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Uncovering Language Learning Beliefs Behind Novice Arabic Learners' Accelerative Speaking Success: A BALLI Analysis in a Higher Education Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

This study maps the language learning beliefs profile of novice learners who successfully mastered speaking skills at the Muslim Scholar Institute (IMC). Using an explanatory case study approach, data were gathered through BALLI questionnaires from 64 new female students, oral exam scores, and in-depth interviews with 9 informants. The questionnaire analysis shows that the students' language belief scores fall into the high category (3.91–4.68). This aligns with oral exam documents confirming mass success, where 71.9% of the students achieved high performance at the end of the semester. The key factors for this accelerated success include: 1) Incubation Period (Silent Period): The language-free policy during the first two months effectively reduced affective filters. This policy shifted rigid perfectionism into a risk-taking strategy. 2) Spiritual Motivation: The integration of spiritual-theocentric motivation achieved the highest score (4.82). This value transformed the mandatory language regulation in the third month into a religious moral need rather than an institutional burden. This study implies the importance of providing a language regulation grace period and addressing internal affective factors for novice learners in a full immersion environment.

Keywords Arabic Immersion, BALLI, Language Learning Beliefs, New Female Students, Speaking Skills.

INTRODUCTION

Learning Arabic as a foreign language continues to grow rapidly, in line with the increasing academic, professional, and religious needs in various educational institutions. Various approaches and strategies have been developed to improve learners' communicative competence, ranging from communicative language teaching (CTL) and task-based learning to full immersion models. However, the

success of language learning is not solely determined by the pedagogical approach but is also influenced by internal factors within the learner, including language learning beliefs, which play a crucial role in shaping their motivation, learning strategies, and expectations.(Asmawi 2021).

Previous studies have shown that language beliefs are one of the affective factors that determine the success of foreign language learning. Horwitz (1987, 1988) through the BALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory) instrument confirmed that learners' beliefs about language aptitude, ease of learning, language characteristics, strategies, and motivation have a direct influence on their learning behavior.(Patricia, Price, and Kuntz, nd)Several follow-up studies have also confirmed that positive beliefs about the language being studied can increase self-efficacy, which impacts student engagement in the learning process and academic success. Conversely, negative beliefs, such as the belief that a language is difficult or impossible to learn well, can hinder motivation and learning outcomes.(Firdausi and Patria 2019). Positive perceptions of language increase learning motivation and provide an effective contribution of up to 9.672% to learning achievement.(Dewi et al. 2020). In the context of Arabic language learning in Indonesia, studies on language beliefs are still limited and generally descriptive in nature without clinically linking them to actual indicators of learning success.

On the other hand, the Muslim Scholar Institute (IMC)—previously known as STIBA Ar-Raayah—is one of the universities that makes Arabic the main instrument in the lecture process and shows significant success in learning Arabic, especially in speaking skills.(Ahyarudin, Umar, and Bahruddin 2022). Beginner students at the Muslim Cendekia Institute are reported to be able to communicate in Arabic in a relatively short time, namely around two months, through the implementation of a full Arabic immersion system.(Umar et al. 2022). This model is in line with the findings of experts in teaching Arabic to foreign speakers, such as al-Fawzān (2005) and the compilers of al-'Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk (Ṣābān et al., 2002), which emphasizes that the direct use of Arabic in all activities is the most effective approach in accelerating language acquisition, because students are encouraged to think in the target language.(Sudirman 2022).

Interestingly, this accelerated success is supported by unique institutional regulations. IMC implements a mandatory Arabic language rule for all students, but specifically for new students, this obligation is given a dispensation for the first two months of study. This two-month pause theoretically acts as a silent phase and a psychological incubation period for novice learners to absorb linguistic input without

regulatory pressure. However, the transition period to the absolute implementation of language obligations in the third month certainly triggers massive psychological dynamics in the learners' heads. Therefore, the success of new students in navigating this transition phase and succeeding in the final speaking skills exam raises an important research question: how do internal factors, specifically language learning beliefs, construct their mentality in utilizing this two-month pause?

