The Implementation of the "Takallam bi al-As'ilah" Strategy to Improve Arabic Speaking Skills (Maharatul Kalam) of Grade X Students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Bahri Bone Bolango

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the Arabic speaking skills (maharatul kalam) of tenth-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Bahri through the implementation of the "Takallam bi al-As'ilah" strategy. The research follows a classroom action research (CAR) model conducted in two cycles, involving the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The study subjects comprised 12 students (2 males and 10 females). Data were collected through observations, oral tests, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed a significant improvement in the students' speaking abilities. Mastery increased from 0% in the pre-test, to 16.67% in Cycle I, and reached 85.71% in Cycle II. Improvements were observed in fluency, speaking confidence, accuracy, grammatical usage, and the ability to construct sentences according to Arabic grammar (nahwu and sharaf). The results indicate that the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy is effective in enhancing students' Arabic speaking skills. This method is recommended as an innovative alternative in Arabic language instruction at the Madrasah Aliyah level.

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Introduction

Arabic is a language of profound importance within the intellectual heritage of Islam and the global Muslim community[1]. It functions not only as the medium of daily religious rituals such as prayer and Qur'anic recitation, but also as the key to accessing classical and contemporary literature in Islamic law, exegesis, hadith, and philosophy[2]. Mastery of the Arabic language is therefore not merely an academic necessity, but an integral component in reinforcing the religious and cultural identity of Muslim students.

In the context of formal education in Indonesia, Arabic is taught systematically across various educational levels, particularly in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren)[3]. The Arabic curriculum typically emphasizes the four core language skills:

listening (istima'), speaking (kalam), reading (qira'ah), and writing (kitabah)[4]. Among these, speaking is often considered the most challenging, as it requires students to respond spontaneously using accurate vocabulary, sentence structures, and communicative confidence[5]. Thus, speaking skills serve as a crucial indicator of success in Arabic language instruction.

However, many Arabic language teaching practices in madrasahs remain overly textual and rigid[6]. Emphasis is often placed on rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules, with insufficient speaking practice[7]. Consequently, students may perform well in written assessments but struggle to express themselves orally in Arabic. This gap is largely due to the lack of communicative and interactive teaching methodologies, leading to stagnation in oral proficiency.

To address these challenges, there is a growing need for instructional strategies that prioritize communicative, participatory, and contextually relevant learning experiences. One such method is the "Takallam bi al-As'ilah" strategy, which encourages students to engage in active question-and-answer sessions in a lively classroom atmosphere. This approach shifts the focus of Arabic learning from mere cognitive attainment to include the development of social communication skills and speaking confidence.

Oral proficiency (maharatul kalam) is an essential skill for students, particularly at the Madrasah Aliyah level[8]. It enables them to effectively articulate ideas, emotions, and arguments in daily conversations[9]. Unfortunately, Arabic speaking instruction often faces several obstacles, including low student motivation, limited vocabulary, and fear of making mistakes[10]. Many students perceive Arabic as a subject driven by memorization rather than as a functional tool for real-world communication[11].

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to speak Arabic fluently becomes a vital asset for cross-cultural communication and scholarly engagement with classical and modern texts[12]. rabic language learning in madrasahs requires strategic innovation to make it more effective and engaging. One relevant strategy is Takallam bi al-As'ilah, a question-and-answer-based approach that encourages students to actively ask and answer questions in Arabic[13]. This strategy not only focuses on linguistic aspects but also fosters critical thinking, confidence, and student responsiveness to the learning material. Through this method, Arabic language classes transform into dynamic spaces for interaction rather than one-way information transfer.

Research has shown that interactive learning methods like Takallam bi al-As'ilah significantly enhance students' speaking skills. Fuadah found that the implementation of a reward-and-punishment system in Arabic language instruction increased students' motivation and willingness to speak[14]. Similarly, Wartiman and Ilyas demonstrated that storytelling strategies conceptually aligned with Takallam bi al-As'ilah improved students' fluency while deepening their comprehension of the material[15]. Furthermore, the use of visual media has proven effective in boosting students' motivation and engagement in Arabic language learning[16]. A scientific approach to language learning, as described by Sobriyah, which includes the stages of observation, questioning, exploration, and communication, has also been shown to foster deeper development in students' speaking abilities[17].

