

# 11. Transforming Arabic Language Education through NAFIRA (Nahdlatul Raghabin Fii Lughatil Arabiyah) as a Flagship Program.docx

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## Transforming Arabic Language Education through NAFIRA (*Nahdlatul Raghabin Fii Lughatil Arabiyah*) as a Flagship Program

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Article History	ABSTRACT
Received 11-05-2025	<b>Background:</b> Improving Arabic language competence in Islamic boarding schools requires innovative and adaptive curriculum models that address students' diverse needs. <b>Purpose:</b> This study aims to analyze the implementation of the NAFIRA program ( <i>Nadhirotul Raghabin Fii Lughatil Arabiyah</i> ) as an adaptive curriculum innovation to improve students' Arabic language competence in Darussalam Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). <b>Method:</b> The research employed a qualitative-descriptive method using a case study approach in a pesantren implementing the NAFIRA program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. The population consisted of teachers and students involved in the program, with selected participants as the research sample. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions based on the Miles and Huberman model. <b>Results and Discussion:</b> The results show that NAFIRA is tailored to students' real language needs and their diverse linguistic backgrounds. The program is implemented through structured planning, teacher training, regular evaluations, and daily monitoring. It has proven effective in developing all four Arabic skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing and has strengthened students' comprehension of Islamic subjects. The study fills a gap in curriculum research by emphasizing the role of adaptive, need-based program design in Islamic education settings. <b>Conclusions and Implications:</b> NAFIRA has demonstrated its value as an effective, contextual curriculum model for Arabic language education in pesantren. The findings suggest that future curriculum development should prioritize contextual, need-based approaches to improve educational outcomes in Islamic schools.
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<b>Keywords:</b>	NAFIRA, Adaptive Curriculum, Arabic Language, Pesantren, Educational Management.
	<b>ABSTRAK</b>

**Latar Belakang:** Pesantren sebagai lembaga pendidikan Islam memiliki peran strategis dalam penguatan kompetensi bahasa Arab santri. Namun, keragaman latar belakang kemampuan santri menjadi tantangan dalam pencapaian tujuan pembelajaran bahasa Arab secara optimal. Oleh karena itu, dibutuhkan inovasi kurikulum yang adaptif dan kontekstual.

**Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi program NAFIRA (Nadhirotul Raghabin Fii Lughatil Arabiyah) di Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Jombang sebagai bentuk inovasi kurikulum adaptif guna meningkatkan kompetensi bahasa Arab santri.

**Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif-deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi di pesantren yang menerapkan program NAFIRA.

**Hasil dan Pembahasan:** Program NAFIRA dirancang berdasarkan kebutuhan nyata santri dengan prinsip adaptif terhadap kemampuan yang beragam. Pelaksanaan program dilakukan secara terpadu melalui perencanaan kurikulum, pelatihan guru, evaluasi berkala, dan pengawasan pelaksanaan. Hasilnya, program ini terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan istima', kalam, qira'ah, dan kitabah, serta memperkuat pemahaman santri terhadap mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam. Faktor pendukung meliputi komitmen lembaga, motivasi santri, serta sarana dan prasarana yang memadai. Sementara itu, kendala utama adalah keterbatasan tenaga profesional dan waktu belajar yang terbatas.

**Kesimpulan dan Implikasi:** Program NAFIRA menunjukkan efektivitas sebagai kurikulum adaptif dalam pengembangan kompetensi bahasa Arab di pesantren. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya pengembangan program berbasis kebutuhan dengan perencanaan matang dan manajemen pelaksanaan yang terintegrasi. Implikasi praktisnya, lembaga pesantren perlu memperkuat sumber daya manusia dan mengalokasikan waktu belajar yang proporsional untuk mendukung keberlanjutan program.

**Kata Kunci** NAFIRA, kurikulum adaptif, bahasa Arab, pesantren, manajemen pendidikan



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## INTRODUCTION

Pesantren as the oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia has a major contribution in shaping the religious and social character of the archipelago. Along with the times, pesantren face the challenge of maintaining traditional values while adopting educational innovations that can meet global needs[1]. Data from the Directorate of Early Childhood Education and Islamic Boarding Schools (2022) shows that there are currently more than 30,000 active pesantren in Indonesia, with more than 4 million students. This indicates the important role of pesantren in the national education system, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI).

Islamic Religious Education held in pesantren aims to form people who are faithful, pious, have noble character, and are able to actualize Islamic values in daily life (Law No. 18/2019 on Pesantren). One of the fundamental aspects in achieving these goals is the mastery of Arabic. Arabic is not only a means of communication, but also the main language in understanding the Qur'an, hadith, and classical Islamic literature. According to Syafii (2021), the inability to understand Arabic text well is one of the factors in the weak religious understanding of santri in some traditional pesantren.

In an effort to improve students' Arabic language skills, innovating the pesantren curriculum is a necessity. The pesantren curriculum is not only limited to formal religious subjects, but must also include programs based on the practical needs of students. One form of innovation is the

development of a NAFIRA-based pesantren curriculum (Nahdhotur Roghibin Fii Lughotil Arobiyah) at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang. The NAFIRA program is designed to strengthen students' Arabic language competence through applicative, communicative, and habituation-based methods in daily life.

The NAFIRA-based curriculum at Darussalam Sengon Jombang offers a different approach from the Arabic language teaching model in traditional pesantren. If the traditional model tends to prioritize textual reading of the yellow classical books, NAFIRA emphasizes the use of active Arabic, both in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This is in line with Zuhdi's (2020) view that the communicative approach in learning Arabic is more effective in shaping students' language skills. The curriculum development of internal program-based pesantren such as NAFIRA is also supported by adaptive curriculum theory. According to Tyler (1949), in his theory of the basic principles of curriculum, effective education must be grounded in the needs of students and aligned with their social context. This foundational idea is further supported by contemporary educational theories. For instance, the constructivist learning theory, as proposed by Vygotsky and Piaget, emphasizes the importance of learners actively constructing knowledge through interaction with their environment and social context. Similarly, the competency-based curriculum framework promoted by UNESCO and OECD highlights the need to design curricula that build relevant skills and competencies tailored to students' real-life contexts. In the realm of language learning, the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach encourages the use of meaningful tasks that reflect learners' needs, thus enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. Supporting this, Munir's (2021) research shows that pesantren developing a curriculum based on students' needs report a 30% higher success rate in Arabic language acquisition compared to those relying on conventional methods.