Much research has been conducted within the context of the Muslim Scholar Institute as an academic institution. Among these is research on language policy based on Bernard Spolsky's theory, which reveals the role of language beliefs in shaping institutional policy practices.(Taufikurrohman 2025). There is also a study on the management of the I'dad Lughawy program(Umar et al. 2022), a comprehensive Arabic language skills learning model in pre-college programs (Huda et al., 2023), to the analysis of the difficulty of written essays(Mukhlishoh et al. 2024). However, all of these studies are more appropriately categorized as tests of cognitive, linguistic, sociolinguistic, and external management factors. To date, no research has specifically examined the internal affective factors in the form of language learning beliefs profiles of novice learners (new students) at IMC, and how these beliefs relate to their actual achievements in the final speaking skills exam (maharah al-kalam) after the implementation of language regulations.

Based on this urgency, this study aims to uncover and map the language beliefs of new female students at the Muslim Cendekia Institute using the BALLI instrument, while explaining how these beliefs are implicated as affective factors behind their successful speaking test performance after a two-month incubation period. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions by strengthening the literature on the psycholinguistics of Arabic language learning, as well as practical contributions for higher Islamic boarding schools in designing immersion programs that are adaptive to the psychological conditions of beginner learners.

In addition to addressing the gap in previous studies, this research also offers a distinctive perspective by integrating psycholinguistic analysis with the institutional immersion system implemented at IMC. Most previous studies on Arabic language immersion programs have primarily focused on curriculum management, language policy, teaching methods, and students' linguistic competence, while affective dimensions such as learner beliefs, psychological adaptation, and self-efficacy remain underexplored. This study therefore positions language learning beliefs not merely as complementary variables, but as central affective constructs that influence how learners respond to institutional language regulations, immersion pressure, and oral

communication demands. By examining the interaction between learner beliefs and the adaptive immersion policy at IMC, this study seeks to explain why some beginner learners are able to transition successfully into intensive Arabic-speaking environments within a relatively short period.

Furthermore, this study contributes theoretically to the development of psycholinguistic and foreign language acquisition literature by emphasizing the importance of affective readiness in immersion-based Arabic language learning. The concept of a two-month incubation or silent period implemented at IMC provides an interesting empirical context for understanding how learners psychologically construct confidence, motivation, and communication strategies before entering full language enforcement. This adaptive transition model has rarely been discussed in previous Arabic language learning studies, particularly within Islamic boarding university contexts in Indonesia. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to provide recommendations for Arabic language institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and higher education programs in designing immersion systems that are not only linguistically intensive but also psychologically supportive for beginner learners. Through this approach, Arabic language acquisition can be facilitated in a more sustainable, humane, and effective manner.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with an explanatory case study design to explore learners' language beliefs as affective factors underlying the phenomenon of accelerated Arabic speaking development. The research was conducted at Institut Muslim Cendekia (IMC), Sukabumi, focusing on female students enrolled in the I'dad Lughawi (Language Preparation) program. The study was carried out in two stages. In the initial stage, quantitative data were collected from 64 female students who had completed the two-month language incubation period and met the research criteria. Subsequently, nine students were purposively selected as key informants for in-depth qualitative investigation, representing three levels of speaking achievement: high, medium, and low performers.

Data were collected through three complementary instruments. First, the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) adapted from Horwitz (1988), consisting of 34 Likert-scale items (1–5), was administered to identify students' beliefs across five dimensions: language aptitude, language learning difficulty, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivation and expectations. Second, documentation of students' final speaking examination (maharah al-kalam) scores was obtained to measure actual speaking achievement

after the implementation of the institution's Arabic-speaking policy. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected informants to gain deeper insights into their language-learning experiences and the relationship between their beliefs and speaking performance. Data analysis integrated quantitative and qualitative procedures. Questionnaire data were processed through reverse scoring for negatively worded items and analyzed descriptively using mean scores and percentages. Belief levels were categorized into three ranges: low (1.00–2.33), moderate (2.34–3.66), and high (3.67–5.00). Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed following the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. To enhance trustworthiness, methodological triangulation was applied by comparing questionnaire findings, speaking test results, and interview narratives.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Description and Analysis of Speaking Test Results

