



The Effect of the Drill Method on Students' Interest and Arabic Learning Outcomes at MTs At-Taqwa Samarinda

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Abstract

The drill method is commonly used in Arabic language instruction because repeated and structured practice can strengthen vocabulary, sentence patterns, reading routines, and other language skills. This study examines the relationship between drill-method implementation, students' learning interest, and Arabic learning outcomes at MTs At-Taqwa Samarinda. A quantitative correlational design involved 148 students in grades 8 and 9, with 40 students selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected through classroom observation, four-point Likert-scale questionnaires, and documentation of official Arabic report-card scores. The drill-method and learning-interest questionnaires showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of .901 and .922. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 through normality and linearity tests, Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and multivariate analysis. The results showed a moderate positive relationship between the drill method and learning interest ($r = .593$, $p < .001$). In contrast, the relationship between the drill method and Arabic learning outcomes was weak and not statistically significant ($r = .168$, $p = .302$). The multivariate test also showed no significant simultaneous relationship. Overall, drill activities were more consistently associated with student engagement than academic scores and should be combined with communicative practice, formative feedback, differentiated support, and varied learning media in instruction.

Keywords: drill method, learning interest, learning outcomes, Arabic language learning, MTs At-Taqwa Samarinda

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A. Introduction

Education is a central component of national development because schools do not merely transmit knowledge; they also shape the competencies, attitudes, and learning habits that students need to participate in social, religious, and economic life. In the Indonesian context, Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System places language and religious education within the broader responsibility of schools to develop learners' intellectual and moral capacities. For Islamic educational institutions, Arabic occupies a distinctive position. It is a foreign language used for communication, but it is also closely connected with access to the Qur'an, hadith, classical Islamic scholarship, and many forms of religious practice. Consequently, the quality of Arabic instruction in madrasahs has implications that extend beyond examination performance. Students are expected to develop sufficient language competence to understand texts, communicate basic meanings, and continue learning independently (Ansori, 2019; Darmadi, 2019; Fattah, 2020).

Despite this strategic position, Arabic is often perceived by secondary-school students as a difficult subject. Learners enter the classroom with different educational backgrounds, levels of exposure to Arabic vocabulary, literacy in Arabic script, confidence, and motivation. Some students have previously studied at Islamic elementary schools or Qur'anic learning institutions, while others have had only limited contact with formal Arabic instruction. These differences create a pedagogical challenge for teachers: a method that is effective for students with strong prior knowledge may not produce the same result for students who are still developing basic recognition and recall. Therefore, the selection of teaching methods should be based not only on the characteristics of the subject matter but also on the characteristics and readiness of the learners (Fattah, 2020; Slameto, 2010).

One method frequently used to strengthen basic language skills is the drill method. Drill is characterized by deliberate, structured, and repeated practice of a particular response or skill until the learner can perform it with greater accuracy and fluency. In Arabic instruction, drills may take the form of vocabulary repetition, pronunciation practice, sentence-pattern exercises, reading aloud, substitution exercises, short written exercises, or repeated application of grammatical rules. The pedagogical logic is that repeated practice reduces hesitation, strengthens recall, and helps learners move from effortful processing toward more automatic performance. Roestiyah (2008) and Ristiana (2022) emphasize that repetition is most useful when the exercise has a clear objective, is appropriately sequenced, and is accompanied by teacher guidance rather than implemented as mechanical repetition without feedback.

Recent studies in Arabic language education indicate that the drill method can support specific aspects of learning when it is applied systematically. Fauzi and Darmawan (2019) reported improvement in Arabic learning outcomes in a classroom action study after drill activities were implemented in cycles. Alimuddien et al. (2022) likewise described improvement in students' Arabic performance after repeated practice in a madrasah context. Munthe and Agustia (2023) found that the implementation of drills was supported by competent teachers and positive teacher-student interaction, although student interest, family conditions, and limited learning media could become barriers. In a more specialized skill context, Rizal et al. (2023) showed that drill-based Arabic calligraphy learning was associated with stronger writing performance and positive student enthusiasm. These findings

suggest that the drill method is potentially useful, but its effectiveness depends on how it is designed, supported, and aligned with the intended learning outcome.