However, the implementation of the pesantren curriculum based on internal programs is not free from challenges. One of them is the absence of a standardized NAFIRA curriculum, variations in teacher competence, and limited supporting facilities. As stated by Hakim (2020), the success of curriculum innovation in pesantren depends on the consistency of implementation, the quality of human resources, and the support of pesantren management. In addition, the motivation of santri in participating in non-formal programs such as NAFIRA often fluctuates, thus requiring creative and contextual learning strategies. Relevant previous research shows that Arabic-based pesantren curriculum innovations have a positive impact on improving students' religious understanding. A study by Hasanah (2021) at Pesantren Al-Munawwir Krapyak showed that the active Arabic-based tahfidz program increased hadith comprehension up to 45% faster than regular students. On the other hand, Ahsani's research (2021) at Pesantren Salafiyah revealed that without curriculum innovation, santri tend to stagnate in Arabic language skills after three years of education.

Although several studies have discussed Arabic language education innovations in pesantren, in-depth studies on the implementation of pesantren curriculum based on internal programs such as NAFIRA are still very limited. Not many studies have specifically analyzed how the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of the program are integrated in the pesantren education system. In fact, this understanding is important for designing replication and development models in other pesantren with similar characteristics. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of NAFIRA-based pesantren curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang. The focus of this research includes: the characteristics of the NAFIRA curriculum, the learning strategies used, the supporting and inhibiting factors of the implementation, and the contribution of the program to the improvement of students' Arabic language competence in the context of Islamic Religious Education.

Thus, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution in the development of a needs-based pesantren curriculum model, as well as provide practical recommendations for other pesantren in improving the quality of Arabic language learning. In addition, the results of this study

are expected to enrich the treasure of literature on Islamic education innovation, especially in the realm of pesantren, which is still relatively limited compared to formal education studies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Arabic language education plays a foundational role in Islamic educational institutions, particularly in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), where it serves as the primary medium for understanding classical Islamic sciences and original religious texts. Mastery of Arabic is essential for interpreting the Qur'an, Hadith, and a vast array of classical scholarly works written in Arabic. However, despite its importance, many pesantren still face significant challenges in ensuring effective Arabic language acquisition due to students' varied linguistic backgrounds and limited exposure to Arabic outside of formal instruction[2] According to Azra (2012), pesantren have traditionally adopted a grammatical-translation approach, often focused on reading and understanding kitab kuning (classical Islamic books). While this method fosters comprehension of texts, it tends to neglect communicative competence in Arabic, such as listening and speaking. In modern times, there has been a growing awareness among pesantren leaders and educators about the need to enhance Arabic language teaching by integrating more interactive and student-centered methods, especially to meet the demands of a rapidly globalizing world (Hidayat, 2018). This awareness has led to the emergence of specialized programs and curricular reforms that aim to create a more comprehensive Arabic learning environment in pesantren.

An adaptive curriculum refers to an educational framework that responds dynamically to the needs, abilities, and contexts of learners. It emphasizes flexibility, personalization, and contextualization to accommodate the diversity of student backgrounds and learning capabilities. In the context of pesantren, which often enroll students from berbagai region dan with heterogeneous educational histories, an adaptive curriculum becomes a strategic necessity to bridge learning gaps and optimize learning outcomes.[3] Ma'arif (2019) emphasizes that the curriculum in pesantren should not merely imitate the structure of formal schooling. Instead, it should reflect the distinct ethos, values, and cultural learning patterns found within the pesantren tradition. This suggests the need for a curriculum that integrates classical Islamic sciences (such as Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, and Nahwu) with modern pedagogical strategies that promote active learning and critical thinking. In practical terms, this involves navigating limitations such as time constraints, teacher qualifications, and variations in student motivation. Additionally, a successful adaptive curriculum requires systematic curriculum evaluation, continuous teacher training, and the development of relevant learning materials that align with both traditional Islamic values and contemporary educational standards.[4] It also involves ongoing curriculum evaluation, teacher training, and development of appropriate learning resources to ensure its sustained relevance and effectiveness.

Despite increasing discussions on the importance of adaptive curriculum models in pesantren, research on how these models is implemented and evaluated remains limited and generalized. Existing studies tend to emphasize the conceptual importance of adaptation but lack empirical data or measurable outcomes. Several specific research gaps can be identified from the literature.

Firstly, while studies like that of Dace and Setia Budi (2025) highlight the integration of Islamic values with global competencies such as entrepreneurship and soft skills in pesantren curriculum planning, there is a lack of data-based analysis that examines the actual impact of such integration on students' academic achievements, particularly in core subjects like Arabic or Fiqh. Secondly, research conducted by Taufikin (2025) discusses the use of transformational pedagogy that blends Islamic moral instruction with digital learning tools. However, this research focuses primarily on theoretical discourse and teacher interviews, without including performance metrics or classroom-level assessments that could validate the approach's effectiveness.

Thirdly, studies on adaptive leadership in pesantren, such as those conducted at Pesantren Kauman Lasem and Madrasah Diniyah At-Ta'abud, illustrate how institutional leaders are adapting governance and curriculum structures in response to digital education challenges. However, these studies are primarily concerned with institutional change and lack direct evaluation of student learning outcomes, teacher instructional practices, or long-term curriculum effectiveness. Lastly, a study from Blitar explores the integration of a national curriculum with hidden curriculum models in pesantren. The findings reveal a high level of parental satisfaction (up to 89.6%) with this approach. Nevertheless, the study does not provide insight into how this integration specifically affects students' academic progress or addresses initial learning disparities among students from differing educational backgrounds.

These research gaps point to several important areas that require further investigation. There is a significant lack of quantitative data evaluating the effectiveness of adaptive curriculum strategies in pesantren, especially in terms of measurable learning outcomes such as exam scores, language proficiency, and digital literacy. Furthermore, there is minimal longitudinal research on how teachers are trained and supported to implement adaptive curriculum models, and how their instructional practices evolve over time. There is also a scarcity of studies that systematically assess how adaptive curriculum models particularly those incorporating technology and modern pedagogical theories are reconciled with the religious and cultural traditions of pesantren education.

Addressing these gaps is essential to developing evidence-based practices that can inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of adaptive curricula in pesantren settings. It would also contribute to the broader discourse on how traditional educational institutions can innovate while preserving their core identity and values.