Additionally, the effectiveness of speaking skill acquisition is highly dependent on the learning environment[18]. In many madrasahs, including MA Nurul Bahri, the lack of an immersive Arabic-speaking environment poses a significant challenge. Limited opportunities for conversational practice outside the classroom and the absence of a consistent Arabic-speaking culture within the school make it difficult for students to maintain the oral proficiency they have acquired. In this context, classroom strategies that emphasize active speaking practice are essential to compensate for the lack of real-world exposure.

The role of Arabic language teachers is also critical in the success of speaking instruction[19]. Teachers are not only facilitators but also serve as language models who must demonstrate accurate pronunciation, intonation, and grammatical structure[20]. The Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy provides teachers with an opportunity to actively direct classroom dialogue and create authentic communication stimuli. In this role, the teacher transitions from being merely a content deliverer to becoming an interactive language partner who inspires students to speak.

Improving Arabic speaking skills also aligns with the broader objectives of Islamic education, which aim to produce individuals capable of accessing religious sources in their original language[21]. With strong speaking abilities, students are not only able to understand Arabic texts but also to participate in discussions and articulate their understanding of Islamic teachings. This capability is essential in shaping competent and communicative Muslim intellectuals.

Furthermore, from the perspective of the 2013 Curriculum in Indonesia—which emphasizes a scientific and active learning approach the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy is particularly relevant, as it aligns with constructivist principles[22]. Students are not passive recipients of knowledge; rather, they construct understanding through interaction and exploration. The strategy also promotes student collaboration, which enriches classroom dynamics and boosts confidence in using Arabic as a medium of communication.

Based on this theoretical framework, the present study aims to explore the implementation of the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy in improving Arabic speaking skills at MA Nurul Bahri. Beyond assessing learning outcomes, the study also seeks to investigate how this method influences student attitudes, confidence, and participation. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the development of a more relevant, enjoyable, and applicable model of Arabic language instruction—one that not only improves students' speaking abilities but also cultivates their critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration in using Arabic as a global communication tool.

Method

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection[23]. The research was conducted in the tenth-grade class of Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Bahri in Kabila Bone, Gorontalo, during the odd semester of the 2017 academic year. The research subjects comprised 12 students, including 2 males and 10 females.

The strategy implemented in this study was Takallam bi al-As'ilah, a question-and-answer-based learning method aimed at improving students' Arabic speaking skills (*maharatul kalam*). The application of this strategy began with the delivery of lesson materials, including the learning topic, key vocabulary, and sample dialogues. The teacher would then pose questions to the students, who answered and passed on questions to their peers in turn. This method created an active and communicative learning environment that encouraged students' speaking confidence.

Data were collected using several techniques:

1. **Observation**, to monitor student engagement and the effectiveness of the strategy during the learning process.
2. **Oral tests**, to assess students' speaking skills in terms of fluency, coherence, confidence, thematic relevance, and the proper use of Arabic grammatical structures (nahwu and sharaf).
3. **Interviews**, to obtain additional insights regarding students' experiences and perceptions of the learning process.
4. **Documentation**, as supporting data including activity records, photographs, and student work.

The instruments used included student engagement observation sheets, interview guides, speaking skill assessment rubrics, and learning evaluation forms. The criteria for success were achieving a minimum score of 70 and at least 75% of students reaching proficiency, along with increased student participation during the learning sessions.

Data analysis followed three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as outlined by Miles and Huberman[24]. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, peer review (observer), and continuous observation.

Reflection was conducted at the end of each cycle to evaluate the achievement of learning objectives, the effectiveness of the strategy, and any obstacles encountered during the process. Decisions regarding the continuation or modification of the intervention were based on the reflection results. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more relevant, communicative, and applicable Arabic language learning models, particularly in enhancing students' speaking skills (maharatul kalam) at the Madrasah Aliyah level.

Results and Discussion

This study aimed to improve the Arabic speaking skills (maharatul kalam) of tenth-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Bahri through the implementation of the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy. The research was conducted in two cycles, beginning with a pre-test to assess the students' initial speaking abilities, followed by the implementation of actions in Cycle I and refinements in Cycle II.