The relationship between drill practice and learning interest is particularly important. Learning interest refers to a learner's tendency to pay attention, feel attracted to, and voluntarily participate in learning activities. Interest influences whether students are willing to remain engaged long enough to benefit from instruction (Ricardo & Meilani, 2017; Slameto, 2010). Repetition can increase confidence when students experience gradual mastery, but it can also produce boredom when tasks are monotonous, excessively long, or disconnected from meaningful use. Thus, the same instructional method can have different motivational consequences depending on task variation, the quality of feedback, classroom climate, and the learner's initial competence. Mawaddah (2022), for example, emphasizes that drill-based learning becomes more motivating when teachers provide supportive reinforcement rather than relying on repetition alone.

Learning outcomes represent another, conceptually different, dimension of educational success. Whereas learning interest concerns engagement and affective orientation toward learning, learning outcomes refer to demonstrated achievement after instruction. In school settings, such outcomes may be represented by tests, assignments, practical performance, or report-card scores that summarize performance across a period of time (Hamalik, 2008; Sudjana, 2010, 2016). A teaching method may therefore be related to interest without showing the same strength of association with report-card results. Report-card scores are cumulative indicators that can reflect many influences beyond one classroom method, including prior knowledge, assessment design, attendance, study habits, family support, and performance in tasks that are not directly trained through drills.

Preliminary observation at MTs At-Taqwa Samarinda indicated that Arabic teachers had already used the drill method, yet its classroom implementation did not always lead to optimal participation. The original study notes problems such as disorganized learning behavior, passive engagement, differences in comprehension, and varying educational backgrounds among students. This context provides an important reason to examine the method empirically rather than assume that frequent use automatically produces better results. It is necessary to distinguish between whether students perceive or experience drill activities positively and whether those activities are reflected in measurable Arabic achievement.

Accordingly, this study focuses on three related questions: whether the implementation of the drill method is associated with students' interest in learning Arabic; whether the drill method is associated with Arabic learning outcomes; and whether the method shows a significant simultaneous relationship with both outcomes. The contribution of the study lies in examining learning interest and academic outcomes together in one madrasah context. This distinction is useful because a method can influence the learning process and students' willingness to participate even when its relationship with cumulative achievement is weaker. Because the study uses a correlational design rather than an experiment, the findings are interpreted as statistical relationships or associations and not as proof of direct causation.

B. Literature Review

The drill method is an instructional technique in which learners repeatedly perform a target task so that the required response becomes more accurate, stable,

and efficient. Roestiyah (2008) describes drill as repeated practice intended to strengthen specific skills, while Cahyaningrum (2018) emphasizes the movement from explanation toward guided and repeated performance. In this sense, drill should not be equated with simple memorization. Effective drill requires a defined target, sufficient modeling, opportunities to respond, correction of errors, and repetition that is adjusted to learners' needs. Surakhmad (1994) and Ulihbukit (2006) similarly stress the importance of clear instructional objectives and teacher monitoring during practice.

In language learning, repetition is pedagogically relevant because many foundational skills require rapid retrieval. A student who must consciously reconstruct every familiar word, sound, or pattern will have fewer cognitive resources available for understanding meaning or producing a response. Repeated practice can therefore support automaticity in vocabulary recognition, pronunciation, spelling, reading routines, and elementary grammatical patterns. For Arabic, this is especially relevant when learners are simultaneously developing familiarity with Arabic script, new phonological distinctions, vocabulary, morphological patterns, and sentence structures. Drill activities can provide an organized space for repeated exposure and response before learners are expected to use the language more independently.