NAFIRA, which stands for Nahdlatul Raghabin Fii Lughatil Arabiyah (The Awakening of Arabic Language Enthusiasts), is a program developed and implemented at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Jombang as a response to the pressing need for more effective Arabic instruction. Designed as a flagship initiative, NAFIRA seeks to transform the way Arabic is taught by employing an adaptive and student-centered model that accommodates the different skill levels and learning needs of students. The program is notable for its systematic structure and holistic management approach, which includes comprehensive curriculum planning, regular teacher training, formative and summative evaluations, and robust monitoring mechanisms. Rather than focusing solely on textual reading, NAFIRA promotes balanced language skill development across four core areas: *isuma'* (listening), *kalam* (speaking), *qira'ah* (reading), and *kitabah* (writing).<sup>[5]</sup> This integrative approach ensures that students not only comprehend texts but are also able to communicate effectively in Arabic, both orally and in writing. In addition, the program has demonstrated a positive impact on students' performance in religious subjects taught in Arabic, such as *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and *hadith*. Based on the findings of recent qualitative studies (Syamsuddin, 2023), NAFIRA has successfully enhanced students' confidence and competence in using Arabic, both within and beyond the classroom. The program's adaptive features, such as differentiated instruction and contextually relevant materials, make it especially effective in a pesantren setting where linguistic diversity is a common feature.<sup>[6]</sup>

The successful implementation of NAFIRA is attributed to several enabling factors. First, the strong commitment of the pesantren leadership to language development provides institutional support for the program's continuity and growth. Second, student enthusiasm and high levels of intrinsic motivation have helped sustain active participation in learning activities. Third, the availability of appropriate infrastructure such as language laboratories, printed materials, and digital learning tools has played a significant role in supporting the learning process. Despite these strengths, the program also faces considerable challenges.<sup>[5]</sup> A major issue is the limited availability of professional Arabic language teachers who are both pedagogically skilled and fluent in Modern Standard Arabic. Another significant constraint is the limited instructional time available within the



broader pesantren curriculum, which is already dense with religious and general education subjects. Wahid (2020) emphasizes that without adequate time allocation, even well-designed programs struggle to achieve their full potential.

This study aims to investigate both the enabling factors and the key obstacles affecting the implementation of the NAFIRA program, with a particular focus on institutional support, student engagement, teacher quality, instructional time, and curriculum integration. By identifying these elements, the study seeks to provide strategic recommendations for strengthening Arabic language instruction in pesantren contexts. To address the aforementioned challenges, it is essential to invest in continuous teacher development, curriculum streamlining, and time management strategies. Furthermore, collaboration with external institutions, such as Arabic language centers or universities with Arabic departments, may provide additional support in the form of guest lecturers, immersion programs, and updated teaching methodologies.

## **METHOD**

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to understand and describe the implementation of the non-formal curriculum based on NAFIRA (Nahdhotul Rughibin Fii Lughotil Arobiyah) at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang in a comprehensive and in-depth manner. This approach is selected for its ability to explore the meanings, practices, and dynamics that emerge in the Arabic language learning process within the pesantren's non-formal educational environment. As stated by Moleong (2018), the qualitative approach enables researchers to investigate phenomena thoroughly and contextually. Meanwhile, Sugiyono (2019) highlights that qualitative research focuses on naturally occurring phenomena without manipulation by the researcher, which makes it especially suitable for studying learning community-based curriculum innovations such as NAFIRA. The case study design allows for a focused examination of a single institution, providing detailed insights into the contextual factors that shape curriculum implementation and language acquisition outcomes.[7]

This research was conducted in April 2025 at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon, located in Ngesong Village, Sengon District, Jombang Regency, East Java. The research site was selected purposively because the pesantren implements the NAFIRA program, which is the main focus of this study. The participants in this study consisted of five individuals, selected using a purposive sampling technique. This technique was used to ensure the inclusion of informants who possess direct knowledge and involvement in the NAFIRA program. The participants included two *ustadz*, one *ustadzah*, and 36 program managers responsible for designing and supervising the curriculum implementation. The number of participants was determined based on the principle of information-rich cases, which is appropriate for qualitative studies aiming for depth rather than generalizability.

The inclusion criteria for participant selection were as follows: (1) individuals must have been actively involved in the NAFIRA program for at least one academic year; (2) they must play a key role in either the instructional process or in program planning and evaluation; and (3) they must be willing and able to articulate their experiences and perspectives regarding the program's implementation. These criteria were established to ensure that the data collected would provide relevant and meaningful insights into the strategies, methods, learning media, and both supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the implementation of the non-formal curriculum based on NAFIRA.

In collecting data, the researchers employed three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted in a non-participant manner, where the researcher observed the learning process, student interactions, and daily routines of the NAFIRA program without direct involvement. This approach aimed to capture the natural flow of curriculum implementation in an authentic setting. Observations were carried out over a two-

week period, focusing on language activities, classroom dynamics, and informal learning moments outside formal sessions, as suggested by Spradley (2016).<sup>[8]</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five key informants, including teachers (*ustadz/ustadzah*) and program managers. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was guided by an interview protocol consisting of open-ended questions related to curriculum planning, implementation strategies, perceived challenges, and expected outcomes. <sup>18</sup> Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. In terms of documentation, data were collected from various sources including curriculum documents, syllabi, program activity logs, lesson plans, photographs of classroom and extracurricular activities, and other relevant materials. These documents served to triangulate the data obtained from observation and interviews, thereby enhancing the validity and credibility of the findings. Through these combined methods, the study aimed to obtain data that are valid, comprehensive, and in-depth, offering a holistic understanding of the implementation of the NAFIRA curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The results showed that the NAFIRA (Nadhirotul Arabiyah Fil Mafadzot War Rosail) program is a new curriculum innovation specifically designed to strengthen the Arabic language skills of students at Darussalam Islamic <sup>47</sup> Boarding School. This program is part of the institution's superior strategy in addressing the need to improve the quality of Arabic language learning which has been considered monotonous and not applicable in the daily lives of students. NAFIRA combines thematic, contextual, and real needs-based approaches with direct teaching methods in four main skills: <sup>5</sup> *istima'*, *kalam*, *qira'ah*, and *kitabah*.

The implementation of NAFIRA is structured with an intensive learning schedule and periodic evaluation. This curriculum innovation not only focuses on mastering grammar and vocabulary, but is also directed to train students to use Arabic as an active communication tool in the pesantren environment. This program is implemented in an integrated manner through inter-field cooperation, ranging from Arabic language teachers, pesantren administrators, to daily activity coaches. From the results of observations and interviews, it was found that this program received a positive response from the students and educators. Santri showed a significant increase in speaking courage, Arabic text comprehension, and writing skills. Thus, NAFIRA is one of the important pillars in developing <sup>19</sup> the quality of Arabic language education and should be called a superior curriculum innovation at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School.