The final speaking skills exam (maharah al-kalam) is administered orally at the end of the first semester. This timeframe was deliberately chosen to measure the level of learning success and consistency of the oral performance of new female students after they have passed through two important phases: (1) a language-free incubation phase during the first two months, and (2) a phase of absolute implementation of the mandatory Arabic language regulations during the remaining months of the semester. The exam is conducted through a direct interview mechanism (face-to-face interview) between new female students and a team of examining lecturers, which is conducted in 4 sessions.In the first session, students were asked to tell about their families, where they live, where they study, and their hopes for the future. In the second session, students were asked to read a text and then retell what they had read. In the third session, students were asked to construct sentences using three vocabulary words they had learned. They were asked about the plural, pronouns, synonyms, and antonyms of the vocabulary of the text they had read previously. In the fourth session, the students were asked to pronounce the words from three sentences..

The examination process is spontaneously designed to measure authentic productive skills through four assessment rubrics: 1)Fluency, to measure the ability of female students to respond to questions spontaneously without too long pauses for thought. 2) Linguistic accuracy (accuracy/grammar) to measure the accuracy of the use of grammar (nahwu and sharaf) when producing spoken sentences.3)Vocabulary richness to measure the variety and accuracy of the choice of

Arabic diction/vocabulary (mufrodāt) according to the context of the topic of discussion.4)Pronunciation (Makhraj) to measure the accuracy of letter pronunciation and speaking intonation according to the rules of fluent Arabic. Through this comprehensive oral examination process, the academic performance data of the new female students presented in Table 1 truly represents their actual speaking skills in the field, not just passive cognitive abilities. Based on the scores documented by 64 respondents, the following is the distribution of their speaking skills test results:

Table 1. Speaking skills test results

Performance Category	**Score Range**	**Number of female students**	**Percentage (%)**
High (Very Competent)	85 – 100	46	71.9%
Moderate (Quite Competent)	70 – 84	10	15.6%
Low (Less Competent)	< 70	8	12.5%
Total		64	100%

Based on the data in Table 1, a very significant academic phenomenon was found: the absolute majority (71.9%) of new female students achieved the high performance category in the oral speaking skills test. Meanwhile, only a small proportion of students fell into the medium (15.6%) and low (12.5%) categories. The absolute dominance of the high-performance group (71.9%) theoretically proves the effectiveness of the language management formula implemented in IMC. This figure validates that the policy of providing a language-free dispensation period for the first two months, before the absolute implementation of language obligations in the third month, successfully acts as a productive silent period for learners' language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). During these two months, new students are not forced to immediately produce orally under conditions of high anxiety, but are given cognitive space to collect as much linguistic input (comprehensible input) as possible through a full Arabic immersion system.

When the mandatory language regulation and final oral exam were implemented after the second month, the massive accumulation of students in the high-scoring category (71.9%) indicated that the psychological incubation phase successfully triggered a collective restructuring of their language beliefs. The majority of new female students successfully built strong self-efficacy, eroded inhibiting perfectionism, and adopted risk-taking communication strategies. This successful psychological transition underpinned their rapid leap in speaking ability. This aligns with previous research that suggests self-efficacy provides learners with

resilience and strength in the face of challenging conditions, fostering resilience, perseverance, and responsiveness in problem-solving.(Hidayanti 2023).

Nevertheless, the presence of minority groups in the medium (15.6%) and low (12.5%) categories still requires academic attention. The existence of this group indicates that external regulations (immersion environments and mandatory language rules) are not responded to uniformly by each individual's internal factors. This 12.5% group represents learners who experienced affective barriers in the form of culture shock or a fixed mindset that they failed to unravel during the initial two-month break. The psychological dynamics that differentiate the success of the dominant group (71.9%) from the obstacles of the minority group (12.5%) will be examined in more detail using the BALLI instrument in the next sub-chapter.