However, the instructional value of repetition depends on the quality of the task. Repeating an incorrect response can stabilize error, while repeating material without understanding may produce short-term recall that does not transfer to new situations. For this reason, drills should include immediate feedback and should move progressively from controlled to more meaningful practice. Teachers may begin with choral repetition or substitution patterns, then shift toward paired practice, short contextual sentences, reading, or communicative application. Ristiana (2022) argues that the teacher's role is not simply to increase the number of repetitions but to manage the sequence and appropriateness of practice so that repetition supports mastery rather than fatigue.

Evidence from Arabic-language classrooms shows both the potential and the limitations of drill. Fauzi and Darmawan (2019) reported improved classroom achievement across action-research cycles, suggesting that structured repetition may help students reach minimum competency targets. Alimuddien et al. (2022) similarly found improved learning performance in a madrasah setting after drill was applied to Arabic material. Munthe and Agustia (2023) found that drills could be implemented through opening, core, and closing learning activities, but the quality of implementation was influenced by student interest, family environment, teacher competence, and available learning media. These findings are consistent with the view that drill is not an isolated treatment; it operates inside a wider instructional ecosystem.

The study by Rizal et al. (2023) provides another useful perspective because it examined drill in Arabic calligraphy. Their results suggest that repeated practice can support a skill that depends heavily on motor coordination, accuracy, and visual form. This is consistent with the traditional strength of drills in domains requiring procedural fluency. Nevertheless, Arabic language learning at the madrasah level includes a broader range of outcomes, such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammatical understanding, oral communication, and written expression. A drill that is well aligned with one of these outcomes may have a limited relationship with a broad report-card score representing several competencies at once.

Learning interest is commonly understood as a relatively positive orientation toward an activity that is reflected in attention, enjoyment, curiosity, and willingness to participate. Slameto (2010) explains that interest encourages students to engage without external coercion, while Ricardo and Meilani (2017) connect interest and motivation with educational achievement. Interest is therefore not merely a pleasant feeling; it has behavioral implications. Students who are interested tend to attend more carefully, persist longer, ask questions, complete tasks, and respond to feedback. At the same time, interest is sensitive to classroom experience and can change when students repeatedly encounter success, difficulty, recognition, boredom, or anxiety.

The drill method can influence interest in two opposite directions. On one side, repeated practice can increase familiarity and perceived competence. When students notice that words become easier to remember or that previously difficult patterns can be completed accurately, they may experience progress and become more willing to participate. Structured drills can also reduce ambiguity because students know what is expected. On the other side, excessive repetition may become monotonous if every task has the same form, if learners receive little choice, or if practice is disconnected from meaningful communication. Munthe and Agustia (2023) identify student interest as one of the factors affecting drill implementation, while Mawaddah (2022) highlights the importance of encouragement and reinforcement for sustaining motivation in drill-based learning.

For this reason, the relationship between drill and interest should be interpreted as a function of instructional design. Short, varied, progressively challenging exercises are more likely to sustain attention than long sequences of identical items. Feedback is also central. Corrective feedback helps students understand what needs to be improved, whereas positive feedback can reinforce effort and progress. In addition, incorporating pair work, games, visual media, or contextual sentences can make repetitive practice feel purposeful. These principles do not eliminate repetition; rather, they transform repetition into guided practice that remains connected to learning goals.

Learning outcomes refer to changes in knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills that can be observed or assessed after learning experiences. Hamalik (2008) and Sudjana (2010, 2016) emphasize that educational outcomes are multidimensional and should be interpreted in relation to learning objectives and assessment procedures. In the present study, Arabic learning outcomes were operationalized through official school report-card scores. This indicator has practical value because it reflects recognized school assessment, but it also has an important characteristic: it is cumulative. It may combine several forms of assessment and may represent competencies developed through multiple learning activities, not only drill.