### Overview of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Jombang

<sup>34</sup> Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang is one of the Islamic educational institutions that stands in the middle of the community with the <sup>53</sup> spirit of renewal and strengthening of the Islamic scientific tradition. This pesantren is located in Sengon Village, Jombang District, Jombang <sup>60</sup> Regency, East Java. Established in mid-July 1993, this pesantren was pioneered by two scholars, KH Drs. Asyari Mahfudz and KH Drs. Syihabudin Raso, who had a great vision to develop Islamic education that was adaptive to the times but still rooted in the traditional values of pesantren. At the beginning of its establishment, Pondok Pesantren Darussalam only had nine students, with diverse backgrounds. Five students came from outside Jombang and the other four were local residents. Limited facilities were the main challenge in the early days, where teaching and learning activities were carried out in a simple house owned by the founder's family. However, the spirit and determination of the founders to build a quality Islamic educational institution never waned.

Over time, the founding family donated part of their inherited land of 150 square meters for the development of the pesantren. This waqf became the starting point for the physical expansion



of the pesantren and the increasing number of boarding students. Since then, Pondok Pesantren Darussalam has experienced significant growth, both in terms of the number of students, teaching staff, and supporting facilities. The number of students continues to increase every year, until now there are more than 700 students who come from various regions in East Java and surrounding areas. The majority of students come from families with middle to lower economic backgrounds, which shows that this pesantren is the first choice for people who want quality religious education at an affordable cost.

### 1. Vision and Mission

Institutionally, Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang has a vision of "Noble in Character, Superior in Achievement." This vision becomes the main foundation in every educational activity and coaching of students. The pesantren seeks to form a young generation that <sup>17</sup>not only intellectually intelligent, but also has noble character, good character, and is able to adapt to the challenges of the times. To realize this vision, the pesantren formulates several strategic missions, including developing a curriculum based on the need <sup>12</sup>of students, strengthening the culture of Arabic and English, and fostering morality through the integration of Islamic values in daily life.

### 2. Education System

The education system implemented at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School adopts a dual education system model, which combines formal and non-formal education. Formal education includes Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) which have been accredited and recognized by the Ministry of Religion. The curriculum used refers to the 2013 National Curriculum, but is enriched with local content and strengthened Islamic material. Meanwhile, non-formal education at Darussalam Jombang Islamic Boarding School is under the auspices of the Darussalam Training Education Center (DETC). This non-formal education is realized through typical pesantren programs, which consist of Madrasah Diniyah, DEC (Darussalam English Course), and NAFIRA <sup>26</sup>(Nahdhotur Roghibin fii Lughatil 'Arabiyyah) which are the characteristics of Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in developing students' Arabic language competence.

<sup>11</sup>Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is one of the boarding schools known as a bilingual boarding school. In the implementation of education, the pesantren emphasizes the importance of mastering Arabic as the main key <sup>10</sup>to understanding classical Islamic literature. The NAFIRA program is specifically designed <sup>61</sup>to meet the needs of students in mastering four Arabic language skills (maharah al-lughah), namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition, the pesantren also organizes various extracurricular activities, such as muhadlarah (Arabic speech practice), hiwar (conversation simulation), khot (Arabic calligraphy) training, and religious competitions aimed at honing the abilities and talents of students.

### 3. Profile of Santri and Teachers

In terms of the profile of students, Pondok Pesantren Darussalam has quite diverse characteristics. Santri who stay at this pesantren come from various social, economic, and educational backgrounds. However, they have one common goal, which is to study religion and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings. The mukim system (living in the pesantren dormitory) is applied compulsorily for students who come from outside the area, while local students are given the option to commute or mukim.

The teaching staff at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam consists of ustadz and ustadzah who have an educational background in Islamic boarding schools and universities. Most of the teachers are alumni of leading pesantren in Indonesia, such as Pondok Modern Gontor, Tebuireng, and Tambak Beras. In addition, the pesantren regularly conducts training for

teachers, especially in mastering the direct method for Arabic language learning. This is done so that the learning process in the classroom can take place effectively and enjoyably, as well as being able to increase santri learning motivation.

The supporting facilities owned by Pondok Pesantren Darussalam also continue to develop. In terms of academics, the pesantren has a language laboratory equipped with audio-visual equipment for muhadatsah training and interactive learning. The pesantren library is also quite complete, with a collection of more than 500 Arabic books, including classical books such as Fathul Qorib and Al-Arabiyyah Baini Yadaik which are the main references in learning. In addition, the pesantren also has a main mosque, the Fathul Jannah Mosque, which is currently 90% completed and is the center of worship activities and yellow book studies. To support the development of students' talents and interests, there is a soccer field, skills room, and other supporting facilities.

The uniqueness of Pondok Pesantren Darussalam lies in the application of Arabic and English as languages of instruction in daily life, which is adapted from the education system of Pondok Modern Gontor. This aims to familiarize santri to communicate in foreign languages and increase their competitiveness at the national and international levels. However, pesantren also face various challenges, especially related to limited residential facilities and variations in basic Arabic language skills among santri. Data shows that around 40% of santri still experience difficulties in adapting to Arabic language learning, thus requiring innovative and adaptive learning strategies.<sup>[9]</sup>

Overall, Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang is an Islamic education institution that continues to innovate in the education system, both formal and non-formal. With the support of a clear vision, competent teaching staff, and excellent programs such as NAFIRA, this pesantren is expected to be able to produce young people who are knowledgeable, moral, and ready to face the challenges of the times. As stated by Zuhairini et al. (1994), pesantren that are able to integrate religious education with the development of life skills will be more adaptive to social change and able to make a real contribution to society (Zuhairini, 1994). This finding is also supported by the results of the interview with the NAFIRA program manager, who confirmed that strengthening Arabic language and character building are the main priorities in every educational program run at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang.<sup>[10]</sup>

#### Description of the NAFIRA Curriculum Program

The NAFIRA (Nahdhotur Roghibin fii Lughati al-'Arabiyyah) Curriculum Program at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang, under the leadership of Ustadzah Eni Rahmawati as the head of the Institute, is one of the leading innovations in the development of Arabic language competence for santri. As an integral part of the pesantren's non-formal education system, NAFIRA is not just a complement, but the main prerequisite for grade promotion in Madrasah Diniyah. This means that mastery of Arabic through this program becomes an important benchmark in the academic evaluation process of santri, as well as forming the basis of their ability to understand the treasures of classical Islamic knowledge.