Analysis of BALLI Profile and Speaking Skill Performance Per Dimension

Dimensions of Language Aptitude

Table 2. BALLI Results Dimension I: Language Aptitude (N=64)

Item	Questionnaire Statement (Language Talent)	Approval Level (S+SS)	Average Score (Mean)
1	Some people have a natural ability to learn foreign languages.	98.4%	4.52 (High)
2	I have a talent for learning Arabic.	98.4%	4.61 (High)
3	There are huge differences in individual abilities to learn foreign languages.	93.8%	4.20 (High)
4	Young children learn Arabic more easily than adults.	64.1%	3.78 (High)
5	People who have good academic abilities usually find it easier to learn foreign languages.	62.5%	3.62 (Moderate)
6*	There are people who simply don't have the talent to learn foreign languages.	28.2%	3.15 (Moderate)
Average dimensions			3.98 (High)

*Note: Item number 6 is a negative item, the values have been reversed before calculating the average.

Based on the data in Table 2, new female students at IMC have a very strong belief in the aspect of language talent with an average score of 3.98 (High) (p. 1). A total of 98.4% of respondents hold the belief that there is a natural ability to learn a foreign language (Item 1, Mean = 4.52). Remarkably, 98.4% of new female students also internalized high self-efficacy that they themselves have the talent to master

Arabic (Item 2, Mean = 4.61). Interestingly, the rejection of rigid thinking is seen in Item 6, where only 28.2% of respondents agree that there are people who are truly untalented (after reverse-scoring, Mean = 3.15). The existence of this massive growth mindset is the initial capital for 71.9% of female students to successfully achieve high performance scores in the speaking exam at the end of the semester. They do not see language regulations as a burden, but rather a potential tool that aligns with the talent capacity they believe exists within them. Interestingly, those who believe that some people are not talented in learning foreign languages are those who have high test scores, while those who disagree with this are those who have low test scores.

This is reinforced by the results of an interview with subject M-7 (Low Score Category): "Even though I am a beginner Arabic learner and have never practiced speaking Arabic, plus my score on the speaking skills test was low, I am very confident that one day I will be able to speak fluently and master Arabic like my seniors whose condition was not much different from mine." There are also female students from the high score group who ignore the talent factor and focus on self-efficacy, as expressed by subject M-3 (High Score Category): "For me, talent is secondary. The important thing is that I was confident in the exam yesterday. I practiced a lot independently in the dormitory before the exam - because I was not used to speaking Arabic before - so when I faced the examiner I was not too nervous."

Dimensions of Difficulty of Language Learning

The second dimension of the BALLI instrument focuses on students' beliefs regarding the level of difficulty in learning Arabic as a foreign language. This dimension is important because learners' perceptions of language difficulty can significantly influence their motivation, persistence, confidence, and overall learning behavior during the immersion process. Students who perceive Arabic as excessively difficult may experience anxiety and reduced participation, whereas those who view the language as a manageable challenge tend to demonstrate stronger resilience and engagement in learning activities. Therefore, analyzing this dimension provides valuable insight into how beginner learners at IMC psychologically interpret the challenges of Arabic language acquisition during the adaptation and immersion phases.

Table 3. BALLI Dimension II Results: Language Learning Difficulties

Item	Questionnaire Statement (Language Learning Difficulties)	Approval Level (S+SS)	Average Score (Mean)
7	Learning Arabic is more difficult than most	25%	3.50

	other foreign languages.		(Medium)
8*	Arabic grammar (nahwu) is very complicated.	34.4%	3.10 (Moderate)
9	Arabic vocabulary is hard to remember.	17.2%	3.57 (Moderate)
10	Learning Arabic is a gradual process that requires time and consistency.	98.4%	4.37 (High)
11	Arabic offers an interesting challenge for beginners.	96.9%	4.28 (High)
12	With the right effort, anyone can master Arabic well.	100%	4.62 (High)
Average dimensions			3.91 (High)

*Note: Scores have been adjusted through reverse-scoring.