The difference between an instructional-process variable and a cumulative outcome variable is theoretically important. The drill-method questionnaire captures the extent to which students experience or perceive repeated practice in instruction, whereas report-card scores summarize broader academic performance. A moderate relationship between drill and interest could therefore coexist with a weak relationship between drill and report-card achievement. Interest may respond quickly to classroom structure and engagement, while academic performance may require longer exposure and may depend on prior achievement, assessment alignment, independent study, attendance, and home support.

The present study also draws attention to learner heterogeneity. Students at MTs At-Taqlwa Samarinda come from different educational backgrounds, and the original study specifically notes differences between graduates of general primary schools and Islamic elementary schools. Such background differences may produce unequal baseline knowledge of Arabic script, vocabulary, and religious terminology. When baseline competence varies substantially, the same drill can be either appropriately challenging, too easy, or too difficult for different students. This condition can weaken the relationship between the frequency of drill and final outcomes unless the teacher differentiates practice according to learner readiness.

Based on this conceptual framework, three hypotheses were evaluated. First, implementation of the drill method was expected to be positively associated with students' interest in learning Arabic. Second, implementation of the drill method was expected to be positively associated with Arabic learning outcomes. Third, the study examined whether the drill method showed a significant simultaneous relationship with learning interest and learning outcomes. These hypotheses allow the study to distinguish an affective learning-process outcome from a cumulative academic outcome and to identify whether the same instructional practice relates equally to both.

C. Method

This study used a quantitative correlational design. The design was selected because the research examined statistical relationships among naturally occurring variables rather than assigning students to experimental and control groups. The independent variable was the implementation of the drill method (X), while the dependent variables were students' learning interest (Y1) and Arabic learning outcomes (Y2). No instructional manipulation or pretest-posttest comparison was conducted; therefore, the design does not permit direct causal inference. Accordingly, the statistical results are interpreted as associations and should not be used to claim direct causal effects (Setyawan & Mabruri, 2020; Sugiyono, 2017).

The research was conducted at MTs At-Taqlwa Samarinda. The population consisted of 148 students enrolled in six classes across grades 8 and 9. From this population, 40 students were selected through simple random sampling. The sample included students from classes 8.1, 8.2, 9.1, and 9.2. The use of random sampling was intended to reduce systematic selection bias and provide each eligible student with an opportunity to be included, although the relatively small sample size means that generalization beyond the school should be made cautiously.

Three techniques were used to collect data: observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Observation was used to monitor the classroom implementation of drill activities and to provide contextual information about how repeated practice occurred during Arabic lessons. The questionnaire for the drill-method variable measured students' experience or perception of the implementation of repeated practice. A second questionnaire measured learning interest. Both questionnaires used a four-point Likert response format. A four-point scale was used to encourage respondents to indicate a directional response rather than select a neutral midpoint (Martono, 2016; Nimatuzahroh & Prasetyaningrum, 2018).

Arabic learning outcomes were obtained through documentation of official school report-card scores. The use of documentary achievement data has the advantage of relying on an assessment source already recognized by the school. However, it also means that the outcome variable represents cumulative academic

performance rather than performance on a test designed specifically to measure skills practiced through the drill method. This distinction is relevant when interpreting the strength of the relationship between the instructional variable and the learning-outcome variable.

The questionnaire instruments were examined for validity using Pearson Product-Moment procedures. Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha. The drill-method instrument produced an alpha coefficient of .901, while the learning-interest instrument produced an alpha coefficient of .922. Both values indicate high internal consistency and suggest that the items within each questionnaire measured a relatively coherent construct. These coefficients support the use of the composite questionnaire scores for correlational analysis, although reliability alone does not establish content validity or causal interpretation.

Data analysis was conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics 26. The analysis began with prerequisite testing. Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were used to inspect normality, and ANOVA-based linearity tests were used to examine whether the relationships between the drill-method variable and each dependent variable could reasonably be treated as linear. Pearson Product-Moment correlation was then used to test the bivariate relationships between the drill method and learning interest and between the drill method and Arabic learning outcomes. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$ (Gunawan, 2015).