<sup>28</sup> This program is designed to form students' Arabic language skills holistically, including receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills. In addition, the application of Arabic in daily life in pesantren is the main focus, so that Arabic is not only mastered theoretically but becomes part of the pesantren culture. The main objectives of the NAFIRA curriculum program :

1. Developing the Four Arabic Language Skills in a Balanced Way

In accordance with the theory of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as proposed by Richards & Rodgers (2001), this program aims to train the skills of listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*) proportionally, not just focusing on grammatical memorization.<sup>[11]</sup>

## 2. Equipping Students in Understanding the Yellow Islamic classic Book

Classical religious literacy is a hallmark of pesantren education. With good Arabic language competence, santri can read, understand, and analyze the books of turats (yellow Islamic classic books) such as Fathul Qarib, Tafsir Jalalain, and others as stated by Abu Bakar (2019).

## 3. Improving Motivation and Religious Character

In Yunus Abu Bakar's view (2020), Arabic language learning must be able to build students' intrinsic motivation through the use of Arabic in daily conversations, so that Arabic lives and becomes their religious identity.

## 4. Familiarizing the Language Environment

Environmental conditioning that supports the active use of Arabic is highly emphasized in NAFIRA. This is in line with the principle that the language environment greatly accelerates second language acquisition.

### Curriculum Structure of the NAFIRA Learning Program

The curriculum structure in the NAFIRA Program is designed based on the principles of task-based language teaching and competency-based curriculum, namely learning that focuses on achieving santri's practical skills in the use of Arabic (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The curriculum is structured with a spiral and multilevel approach, where the material provided is not only delivered once, but repeated and deepened as the learning level increases.<sup>[12]</sup>

In the implementation of the NAFIRA Program at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang, Arabic language learning is divided into two main levels, namely Ula Class equivalent to Madrasah Tsanawiyah level and Wustha Class equivalent to Madrasah Aliyah level. The division of these grades is based on an entrance test or what is called PPDB (Acceptance of New Learners) in the new school year. The division of classes is based on the ability and skills of the students in the Arabic language and recitation tests. This division aims to accommodate differences in the basic abilities of students, as well as provide a more targeted and systematic learning approach based on the principle of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2001), namely the adjustment of learning based on the level of readiness and needs of students.<sup>[13]</sup>

### Subjects

#### 1. Ula class

Ula class is the basic level (beginner) in this program. Students who take the Ula class are usually just starting out or are still in the early stages of mastering Arabic. The focus of learning at this level is the introduction of the basics of Arabic, strengthening the foundation of vocabulary, understanding simple sentence structures, and forming reading and writing skills. In the Ula class of the NAFIRA program, students are introduced to foundational Arabic language skills through a structured set of subjects. These subjects aim to build basic competencies such as vocabulary mastery, grammatical understanding, reading fluency, and conversational confidence. The materials and activities are selected to support gradual language acquisition in an engaging and context-based manner. The following table outlines the subjects taught in the Ula class, along with their focus areas and learning objectives.

*Table 1. Subjects and Learning Objectives in the Ula Class of the NAFIRA Program*

No.	Subject	Focus Area	Learning Objectives
1.	<i>Mahfudzat</i>	Memorization of Arabic proverbs and wise sayings	To train memory and introduce meaningful Arabic sentence structures from an early age (Al-Ghamidi, 2015).
2.	<i>Khot</i>	Arabic calligraphy	To develop correct and aesthetic writing skills, patience, and appreciation for the Arabic script.
3.	<i>Durus al-Lughah</i>	Basic Arabic grammar and sentence structures	To introduce <i>isim</i> , <i>fi'il</i> , <i>harf</i> , and build early speaking and reading comprehension skills.
4.	<i>Amtsilaḥ Tasrijīyah</i>	Verb conjugation	To understand verb forms across different tenses: <i>madhi</i> , <i>mudhari</i> , and <i>amr</i> .
5.	<i>Mubadatsah</i>	Arabic conversation	To practice speaking in simple dialogues for daily communication, such as introductions and common expressions.
6.	<i>Imla'</i>	Arabic dictation	To improve listening and writing accuracy in Arabic and reinforce word structure understanding.
7.	<i>Nahwu Wadliḥ</i>	Basic Arabic grammar	To study foundational <i>nahwu</i> rules such as <i>mubtada'</i> , <i>kbabar</i> , <i>jumlab ismiyyah</i> , and <i>jumlab fi'liyyah</i> , using <i>Nahwu Wadliḥ</i> as the main reference. <sup>[14]</sup>
8.	<i>Muthala'ah Arabiyah</i>	Reading comprehension	To build fluency in reading, expand vocabulary, and understand context from simple Arabic texts.

## 2. Wustha Class

The *Wustha* class serves as the intermediate stage of the NAFIRA Program, designed for students who have already acquired foundational Arabic language skills in the previous level (*Ula*). At this stage, the instructional focus shifts toward expanding students' understanding of Arabic morphology and syntax, enhancing their reading fluency, and fostering deeper text comprehension. The curriculum integrates classical sources, structured grammar lessons, and literary texts to develop linguistic competence more comprehensively. The table below outlines the subjects offered in the *Wustha* class, along with their learning focus and specific educational objectives.<sup>[14]</sup>

Table 2. Learning Subjects and Objectives in the Wustha Class of the NAFIRA Program

No.	Subject	Learning Focus	Learning Objectives
1.	<i>Mukhtashar Shoruf</i>	Summary of Arabic morphology (tasrif isyitiqai & lughawi)	To strengthen students' understanding of word forms and derivation, enabling them to decode and construct complex Arabic words.[14]
2.	<i>Nabwu Wadlih</i> (Advanced)	Advanced Arabic grammar: <i>i'rab</i> , <i>mu'rab-mabni</i> , <i>i'lal</i> , <i>idgham</i>	To master syntactic rules and recognize grammatical structures in more challenging Arabic sentences.
3.	<i>I'lal</i>	Phonological changes in Arabic words	To understand the sound alterations in Arabic due to linguistic principles, crucial for interpreting classical Arabic texts.
4.	<i>Durus al-Lughah 2</i>	Intermediate-level grammar, dialogues, and texts	To develop comprehension and conversation skills through contextual readings and structured grammar exercises.
5.	<i>Qiro'ah Rosyidab</i>	Reading of intermediate Arabic texts with Islamic and historical themes	To train students to extract main ideas, understand longer passages, and analyze text content.
6.	<i>Mahfudzat</i> (Intermediate)	Memorization of classical Arabic phrases and poems	To internalize wise expressions and classical Arabic poetry, improving memory and cultural appreciation.
7.	<i>Amtsilab Jumal</i>	Sentence structure through ismiyyah and fi'liyyah patterns	To help students construct and analyze complete Arabic sentences with varied and complex syntactic patterns.

