their opinions in Arabic. Throughout the learning process, all teachers use Arabic as the language of instruction.(Jannah 2026b).

c) The Role of Teachers as Facilitators in CLT Learning

In general, in the world of education, one of the roles of a teacher is as a facilitator.(Majid 2024)In the implementation of CLT, the teacher's role undergoes a significant transformation, from teacher-centered to student-centered. The teacher functions as a facilitator, motivator, and guide in the learning process. Abdul Fattah explained that his role is as a facilitator and motivator, striving to create a comfortable atmosphere so that students are not afraid of making mistakes when speaking.(AF Rosmullah 2026)As a facilitator, the teacher's role is to provide support so that students can discover and develop their potential optimally.(Ru'ung 2021)From a theoretical perspective, the teacher's role in CLT is as a communicator, organizer of resources, and guide in the interaction process (Littlewood). Teachers not only deliver material but also manage communication activities and provide constructive feedback.(Aswad et al. 2024)Furthermore, teachers also play a role in motivating and encouraging students to actively participate. This is crucial because successful language learning is heavily influenced by affective factors, such as self-confidence and courage in communicating. Motivation plays a crucial role in success, as it is closely linked to the desired goals.(Mulia, Kosasih, and Zen 2021).

The implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching method at the Amal Jama'i Bojong Cikembar Islamic Boarding School has been carried out through three main stages, namely: Understanding and planning communicative-oriented learning, Implementation of interactive and communication practice-based learning, The role of teachers as facilitators in creating a conducive learning environment. These three aspects are interrelated and contribute significantly to improving the Maharatul Kalam of students. Thus, the implementation of CLT at this Islamic boarding school is in accordance with the theoretical principles of communicative language learning.

4. Effectiveness of Implementation *Communicative Language Teaching* in Improving *Maharatul Kalam*

a) Improving Speaking Skills (*Maharatul Kalam*) *Santri*

Maharah al-kalam is the skill of speaking Arabic well, correctly and according to the rules.(Amen 2023).The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has a positive impact on improving the speaking skills (Maharatul Kalam) of students at the Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding

(Nidaul Jannah et al)

School in Bojong Cikembar. Based on the interview results, Abdul Fattah Rosmullah, as the person in charge of Arabic, revealed that there has been quite significant development, especially in the students' courage in communicating using Arabic. (AF Rosmullah 2026) This improvement demonstrates that CLT is capable of creating a learning environment that encourages active communication practice. In the context of language learning, speaking skills can only develop through repeated practice and direct use of language in social interactions. Furthermore, improvements occurred not only in basic speaking skills but also in the ability to construct simple sentences and convey ideas verbally. This indicates that learning is no longer theoretical, but rather applied and communicative. (Jannah 2026a). Thus, CLT has proven effective in developing the productive aspects of language, especially Maharatul Kalam.

b) Affective Responses and Student Participation in Learning

Based on interviews, students responded positively to this method. Abdul Fattah noted that students appeared more active and enthusiastic, and the class became more lively compared to the traditional lecture method. (AF Rosmullah 2026) This increased participation demonstrates that CLT is able to create a fun and non-monotonous learning environment. Students are no longer passive listeners but actively engaged in the learning process. Furthermore, there has been a significant increase in students' confidence in speaking Arabic. They are no longer afraid of making mistakes, as learning emphasizes the communication process rather than language perfection.

In Second Language Acquisition theory, this condition is related to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, which states that emotional factors such as anxiety and fear can hinder the language learning process. (Kusumastuti 2023) With reduced anxiety and increased self-confidence, students can more easily absorb and actively use language. This is a key indicator of the success of CLT-based learning.

