Assessing The Classroom Learning in Arabic Matriculation Program: Tutor and Student Perspective

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Abstract
The Arabic language matriculation program in the Arabic Education Department of IAIN Sultan Amai has been implemented for years, but its effectiveness and efficiency have not been scientifically evaluated yet. This study aims to evaluate the Arabic language matriculation program from the perspectives of tutors and students. The approach used is qualitative with a descriptive type of analysis, and the data sources are the tutors from each class and a number of students from different classes. Data collection methods used are interviews and observations. The results show that the strengths of the matriculation program are the dedication of tutors, varied teaching methods, customized handbooks, an Arabic language environment, and cooperative participants. However, the program also has weaknesses, such as unclear educational calendars, unstructured evaluations, and suboptimal attendance control. In conclusion, the roles of tutors and student management are vital in this program, and positive two-way feedback from participants and tutors can sustain the program despite shortcomings in management. It is suggested to conduct a study on the program’s effectiveness and obtain empirical data in the form of quantitative measurement.

Keywords: Classroom Learning, Arabic Matriculation Program, Students, Tutor

Introduction
The Arabic language matriculation program aims to provide a basic understanding of Arabic language skills to new students. This program was conducted by the Department of Arabic Language Education¹ at IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo in collaboration with the Student Association² as cooperation that has been carried out in several other program. This program is crucial since the new students come from diverse backgrounds, some with prior experience in learning Arabic, while others have no previous knowledge at all. However, there has not been a systematic evaluation of the Arabic language matriculation program. Therefore, this research aims

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to evaluate the classroom learning process managed by tutors and attended by students, from both the tutor's and student's perspective.

According to Fitzpatrick, program evaluation is a deliberate series of activities aimed at assessing the effectiveness of a program. It is considered crucial for all types of programs. Evaluation of the Arabic language matriculation program is necessary to ensure that the program effectively provides a basic understanding of Arabic language skills to new students. Additionally, evaluation can help identify the areas where students face difficulties and provide information that can be taken into consideration to help make further decisions about the program. This program evaluation is vital since the new students come from diverse backgrounds, some with prior experience in learning Arabic, while others have no previous knowledge at all. Furthermore, evaluating from the perspectives of both tutors and students is crucial to assess the program's effectiveness.

Tutors play a critical role in the Arabic language matriculation program as they are responsible for managing the class and providing effective materials. Evaluating the tutors' perspectives on the learning process in the matriculation class is, therefore, an essential part of this research. This evaluation can help identify areas where tutors can improve their skills in managing the class and providing effective materials. Furthermore, understanding the tutors' perspectives can provide insights into their expectations and goals for the students. On the other hand, student perspectives on the learning process in the matriculation class are equally important as they can provide insights into areas where students face difficulties in understanding the material and acquiring Arabic language skills.

There have already been several studies conducted in this field. The first study was conducted by Amirudin et al. (2020), which focused on examining the differences in emphasis on Arabic learning management objectives in three Islamic boarding schools. The study recommended that Arabic learning management should focus on four aspects of language proficiency. On the other hand, my current research aims to examine the classroom learning

process related to program management. The program management even more interesting to analyze because all tutors and field officers of this program are senior students who voluntarily work. As already state before, this program was conducted by the Department of Arabic Language Education at IAIN Sultan Ami Gorontalo in collaboration with the Student Association as cooperation that has been carried out in several other program.⁶

The second study was a qualitative research conducted by Rasyid et al. (2022), which evaluated the management activities of an Arabic matriculation program at Darul Hikmah Boarding School. The study used the learning time token arends model and the al-Arabiyyatu Baina Yadai Auladina Book.⁷ The third study was published in the same year by Jufih et al. (2022). The study aimed to evaluate the planning, organizational structure, and implementation of an Arabic language program at Daarul Ukhuwwah. The study showed that the program curriculum was adopted from another institution and evaluated periodically.⁸ The fourth study was conducted last year by Opier et al. (2022), which aimed to assess the organizing management of the Arabic Club at an Islamic Senior High School in West Seram. The study found that the organizing management was not well-structured due to the absence of an organizational structure and clear division of organizational tasks.⁹ In contrast to those three studies, which took place in boarding schools, my research focuses on a different educational level, which is college. Thus, my research differentiates itself by its focused aspect and educational level.