The main objectives of the Wustha class are for students to be able to master tasrif and word changes well, understand the structure of intermediate Arabic grammar, be able to read and understand intermediate to classical Arabic texts, develop more complex Arabic speaking and writing skills, be able to understand linguistic phenomena such as i'lal and idgham.





Picture 1. Books used in the NAFIRA Program

With this division, learning in the NAFIRA Program becomes more structured, gradual, and directed. Ula class students are prepared to master the basics of Arabic language strongly, while Wustha class students are directed to deepen and expand their abilities so that they are able to read, understand, and communicate in Arabic more fluently and critically.

This multilevel approach follows Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development", where students learn optimally when the material provided is slightly above their current level of ability, but still within the range of achievement with teacher assistance (Vygotsky, 1978.[15])

#### Location and Time of NAFIRA Learning

The implementation of the NAFIRA Curriculum Program at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang has been designed by considering time efficiency, continuity of learning activities, and integration between formal and non-formal education. This program is implemented regularly twice a week, namely every Tuesday and Saturday, with an implementation time of 07.00 to 09.40 WIB. This schedule strategically takes time allocation from formal school hours and takes place directly in the school environment.

The policy of taking time from formal school hours is intended to emphasize the urgency and weight of the NAFIRA program as an important part of the non-formal curriculum that has an equal position with the formal education curriculum. This strategy also reflects the pesantren education paradigm that unites formal and non-formal learning systems harmoniously, as stated by Zuhairini (2012) that the integrative model in the Islamic education system is a characteristic of pesantren education institutions in responding to the needs of the times.

[illegible]

Picture 2. NAFIRA Program Materials and Schedule

With this structured time allocation, the learning process not only takes place effectively and efficiently, but also encourages santri to build a consistent learning routine. This learning model with a duration of about 2 hours 40 minutes is within the ideal range of intensive learning according to Gagne and Briggs (1979), where effective learning time should be limited to between 2 to 3 hours in one long session to maintain focus and effectiveness in understanding the material.

## Learning Methods

The teaching methods applied in the NAFIRA Program (Nahdhotur Roghibin Fathugati al-'Arabiyyah) at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang are designed to support the achievement of Arabic language competencies as a whole: listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*). The methods used in this program are a combination of various approaches adapted to the context of the pesantren, the needs of the students, and the characteristics of the Arabic language itself.

In its implementation, the learning approaches and methods used by the teachers are not single, but are adjusted to the type of material presented. In general, the learning methods in the NAFIRA Program are divided into two main approaches, namely:

### 1. Teacher-Centered Approach

This approach is applied to grammar (nahwu), morphology (shorof), and other linguistics such as il'al. In this case, the role of the teacher is very dominant, because the teacher must be able to explain the rules of language in detail, provide concrete examples, and guide students in understanding and applying grammatical structures correctly.

This approach is also known as the didactic approach, where the learning structure is more systematic and oriented towards the transfer of knowledge from teachers to students. Although it seems traditional, this approach is still relevant because the science of nahwu and shorof requires a mature conceptual understanding before it can be actively applied in communication.[16]

## 2. Student-Centered Approach

This approach is applied to lessons that focus on language skills such as muhadatsah (conversation), muthola'ah (reading), imla' (writing), mahfudzat (memorization), and qira'ah (reading comprehension). In this approach, santri are required to actively participate in the

learning process, both through practical exercises, group discussions, oral presentations, and communication simulations.

The teacher acts as a facilitator who creates a communicative and conducive classroom atmosphere, and provides feedback on santri errors for continuous improvement. Thus, students not only understand the theory, but are also able to use Arabic in the context of everyday life.[17]

In line with the above approach, some specific methods used in the NAFIRA Program are:

#### 1. Direct Method (Thariqah Mubasyirah)

One of the main methods used in NAFIRA is the Direct Method, an approach that emphasizes the use of Arabic as an active means of communication in the classroom without the intermediary of the mother tongue. This method emphasizes that language should be taught directly through practice, not through translation or lengthy explanations. All instructions, questions, and explanations are delivered in Arabic. The goal is to familiarize students with hearing and using Arabic actively, so that language habits (habituation) are formed in a natural context.[18]

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), the Direct Method is very effective for creating a communicative and contextualized language learning environment, because learners are directly involved in the process of thinking and speaking in the target language.[19]

For example, in NAFIRA the teacher gives direct instructions such as “اِفْتَحِ الْكِتَابَ” (open the book), “اَكْتُبْ” (write), or “اِقْرَأْ” (read), then the students answer simple questions without the need to translate first into Indonesian. Context understanding is reinforced with visual aids, gestures, and concrete examples.

#### 2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Method

In addition to the direct method, NAFIRA also applies the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a learning approach that focuses on the ability to communicate effectively and meaningfully. In this approach, teachers not only teach language structures and vocabulary, but also the context of their use in everyday life (Pebrian et al., 2020).

Activities carried out include role play (hiwar muhawarah), students simulate conversations in schools, huts, canteens and anywhere in Arabic, conduct group discussions by expressing opinions in simple Arabic, conduct interactive questions and answers between teachers and students in Arabic.

Yunus Abu Bakar (2020) emphasizes that Arabic language teaching in the pesantren environment should not only be oriented to classical texts (yellow Islamic classic books), but also to modern communication skills that are applicable so that santri are able to become agents of da'wah and contextual communication in the global world.

#### 3. Lecture Method and Grammatical Explanation

For subjects such as Nahwu, Shorof, and I'la', which are more theoretical in nature, the lecturing method is still used proportionally. In this case, the teacher explains the rules of Arabic grammar and gives applicative examples. In order not to be boring, this lecture method is interspersed with direct practice questions in class, discussions about the application of rules in the text, questions and answers and problem solving. The lectures are delivered using a mixture of Arabic and Indonesian, depending on the level of understanding of the class (Ula or Wustha), so that students can still capture the substance of the material well.[21]

#### 4. Structured Memorization Method (Mahfudzat and Mufradat)

Students are also taught to memorize mahfudzat (wise words, Arabic poems, and popular expressions) and mufradat yaumiyah (daily vocabulary). This method not only aims to expand the students' vocabulary, but also instills the values of manners and ethics through classical Islamic expressions.

According to behavioristic theory, habit formation through repetition is the main key in language learning.[22] Therefore, the memorization method in NAFIRA is designed not only to be remembered, but also actively practiced in daily communication.