The analysis results in Table 3 describe psychological indicators that strongly support the success of learner acceleration with an average dimension of 3.91 (High). Only 25% of respondents considered Arabic more difficult than other foreign languages (Mean = 3.50). Furthermore, the dogma regarding language complexity can be reduced, where the assumption that grammar (nahwu) is very complicated is only agreed by 34.4% of learners (Mean = 3.10). This low pessimism is directly proportional to the absolute belief (100%) of learners that anyone can master Arabic with the right effort (Item 12, Mean = 4.62). This cognitive pattern explains why the 2-month incubation period at the beginning of the semester effectively reduces the affective filter. New female students view Arabic as a friendly subject to learn, so the mandatory language rules after the second month are responded to with optimistic mental readiness. Subject M-5 (Medium Score Category) explained his psychological dynamics during the exam: "In my mind, nahwu sharaf is a very complicated problem. During the speaking test, I took too long to think about matching the final vowels of words, because I was afraid of making grammatical mistakes, plus I felt unfamiliar because I had never been tested in Arabic before. As a result, my speaking time was up and the examiner judged me as not fluent."

Dimensions of the Nature of Language Learning

Table 4. BALLI Results Dimension III: The Nature of Language Learning

Item	Questionnaire Statement (Language Learning Difficulties)	Approval Level (S+SS)	Average Score (Mean)
13	To speak Arabic well, one must know	93.7%	4.23 (High)

	many grammar rules.		
14	Memorizing vocabulary is the most important part of learning Arabic.	100%	4.56 (High)
15	To be able to speak Arabic, one must learn to translate.	45.3%	2.75 (Medium)
16	Learning Arabic also means learning Arab culture.	56.3%	3.50 (Medium)
17	People can speak Arabic well even with minimal grammar study.	48.5%	3.42 (Moderate)
18	Learning Arabic is primarily a process of memorization.	86%	4 (High)
Average dimensions			3.74 (High)

*Note: Scores have been adjusted through reverse-scoring.

The data in Table 4 demonstrates a very strong learning orientation towards formal linguistics and vocabulary enrichment, with an average dimension of 3.74 (High). Ninety-three percent of female students believe that speaking Arabic requires a thorough understanding of grammar rules (Item 13, Mean = 4.23), coupled with an absolute belief (100%) that memorizing vocabulary is the most important part (Item 14, Mean = 4.56). Interestingly, in Item 17, responses to grammar flexibility were moderate (48.5%, Mean = 3.42). This suggests that IMC learners view Arabic as a structural system that must be memorized (Item 18, Mean = 4.00) while remaining practically oriented. This belief explains the importance of the initial two-month break in IMC; this time allows learners to accumulate structural capital and vocabulary before being forced to actively produce it after the second month.

This is in line with the results of interviews with nine female students; all agreed that the two-month break was used optimally to accumulate daily vocabulary and listen to expressions in everyday conversations. However, there is an important difference between students with high and low scores. Students with high scores used the two months to practice speaking Arabic more, while students with low scores spent more time listening and were embarrassed to speak, especially if they made mistakes. Subject M-9 (Low Score Category) reflected on her mental block: "I was mostly silent during exams because I was unable to express the answers. This was triggered by a lack of practice, limited vocabulary, and qawaid that had not been practiced well." Subject M-8 added: "During exams, I felt less able to express the answers, because at the beginning of the learning period I often used the tarjamah method, which triggered a lack of spontaneity in Arabic."

Dimensions of Learning and Communication Strategies

Table 5. BALLI Results Dimension IV: Learning and Communication Strategies

Item	Questionnaire Statement (Language Learning Difficulties)	Approval Level (S+SS)	Average Score (Mean)
19	I learn faster by practicing speaking directly.	93.8%	4.34 (High)
20	I learn Arabic better in an environment where I practice speaking Arabic all the time.	100%	4.71 (High)
21	I was helped to understand Arabic better by listening to people speak Arabic.	95.3%	4.50 (High)
22	I have to practice speaking a lot to improve my skills.	100%	4.70 (High)
23	I like it when teachers correct my mistakes directly.	100%	4.59 (High)
24	I am not ashamed to make mistakes when speaking Arabic.	64%	3.84 (High)
25*	I need to memorize a lot of dialogues first to be able to speak Arabic.	54.7%	3.89 (High)
26	I use strategies like note-taking or repetition to remember vocabulary.	98.5%	4.39 (High)
Average dimensions			4.37 (High)

*Note: Scores have been adjusted through reverse-scoring.