The results of this research are expected to provide significant contributions to the development of the Arabic language matriculation program and serve as a reference for similar programs elsewhere. This research aims to evaluate the classroom learning process managed by tutors and attended by students. Author explored more from both the tutor’s and student’s perspective. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to the improvement of the Arabic language matriculation program and enhance the quality of Arabic language education at IAIN

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⁹Ulfa Mawaddah, Ahmad Opier, and Nuril Mufidah, “The Organizing Management of Arabic Language Program in Islamic Senior High School of West Seram, Maluku Province,” 12 Waiheru 8, no. 2 (22 December 2022): 206–214, https://doi.org/10.47655/12waiheru.v8i2.68.
Sultan Amai Gorontalo.

**Method**

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to describe and analyze the Arabic language matriculation program's classroom learning process from both the tutor's and student's perspectives. This approach is suitable for this research since it allows for a comprehensive understanding of the learning process, particularly in the context of the program and classroom management.

The data collection methods used in this research are observation and interview. The observation method using check list instrument is employed to obtain a comprehensive view of the classroom learning process, particularly the tutors' management of the class and the students' engagement in the learning process. The observation conducted in two weeks to ensure that the findings represent the overall process. The interview method is used to gather information about the tutors' and students' perspectives on the classroom learning process. The interview questions are designed to elicit information on their experiences in the matriculation class, their opinions on the program's effectiveness, and their suggestions for improving the program. The interview conducted face-to-face with three tutors and several student representatives.

The data collected from observations will be analyzed using the method of deduction and description. On the other hand, the data collected from recorded interviews will first be transcribed. Then, the data will be reduced by removing irrelevant information that does not align with the research focus. The reduced data will then be summarized and analyzed. Subsequently, the data from both methods will be cross-checked, and a narrative will be created to draw conclusions.

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Result and Discussion

This research aims to assess the implementation of the learning process in the Arabic Matriculation Program. The discussion will focus on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach. By identifying what works well and what needs improvement, the program can maintain and enhance its successful aspects while addressing areas that require further development. Solutions will be sought to address any weaknesses or shortcomings, in order to achieve the goal of continuous improvement. The following will be explained in detail regarding the strengths and weaknesses of learning in the program.

Strength Aspects of Learning in Arabic Matriculation Program

1. Tutor’s Dedication

This study observed that one of the strengths of learning in the matriculation program is the totality of the tutors in teaching even though they teach voluntarily without any payment for their services. This is an interesting phenomenon considering that the tutors are students themselves but have a high dedication to teaching in this program. High dedication is one of the four primary factors that can establish the characteristics of an exemplary educator, which are teaching proficiency, teaching traits, teacher's physical appearance, and dedication to teaching. Another aspect of an ideal teacher is having both excellent subject knowledge and personal qualities.

The tutors always mentally and technically prepare themselves before teaching by reading the material they will teach, even though the time between lectures and teaching is only 30 minutes. Such preparation should be done before teaching as research indicates that being well-prepared is one of the characteristics of a good educator. The researcher observed that this has a positive impact on learning and on the tutors themselves, because through their teaching activities in the matriculation class, the tutors can practice the theories and concepts of six basic

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teaching skills they learned in their courses.15

2. Varied Teaching Methods

In addition to mental preparation, the tutors in the matriculation program also prepare various teaching strategy and media. It is important for teachers to understand deeply on the subject matter they teach and their competency in using appropriate instructional strategies. This includes understanding student learning styles, attitudes, motivations, dispositions, and sociocultural contexts.16 Although the learning flow is generally predetermined, the tutors often adapt their teaching methods to the material and the participants' situation.