5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching

a) Supporting Factors for the Implementation of CLT in Learning

Based on the research results, several factors support the successful implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at the Amal Jama'i Islamic Boarding School in Bojong Cikembar. One of the main factors is a conducive language environment. A pesantren environment that encourages the use of Arabic in daily life provides significant opportunities for students to practice the language continuously. Abdul Fattah stated that a pesantren environment that encourages the use of Arabic in daily life is very helpful. (Jannah 2026a) An active language

environment is an important element in second language acquisition, as it provides continuous exposure that allows students to become accustomed to using the language naturally.(Huda, Alim, and Mujahidin 2023). Furthermore, institutional support and language familiarization programs are also significant contributing factors. Programs such as daily language use, conversation activities, and interactions in the dormitory strengthen the implementation of CLT outside the classroom. Thus, learning takes place not only in the classroom but also in the students' daily lives (Interview Document). Institutional support significantly influences the outcomes of an institution, including educational institutions.(Elshifa et al. 2023).

b) Inhibiting Factors in CLT Implementation

In addition to supporting factors, there are also several obstacles faced in implementing CLT. One of the main obstacles is the heterogeneity of students' Arabic language abilities. Abdul Latif Rosmullah revealed that the differences in ability levels pose a challenge in implementing learning; some are already quite proficient in speaking, while others are still at a very basic level.(AL Rosmullah 2026)This difference requires teachers to implement differentiated learning strategies so that all students can participate in the learning process optimally.(Virna and Bila 2025). Furthermore, limited learning time is also a barrier. The CLT approach, which emphasizes communication practice, requires more time than conventional methods. Therefore, limited time allocation can reduce the intensity of students' speaking practice. Another obstacle faced is the limited availability of learning media, particularly audio-visual media. As Abdul Fattah stated, more varied learning media, such as audio-visual media, still needs to be improved.(AF Rosmullah 2026). In fact, in modern language learning, media plays an important role in increasing learning motivation, providing a more realistic context, and helping students understand meaning more effectively.(Santosa et al. 2021)

c) Teachers' Efforts to Overcome Learning Barriers

In the face of these various obstacles, teachers employ a number of strategic efforts to maintain the effectiveness of CLT-based learning. One such effort is to motivate students to avoid making mistakes when speaking. Abdul Fattah expressed this by consistently motivating students to avoid making mistakes and creating study groups to support each other.(Jannah 2026a)Providing motivation is crucial for reducing anxiety levels in language learning, allowing students to be more confident in participating in communication. Furthermore, teachers implement group-based learning, where students with higher abilities can help those with lower abilities.

(Nidaul Jannah et al)

This strategy aligns with the concept of collaborative learning, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process. (Cerro Martínez, Guitert Catasús, and Romeu Fontanillas 2020). Teachers also strive to use a variety of methods to keep learning interesting and able to reach various levels of student ability. This variety of methods is a form of adaptation to heterogeneous class conditions, as well as to maintain the active involvement of all students. Thus, the efforts made by teachers show the existence of adaptive strategies in implementing CLT contextually, so that existing obstacles can be minimized. This finding strengthens the theory that the communicative approach is one of the effective methods in language learning, especially in developing speaking skills (speaking skills or Maharatul Kalam), because it emphasizes the use of language in a real communication context.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the application of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in improving Maharatul Kalam at the Amal Jama'i Bojong Cikembar Islamic Boarding School, the following conclusions can be drawn: The implementation of the CLT method in Arabic language learning has been carried out in a planned and systematic manner through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Teachers have understood the concept of CLT as an approach that emphasizes the use of language in real-life communication contexts. In practice, learning is carried out interactively through dialogue, discussion, and role-play, and positions students as active subjects (student-centered learning). The language of instruction is entirely Arabic. The effectiveness of CLT implementation has been proven to improve students' Maharatul Kalam (literacy). This improvement is evident in their more fluent speaking skills, more appropriate vocabulary use, and confidence in communication. Furthermore, affective aspects such as self-confidence and student participation have also significantly improved. This indicates that CLT not only improves linguistic abilities but also the psychological aspects of language learning. Supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of CLT indicate that the method's success is influenced by a conducive language environment, support from Islamic boarding school programs, and the active role of teachers as facilitators. Obstacles faced include the diversity of student abilities, limited learning time, and a lack of varied learning media. However, teachers have implemented various adaptive efforts to overcome these obstacles, such as providing motivation, group learning, and varying methods.

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(Nidaul Jannah et al)

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(Nidaul Jannah et al)

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