Dimension IV (Table 5) recorded a high average of 4.37 (High), which was the main driving force behind the dominance of high-category oral exam scores. The characteristics of learner strategies in IMC were heavily skewed towards daily communicative activities. Absolute confidence (100%) emerged in the need for a total immersion environment (Item 20, Mean = 4.71) and a commitment to active speaking practice (Item 22, Mean = 4.70). The characteristic of daring to take risks (risk-taking strategy) was also strengthened, where 64% of female students stated that they were no longer embarrassed to make mistakes when speaking (Mean = 3.84). This proactive strategy was a positive impact of the 2-month language-free phase at the beginning of the semester, which successfully reduced their speaking anxiety, making them more confident in practicing the language until the end of the semester. This difference in strategy clearly distinguishes the high and low score groups.

Subject M-1 (High Score Category) explained his adaptive communication strategy: "Before the oral exam, I maximized my efforts to communicate consistently in Arabic, even though sometimes I got stuck because I didn't know the right vocabulary. And thank God, during the speaking exam yesterday, I answered all the questions even though I didn't know whether the answers were right or wrong. The important thing was that communication with the examiner didn't break down."

Dimensions of Motivation and Expectations

Table 6. BALLI Results Dimension V: Motivation & Expectations

Item	Questionnaire Statement (Language Learning Difficulties)	Approval Level (S+SS)	Average Score (Mean)
27	Arabic is important for my future.	100%	4.64 (High)
28	I feel excited when I learn Arabic.	96.9%	4.51 (High)
29	I am sure that one day I will be able to master Arabic well.	100%	4.79 (High)
30	I want to speak Arabic like a native speaker.	96.9%	4.67 (High)
31	I study Arabic for religious reasons.	87.5%	4.23 (High)
32	I studied Arabic to understand the Koran and Islamic texts.	100%	4.82 (High)
33	I am proud when I can use Arabic.	100%	4.79 (High)
34	I will continue to learn Arabic despite the difficulties I face.	100%	4.71 (High)
Average dimensions			4.65 (High)

The results of the final dimension analysis (Table 6) reflect a very massive integration of instrumental, integrative, and spiritual motivations, while achieving the highest average dimension score, namely 4.65 (High). A perfect score (100%) dominates almost all aspects of hope. Learners believe Arabic is important for their future (100%, Mean = 4.64), are confident in mastering it (100%, Mean = 4.79), and are proud to use it (100%, Mean = 4.79). Theocentric spirituality is reflected in Item 32, where 100% of respondents are motivated to learn to understand the Qur'an and Islamic texts with the highest mean of 4.82. This strong socio-religious motivation acts as a primary psychological fuel. The pressure of mandatory language regulations after the second month is not seen as a burden, but rather a bridge to achieve their religious and academic hopes at the end of the semester.

This is illustrated by the interview results. All informants agreed that the mandatory Arabic language requirement was not a burden at all; in fact, they enjoyed it. Although there was some fear and sometimes stress in facing the learning process and the books that were entirely in Arabic. Subject M-6 (Medium Value Category): "I am very enthusiastic about learning Arabic because Arabic is the key to understanding religious knowledge. I want to teach religion with the correct understanding to the people around me, especially my family, even though it sometimes gets tiring."

Discussion

The accelerated success of new female students at the Muslim Cendekia Institute (IMC)—where an absolute majority of 71.9% achieved high performance in the final speaking skills exam—is a unique phenomenon in foreign language acquisition studies. Empirical findings from the five dimensions of the BALLI questionnaire indicate that the success of oral performance at the end of this semester was fundamentally driven by the construction of highly positive and adaptive affective beliefs (language learning beliefs). This success is inseparable from the harmonious interaction between institutional regulations (a 2-month language-free break) and the restructuring of learners' cognitive perspectives before the demands of formal language production are activated.

Theoretically, the initial two-month language-free dispensation period in IMC acts as a structured utilization of the silent period phase. Referring to the Input Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982), beginner learners require the accumulation of rich linguistic exposure (comprehensible input) before being forced to produce language orally. The provision of a pause in IMC successfully reduces affective filters—such as anxiety and fear of negative evaluation—that usually paralyze new learners mentally. This is strongly validated in the Learning Difficulty Dimension in this study, where the average score for the dimension was recorded as high (3.91). The low level of pessimism, such as only 34.4% of respondents viewing grammar (nahwu) as a complex threat, proves that the two-month pause period successfully reduces cognitive stress and transforms academic threats into interesting cognitive challenges (96.9%).