Tutors demonstrate their creativity by implementing diverse methods and strategies in the learning process. For honing listening and speaking skills, tutors commonly employ the direct method, where they consistently communicate in Arabic to provide basic instructions such as asking participants to stand, initiating joint prayers before the commencement of the lesson, delivering opening remarks, and giving other fundamental commands. Meanwhile, in the teaching of Arabic grammar rules, tutors combine both inductive and deductive approaches.17 The instruction of grammar is incidental in nature, as it is not the primary focus of the learning program. However, on occasions when texts or sentences necessitate explanations of grammar rules or when participants take the initiative to inquire, tutors will clarify those rules. Tutors play a pivotal role in executing the program, showcasing their creativity in selecting and implementing teaching methods tailored to the participants' needs, thereby enabling them to better understand and master the Arabic language skills.


Sometimes, learning is even conducted outdoors in the surrounding field of the classroom building to provide a fresher atmosphere. The outdoors holds a great possibility for acquiring language skills.\(^{18}\) Learning language in an outdoor setting has a positive impact on learners, such as increasing motivation, reducing tension and boredom, boosting creativity, and enhancing the learners' learning experience.

Regarding teaching media, some tutors have utilized physical media to aid in teaching. Utilizing appropriate teaching media is critical in language learning as it can boost students' motivation, comprehension, and retention of the language being taught.\(^{19}\) However, the use of technology-based media is still lacking. Whereas the use of technology-based media in second language learning has been proven effective in many studies.\(^{20}\) Technology-integrated instructional media, particularly on mobile devices, has demonstrated significant effectiveness in enhancing learning performance for participants.\(^{21}\) On the other hand, the limitation of technology-based learning media is still a constraint due to inadequate classroom facilities.

Sometimes, tutors hold icebreaking games or comprehension quizzes for the participants. These games and quizzes are aimed at eliminating boredom in learning. The game material is still oriented towards the Arabic language being studied or Arabic language material in general, to remain substantive. Just as the use of games in learning can increase students' motivation to learn.\(^{22}\)

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3. Customized Handbook

The textbook is one of the main components that must be present in the Arabic Language (foreign) learning program. In addition to providing language materials to be studied, the textbook also offers students the opportunity to practice using and getting accustomed to the target language in the classroom. In the context of the matriculation program, the program organizers must consider criteria in selecting Arabic language teaching materials in the textbook to align with the learning objectives and desired competencies. It is essential to tailor the Arabic language textbooks in this program to match the specific learning objectives and competencies intended to be achieved. Therefore, the program organizers design the textbooks themselves to ensure they are more in line with the needs and characteristics of the learning program.

The matriculation program committee, consisting of supervising lecturers and a team of four, has developed a handbook for the participants. The handbook was not created from scratch but rather was derived from several renowned Arabic language learning books. Of course, the book is customized to meet the learning needs to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

The development of instructional materials such as this handbook is highly commendable as it is based on the needs and circumstances of an institution or a particular learning program. Research has shown that instructional materials developed through precise needs analysis can result in effective Arabic language learning. Therefore, further research on the handbook developed and utilized in this matriculation program is warranted.

4. Classroom-Based Arabic Environment


The Arabic language learning program in class aims not only to provide basic Arabic language skills that are equivalent for all new students, but also to familiarize participants with using Arabic in daily life. It is important to build a strong Arabic environment in the class. To achieve this goal, Arabic is used as the communication language in classroom learning and interaction. Research shows that interactive language learning activities improved the learners’ second language speaking ability. However, Indonesian is still used as the best way in explaining the main learning materials.

The relaxed classroom environment makes participants more confident in using Arabic even though their ability is still limited. This is because participants can ask the tutor about Arabic sentences they do not yet know. Tutors also encourage the use of Arabic in the classroom by always trying to use it, even though their own ability may still be limited. This is how direct method works to improve speaking ability. Tutor using Arabic directly to stimulate participants. The Direct Method is a teaching approach that has been introduced in the field of second language learning, for a long time. However, it is still widely used in current Arabic language learning practices in Indonesia.

It is important to establish a stable language environment in the classroom. A supportive and encouraging environment that promotes the acceleration of language learning is not only the responsibility of the tutor, but all elements of the class play an important role in building an Arabic language environment in the class. With a supportive and conducive environment, participants can more easily adapt to using Arabic in daily life and improve their language skills.

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more quickly and effectively.