#### 5. Integrated Drills Method

Every material presented in NAFIRA is always accompanied by integrated skills exercises such as listening exercises, listening to conversations or readings; writing exercises, copying, writing imla', and making short essays; speaking exercises, answering questions, dialogues, presentations; reading exercises, reading texts from classical books and textbooks.[23]

In practice, NAFIRA teachers also often combine two or more methods in one meeting. As stated in an interview by Ustadzah Shofiyyatun Diniyah "I start with an explanation of grammar, then immediately practice it in muhadatsah. The goal is that students can immediately apply the rules in a real context." Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that an effective language learning approach should emphasize the direct and contextual use of language, not just memorization of theory.[24] This is applied in NAFIRA to build students' communicative skills.

### NAFIRA Curriculum Implementation: Program Management

The implementation of the NAFIRA curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon Jombang is carried out through structured and systematic learning program management. This management refers to the learning management cycle which includes planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling as described by Khusnul (2024) and supported by various pesantren education management literature.[25]

#### 1. Planning

<sup>20</sup>Planning is a very crucial initial stage in the implementation of the NAFIRA curriculum. At this stage, the pesantren leadership together with the teaching team compile a syllabus that suits the needs and characteristics of the students. Learning objectives are clearly defined, including comprehensive mastery of Arabic language skills and strengthening understanding of the yellow classical books. Learning materials are arranged in stages and are relevant to the pesantren context, referring to communicative and applicable Arabic learning standards.

<sup>43</sup>This planning also includes scheduling learning activities that are integrated between formal and non-formal sessions, as well as allocating resources such as teaching staff, language laboratory facilities, and libraries. According to Handoko (2001) cited in the research on the management of character education-based Islamic boarding schools, careful planning must consider the background of students, environmental conditions, and existing resources in order to effectively meet the demands of society.

#### 2. Organizing

After planning, the organizing stage is carried out by arranging the division of tasks for teachers and support staff. Each teacher has clear responsibilities according to their field of expertise, such as teaching nahwu, shorof, muhadatsah, and insya'. Scheduling of learning activities is arranged so that there is no overlap between formal and non-formal programs so that students can participate in all activities optimally.

Organizing also includes providing supporting facilities and infrastructure, such as language laboratories equipped with audio-visual equipment, conducive classrooms, and libraries that provide collections of Arabic books and supporting literature. This is in line with the principles of Islamic education management which emphasize the importance of managing resources effectively to support the learning process (Abu Bakar, 2020).

### 3. Implementation (Actuating)

The implementation of the NAFIRA program is carried out with interactive and communicative learning methods. Teachers use the direct method approach, which is learning Arabic directly without the intermediary of another language, so that students are accustomed to using active Arabic in daily communication. Learning activities are carried out in morning and evening sessions, with a variety of methods such as lectures, discussions, role-play, and memorization exercises of mufradat yaumiyah (daily vocabulary).

This implementation is supported by regular training for teachers to improve Arabic teaching competencies, including training in communicative learning methods and the use of learning technology. According to research at Pondok Pesantren Darussalam, training and staff development are important factors in the successful implementation of the Arabic language learning program (Khusnul, 2024).

### 4. Controlling

Controlling is carried out periodically to ensure the achievement of learning objectives. Evaluation includes structured oral and written exams, observation of learning activities, and monitoring the activeness of students in Arabic language activities. The evaluation of the NAFIRA program is called munasabah which is carried out once a year like a class promotion exam in general. Evaluation in the NAFIRA program is carried out in stages and continuously, consisting of monthly, mid-semester, and year-end evaluations. Evaluation is carried out in two main forms:

- a. Oral Exam: Assessing istima' (listening) and kalam (speaking) skills, testing the ability of students to understand conversations, as well as speaking with appropriate grammar and vocabulary.
- b. Written Exam: Assessing qira'ah (reading) and kitabah (writing) skills, including fluency in reading classical and modern Arabic texts, as well as the ability to write simple essays.

This evaluation model is in accordance with the principles of authentic assessment proposed by Wiggins (1990), where assessments should represent real-world tasks and assess the application of knowledge in the actual context. Evaluation results are used as the basis for future curriculum improvement and development. Control also involves regular coordination meetings between pesantren leaders, teachers, and staff to discuss obstacles and solutions in program implementation. According to Handoko (2001), effective supervision will help leaders know whether activities are going according to plan and identify deviations for immediate correction.

The NAFIRA curriculum shows strong relevance to adaptive curriculum theory, especially referring to the principles proposed by Ralph W. Tyler (1949) in his book *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. According to Tyler, a good curriculum must be organized based on the needs of students, the needs of society, and the needs of science. Tyler posed four fundamental questions in the preparation of the curriculum, namely:

1. What goals are to be achieved?
2. What learning experiences need to be provided to achieve these goals?
3. How can the learning experiences be organized effectively?
4. How can we know that the objectives have been achieved?



##### 5. Bagaimana pengalaman belajar itu dapat diorganisasikan secara efektif?

The application of the principle of learner needs in NAFIRA is very evident in the planning and implementation of learning. Pesantren Darussalam Sengon adapts the NAFIRA curriculum by considering the diverse backgrounds of students in mastering Arabic, so that the preparation of learning materials and methods is adjusted to the level of their needs. This is in line with Tyler's view that "educational experiences must be meaningful to learners and relevant to their lives" (Tyler, 1949).<sup>[27]</sup>

Furthermore, the approach used by Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon also shows flexibility in organizing learning experiences. The emphasis on the direct method, teacher training, and regular evaluation show an adaptive attitude towards the development of students' needs and the challenges of the learning environment.

Thus, the implementation of the NAFIRA curriculum not only meets the standards of systematic learning planning, but is also consistent with the principles of an adaptive curriculum that prioritizes flexibility, relevance and orientation to the real needs of learners.

#### Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Implementation

The implementation of the NAFIRA Program in improving Arabic language competence in pesantren cannot be separated from the existence of supporting factors that accelerate the achievement of goals, as well as inhibiting factors that become challenges in the field. The success of educational innovation is strongly influenced by the interaction between supporting forces (facilitators) and inhibiting forces (barriers) in the implementation environment

#### Supporting Factor

##### 1. Institutional Commitment

The commitment of the pesantren institution is the main foundation for the sustainability of the NAFIRA program. The pesantren leadership that fully supports this innovation shows structural and cultural commitment. According to the **Organizational Commitment theory** by Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1979), organizational commitment is the degree of individual or group attachment to organizational values and goals, which ultimately has an impact on behavioral consistency in supporting the program.<sup>[28]</sup> In the context of NAFIRA, this commitment is reflected through pesantren policies that provide full support for curriculum preparation, procurement of infrastructure, and provision of regular training for teachers.<sup>[29]</sup>

##### 2. Santri Motivation

Student motivation is also a key factor in the successful implementation of NAFIRA. The theory of learning motivation proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) in **Self-Determination Theory** emphasizes that **intrinsic motivation**, namely the learning drive that arises from within the students, is very important for academic success.<sup>[30]</sup> Students who feel that mastering Arabic will improve their understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith show strong intrinsic motivation. The NAFIRA program also builds extrinsic motivation through rewards for achievement, Arabic competitions, and roles in Arabic forums within the pesantren.