Furthermore, the massive accumulation of high grades at the end of the semester confirms the strong self-efficacy of the female students. Based on Bandura's (1997) cognitive psychology principles, high self-efficacy determines an individual's level of effort and resilience when facing difficult situations. In the Language Aptitude Dimension, almost all learners (98.4%) internalized the positive belief that

they possessed the talent to master Arabic. This finding updates the study by Victori & Lockhart (1995) which stated that false beliefs regarding talent can trigger learner passivity. In IMC, the absence of this fixed-mindset dogma fosters a persistent determination to learn; learners view speaking ability as a capacity that can be accelerated through daily immersion, not simply an innate genetic factor.

However, this high self-efficacy almost experienced cognitive friction with their orientation to the Dimension of the Nature of Learning (3.74). Data show that 93.7% of learners believe that oral fluency requires mastery of strict grammar rules. In many cases in the literature, such as Horwitz's (1988) research, rigid beliefs demanding structural perfection (analytical language learning) are often correlated with high communication anxiety and slow spontaneous speech (fluency). This is where the Learning and Communication Strategies Dimension (4.37) plays a crucial role as a safety valve (buffer). The demands of the total immersion environment in the third month (100%) forced learners to adopt a risk-taking strategy (a strategy of daring to take the risk of making mistakes) conceptualized by Rubin (1975). The courage of 64% of respondents who stated they were no longer ashamed of making mistakes when practicing spoken sentences broke the chain of rigid perfectionism. Learners in IMC successfully align the needs of ideal grammar (cognitive learning phase) with the courage of spontaneous practice in the field (functional acquisition phase).

Finally, this entire affective ecosystem is anchored by the resilience of socio-religious and spiritual motivations in the Motivation and Hope Dimension, which recorded the highest score (4.65). Referring to Gardner & Lambert's (1972) motivational theory, learner motivation is generally divided into instrumental (career/future) and integrative (cultural assimilation). However, in the context of the higher Islamic boarding school at IMC, a very dominant theocentric motivational dimension was found, where the hope of understanding the Qur'an and Islamic texts achieved the absolute highest mean score (4.82). This spiritual drive transformed the pressure of institutional regulations into a noble moral obligation (identified/integrated regulation in the Self-Determination theory by Deci & Ryan, 2000). Therefore, when the official Arabic language requirement was implemented in the third month until the final semester exams were held, the female students did not respond to it as exhausting pressure, but rather as a form of worship and a sacred bridge in fulfilling their religious hopes. This affective guidance based on spiritual values is the biggest secret behind the effectiveness of the 2-month full immersion system at the Institut Muslim Cendekia.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the remarkable speaking achievement of new female students at the Muslim Cendekia Institute (IMC), where most participants attained high performance in the final speaking examination, was strongly associated with the development of positive and adaptive language learning beliefs. The findings indicate that the two-month language dispensation period functioned as an effective affective incubation phase, allowing learners to adjust psychologically before entering a full Arabic immersion environment. As a result, learners developed strong beliefs regarding language aptitude, learning difficulties, the nature of language learning, communication strategies, and motivation. Among these dimensions, motivation and expectations emerged as the strongest factor, reflecting the important role of spiritual and personal goals in sustaining language learning efforts. In addition, learners demonstrated high self-efficacy, viewed language difficulties as manageable challenges, and adopted active communication strategies that encouraged speaking practice without excessive fear of making mistakes. These beliefs contributed significantly to their successful oral language development. Theoretically, this study supports psycholinguistic perspectives emphasizing that language achievement is influenced not only by instructional methods but also by learners' belief systems and affective readiness. Practically, the findings suggest that beginner learners may benefit from a gradual immersion model that includes a transitional adaptation period before the full implementation of target-language regulations. This study is limited to the analysis of learners' beliefs and speaking achievement within a single institutional context. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine changes in language learning beliefs over time and to investigate the contribution of each BALLI dimension to broader linguistic and psycholinguistic outcomes in Arabic language acquisition.

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