5. Cooperative Participants

An important factor that supports the smoothness of learning in this matriculation program is the active participation of students in the classroom. During the learning activities, students are encouraged to actively engage in conversation practice or to work on problems in front of the class, creating a mutually beneficial collaboration between tutors and students. In this case, there is no difference in roles between teachers and learners, but rather an interaction and collaboration between them. Researchers have also found that an emotional bond has been established between some tutors and learners, especially among female tutors and learners.

Weakness Aspects of Learning in Arabic Matriculation Program

1. Unclear Educational Calendar

The matriculation program is a one-year Arabic learning program for new students. However, there is currently no clear calendar of learning for the upcoming year. This occasionally results in delayed delivery of learning materials because tutors are not certain about the scope of the material that needs to be covered within a certain period. It all depends on the ability of each tutor to manage the delivery of the materials over the course of one year. In addition, the lack of clarity in the program's calendar also affects the implementation of monthly evaluations, which cannot always be carried out regularly.

The creation of a learning calendar should be an integral part of the planning stage in this program. The planning function consists of several steps. Firstly, there is a need to anticipate future conditions and requirements. Then, the objectives that need to be accomplished are determined. Subsequently, policies are established to achieve the previously set objectives. Afterward, a program is defined, which includes the approach, type, and sequence of activities. Cost estimation is then performed, taking into account the amount of fees required. Lastly, work schedules and actions to be taken are determined.30

2. Unstructured Evaluation

Evaluation is a crucial part of any educational program should be improved from various aspects.\textsuperscript{31} However, in this program, the evaluation process is not carried out regularly. Instead, it depends on whether the tutors have the time to conduct it or not. This lack of regularity means that the evaluation process is not standardized, and the results obtained may not be entirely accurate. Furthermore, there is no standardization of the evaluation questions, with tutors formulating their questions. As a result, there is no guarantee of the validity of the evaluation results.

Without standardized evaluation procedures, the effectiveness of the program cannot be accurately determined. To ensure that the program's objectives are met, regular and standardized evaluations must be conducted. With clear standard and scheduling, both formative and summative evaluations can be conducted efficiently.\textsuperscript{32} These evaluations should be carried out at predetermined intervals, regardless of the tutor's availability, and should be based on standardized questions.\textsuperscript{33} By implementing standardized evaluation procedures, the program's administrators can ensure that the evaluation process is fair, accurate, and in line with the program's objectives.

3. Suboptimal Attendance Control

Some participants do not attend the matriculation classes until the end. Some of them disappear after a few months from the beginning of the program. Attendance control by the tutors in each class does exist. Tutors always follow up on participant attendance. However, this is considered ineffective if clear sanctions are not applied. There should be a clear strict sanction for them as a punishment. Strict penalties should be imposed to discipline the participants as punishment.\textsuperscript{34} The lack of clear sanctions during several years of the program's implementation


has become one of the challenges in the program.

The lack of clear sanctions for attendance has resulted in some participants not taking the program seriously. This can lead to a negative impact on the overall learning process and may affect the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, it is essential to have a clear attendance policy and sanctions that are consistently enforced to ensure that all participants attend the classes regularly and make the most of the program.

Conclusion

The Arabic matriculation program has several strengths in its teaching methodology, such as the tutor's thorough mental and technical preparation before teaching, the use of various teaching methods tailored to the participants' situation, the use of a summarized handbook from various renowned Arabic language learning books, the use of Arabic language as the communication language in the classroom, and the participants' active involvement, which supports the smooth running of the learning process. However, the program still faces several challenges, such as the unclear learning calendar, the unstructured implementation of evaluations, the lack of maximum attendance control, and the absence of clear sanctions.

In the Arabic language matriculation program, the role of the tutor is vital as they become the main driver of the entire program's activities. Despite the lack of material incentives given to them, tutors give their best in imparting knowledge to the participants. An emotional bond of brotherhood is established between participants and tutors, so that tutors put in their best efforts as if it is out of love for a sibling or family. Therefore, it is important to cultivate such emotional awareness in similar programs to build a good program. However, improvements and management program enhancements are necessary, especially in terms of regulations and scheduling. Problems such as lack of program management supervision remain a challenge that needs to be addressed.

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