##### 3. Facilities and Infrastructure

The availability of adequate infrastructure, such as comfortable learning spaces, Arabic language libraries, language laboratories, and digital learning media, is a significant supporting factor. As stated by Farrant (1980), adequate educational facilities are one of the fundamental components in supporting the effectiveness of the learning process. In the NAFIRA implementing pesantren, these facilities are optimized by providing Arabic conversation

rooms, Arabic bulletin boards, and electronic media-based audio-lingual programs to enrich the learning experience of students.

### Inhibiting Factors

#### 1. Lack of Professional Human Resources

One of the main challenges in the implementation of NAFIRA is the lack of professional human resources (HR) in modern communication-based Arabic language teaching. Many Arabic teachers are more trained in the traditional grammatical approach (Grammar-Translation Method), but have not fully mastered the communicative approach (Communicative Language Teaching).

According to the theory of teacher competence proposed by Shulman (1987) in the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), teachers must have not only knowledge of the material, but also the right method to deliver the material. The imbalance between material mastery and innovative teaching techniques is a real obstacle in the implementation of NAFIRA.

#### 2. Time Limitations

The time available in the pesantren activity schedule is quite tight, covering academic, worship, and other extra-curricular activities. This makes the allocation of special time for NAFIRA program limited. As stated by Carroll (1963) in the Model of School Learning, the time available to learn (opportunity to learn) is a key variable that affects learning outcomes. If learning time is insufficient, then achieving the expected Arabic language competency targets also becomes more difficult to achieve.

#### 3. Variations in Students' Backgrounds

Variations in students' backgrounds in terms of initial Arabic language ability, learning experience, and family support also become inhibiting factors. Students who come from pesantren or previous schools that do not implement intensive Arabic language learning usually need a longer adaptation time.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that effective learning occurs when challenges are slightly above learners' actual abilities.[31] However, with a high variation in backgrounds, it becomes difficult to organize uniform learning, so a learning differentiation strategy is needed to accommodate the individual needs of santri.

The successful implementation of NAFIRA is inseparable from several key supporting factors. Based on educational management literature, the success factors of learning programs include: visionary leadership, professional teacher involvement, adequate infrastructure, and a strong academic culture.

At Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Sengon, the leadership of the pesantren is the main motor in encouraging the success of curriculum implementation. The collegial leadership applied allows the creation of a participatory atmosphere in program planning and implementation. In addition, continuous training for NAFIRA teachers is an important factor that supports the success of the program, as stated by Sudjana (2013) that teacher competence has a positive correlation with student learning outcomes.

However, there are also obstacles faced, such as the heterogeneity of students' initial abilities in Arabic, the limitations of technology-based learning media, and obstacles in maintaining the motivation of students in the midst of busy boarding school activities. Pesantren Darussalam Sengon overcomes these obstacles with adaptive strategies, such as:

#### 1. Holding a language enrichment program for new students,

2. Providing non-formal language practice spaces such as weekly muhadharah forums,
3. Conducting individual assistance for students who have difficulty speaking Arabic.

This adaptive approach is in line with the concept of adaptive leadership in education proposed by Heifetz (1994), namely the need for educational leaders to not only rely on routine procedures, but also to innovate in the face of challenges.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that the NAFIRA program (Nahdlatul Raghabin Fii Lughatil Arabiyah) serves as an effective model of an adaptive, non-formal curriculum that enhances Arabic language competence within the pesantren context. The program's strengths namely its flexibility, responsiveness to students' linguistic and social needs, and its communicative-contextual teaching strategies support previous theories of adaptive and competency-based curriculum development (Tyler, 1949; Vygotsky, 1978; UNESCO, 2017). This study reinforces the relevance of constructivist approaches and task-based language teaching (TBLT) in non-formal religious education settings, particularly in Islamic boarding schools with diverse student populations.

Moreover, the study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that Arabic language acquisition in pesantren can be significantly improved through a curriculum that integrates classical Islamic sciences with modern pedagogical practices. This aligns with and extends the findings of Munir (2021), who emphasized the importance of student-centered curriculum design. The success of NAFIRA not only lies in linguistic outcomes but also in enhancing comprehension of core Islamic disciplines such as Qur'anic interpretation, Hadith, and Fiqh. Although constrained by limited professional instructors and time allocation, the program overcame these challenges through strategic adaptation highlighting the importance of institutional support, structured teacher training, and curriculum contextualization. These findings not only reaffirm the significance of adaptive curriculum theory but also offer new insights into its practical application within pesantren, thus extending the scientific discourse on non-formal religious education and Arabic language pedagogy in the 21st century.

The findings of this study present several actionable implications for educational stakeholders involved in Islamic boarding school (pesantren) education. First, adaptive curriculum models such as NAFIRA should be considered for scaling and replication, particularly in pesantren environments where students come from heterogeneous linguistic and educational backgrounds. For instance, the 30% increase in Arabic proficiency reported in adaptive programs (cf. Munir, 2021) supports the development of needs-based curriculum design in similar contexts. Second, policymakers and institutional leaders should prioritize structured teacher development programs, including certification in Arabic pedagogy, workshops on communicative language teaching, and regular mentoring. The lack of qualified Arabic language instructors remains a major bottleneck, and targeted upskilling initiatives supported by government grants or partnerships with universities are essential.

Third, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework should be integrated into program implementation. This includes regular classroom observations, formative assessments, and learner feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement. Fourth, the success of integrating Arabic language learning with religious studies in NAFIRA suggests the value of contextualized content delivery. This can be translated into the development of integrated learning modules (e.g., Arabic for Qur'anic Studies) that simultaneously build language skills and deepen religious understanding. Lastly, future innovations should explore digitalization strategies, such as mobile learning applications, online Arabic tutorials, and blended learning models, especially to address time constraints and teacher shortages. To ensure sustainability and wider

reach, there is a pressing need for policy-level support including curriculum guidelines from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, dedicated funding schemes, and recognition of non-formal programs like NAFIRA within the national education framework.

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