Hasil Pre-Test

The pre-test results revealed that the students' initial Arabic speaking skills were very low. All students (100%) were in the "low" category, with an average score of 53.75. None of the students achieved the minimum competency threshold. This condition indicated

difficulties in expressing ideas, constructing grammatically correct sentences, and speaking fluently in Arabic. This low proficiency may be attributed to the limited practice of speaking Arabic outside the classroom[25]

Table 1. Pre-Test Results of Speaking Skills

Score Range	Category	Number of Students	Percentage
86-100	Good	0	0%
70-85	Fair	0	0%
45-69	Poor	12	100%

These results are consistent with previous research, which found that without interactive teaching strategies, students tend to be passive in language learning, making it difficult to achieve oral proficiency[26]

Cycle I Results

Following the application of the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy in Cycle I, the average score increased to 61.08. However, only 2 students (16.67%) reached the minimum competency level, while 10 students (83.33%) remained in the "low" category.

Table 2. Post-Test Results Cycle I

Score Range	Category	Number of Students	Percentage
86-100	Good	0	0%
70-85	Fair	2	16,67%
45-69	Poor	10	83,33%

Figure 1. Comparison Chart of Pre-Test and Post-Test Cycle I Mastery Levels
(Visualization: Bar or pie chart comparing mastery percentages: Pre-test 0%, Post-test I 16.67%)

Although there was improvement, the results indicated that the first cycle had not yet achieved optimal outcomes. Reflections from Cycle I highlighted several shortcomings, such as inadequate teacher facilitation in guiding dialogue practices and the use of materials that were not fully relevant to students' daily experiences. Some students also hesitated to speak due to limited vocabulary and fear of making mistakes.

Cycle II Results

In Cycle II, improvements were made by adapting more contextual learning materials, increasing the intensity of dialogue practice, and enhancing teacher guidance. As a result, there was a significant increase: the average score rose to 76.83, and 10 out of 12 students (85.71%) achieved learning mastery.

Table 3. Post-Test Results Cycle II

Score Range	Category	Number of Students	Percentage
86-100	Good	2	14,28%
70-85	Fair	8	57,14%
45-69	Poor	2	14,28%

Figure 2. Progression Trend of Mastery Levels per Cycle
(Visualization: Line chart showing improvement trend: Pre-test 0% → Cycle I 16.67% → Cycle II 85.71%)

These results demonstrate that the implementation of the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy was effective in fostering an active and interactive learning atmosphere. This method encouraged students to engage in real conversations, practice the language directly, and build speaking confidence. The chain-question technique also helped students develop critical thinking by requiring them not only to answer but also to formulate new questions for their peers.[27]

Discussion

The substantial improvement observed in Cycle II aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction in language learning. The Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy also supports a constructivist approach, where students learn through direct experiences and social interaction[29].

Additionally, this dialogue-based learning had a positive effect on affective aspects such as student motivation and confidence. Previous studies have shown that supportive learning environments and opportunities for direct speaking practice can enhance students' willingness to use a foreign language[30]. In this context, the teacher serves not only as a facilitator but also as a linguistic model who provides instructional stimuli and ongoing support.

Thus, the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy not only enhances students' speaking abilities in terms of fluency, confidence, and accuracy but also helps internalize Arabic as a tool for communication rather than merely an academic subject. These findings are consistent with other research that advocates for the use of interactive teaching strategies in foreign language instruction[31].

Overall, this study provides valuable contributions to the development of Arabic language teaching models in madrasahs. The Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy emerges as a relevant, effective, and practical alternative for improving students' Arabic speaking skills.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy was effective in enhancing the Arabic speaking skills (maharatul kalam) of tenth-grade students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Bahri. This strategy successfully fostered a more interactive learning environment, encouraged students' speaking confidence, and supported their active development of Arabic language proficiency.

The findings showed a significant improvement from the pre-test stage to Cycle II. In the pre-test, none of the students achieved the minimum competency threshold (0%). In Cycle I, learning mastery increased to 16.67% (2 out of 12 students). After adjustments in Cycle II, mastery improved further to 85.71% (10 out of 12 students). This improvement covered aspects of fluency, coherence, confidence, topic relevance, and the correct use of Arabic grammatical structures.

Therefore, the Takallam bi al-As'ilah strategy can be recommended as an innovative, communicative, and effective model for Arabic language instruction to improve students' speaking skills. The results of this study are expected to serve as a valuable reference for teachers, researchers, and education practitioners in developing more engaging and meaningful Arabic language teaching methods at the Madrasah Aliyah level.

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