For the third hypothesis, a multivariate procedure (MANOVA) was used to evaluate the simultaneous relationship involving learning interest and learning outcomes. The significance value was greater than .05. Because the independent variable was measured as a score rather than created through experimental group assignment, the multivariate result should be interpreted conservatively and should not be extended to a causal claim.

An important analytical consideration emerged from the assumption tests. The normality significance value for learning interest was .040, which is below .05, whereas the value for learning outcomes was .200. Thus, the normality assumption was not fully satisfied for all variables. The Pearson results should therefore be read with caution. A future reanalysis using a nonparametric sensitivity test such as Spearman's rank correlation, together with inspection of distributions and outliers, would strengthen the robustness of the statistical conclusion.

D. Findings

The analysis was organized around the three research questions: the relationship between drill-method implementation and learning interest, the relationship between drill-method implementation and Arabic learning outcomes, and the reported simultaneous relationship involving both dependent variables. Before hypothesis testing, the prerequisite tests were reviewed because the appropriateness of parametric statistics depends partly on distributional and linearity assumptions.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality results were $p = .040$ for learning interest and $p = .200$ for Arabic learning outcomes. The value of .040 is lower than the .05 criterion, indicating that the learning-interest distribution did not fully meet the conventional normality assumption. By contrast, the learning-outcome distribution did not show a statistically significant departure from normality at the .05 level. Thus, the normality assumption was not fully satisfied across the variables. The mixed

assumption result does not automatically invalidate all parametric analysis, but it requires greater caution in interpretation, particularly with a sample of 40 students.

The linearity tests produced significance values of .904 for the relationship between the drill method and learning interest and .499 for the relationship between the drill method and learning outcomes. These values indicate that the relationships could be treated as linear for the subsequent correlational analysis. This finding supports examination of the direction and magnitude of the relationships with Pearson's correlation coefficient, while the normality issue described above remains a limitation.

For the first hypothesis, Pearson correlation analysis yielded $r = .593$ between the drill-method variable and students' learning interest. The reported significance value was $p < .001$, and the calculated correlation exceeded the critical value of $r = .312$. The coefficient indicates a moderate positive relationship: students who reported stronger or more consistent implementation of drill activities also tended to report higher learning interest. The result supports the first hypothesis in an associational sense. It does not, however, demonstrate that drill practice alone caused the increase in interest, because the variables were measured without experimental manipulation.

For the second hypothesis, the correlation between the drill-method score and Arabic learning outcomes was $r = .168$ with $p = .302$. This coefficient is positive but weak, and the probability value is above .05. The second hypothesis was therefore not supported. In practical terms, variation in reported drill-method implementation was not closely accompanied by variation in students' cumulative Arabic report-card scores within this sample. The difference between the first and second correlations is central to the study: drill activities were more clearly connected with students' interest than with their documented academic achievement.

For the third hypothesis, the multivariate analysis produced a significance value above .05. On the basis of that output, the study did not find a statistically significant simultaneous relationship between the drill method and the combined set of learning-interest and learning-outcome variables. The available result indicates a nonsignificant multivariate decision at the .05 level, so the combined outcome pattern did not meet the criterion for statistical significance.

Taken together, the findings show a differentiated pattern rather than a uniformly positive result. The drill method demonstrated a meaningful association with the affective-engagement variable of learning interest, but not with cumulative academic performance. This pattern suggests that students may respond positively to the structure, familiarity, or participation generated by drill activities without necessarily obtaining higher report-card scores. It also highlights the importance of matching the outcome measure to the particular skill that an instructional method is intended to develop.

The statistical pattern must be considered alongside the contextual observations reported by the study. Students differed in ability, prior educational background, and interest. The study also identified limited instructional time and weak family support as potential constraints. These factors provide plausible explanations for why a moderate relationship with interest did not translate into a significant relationship with learning outcomes. The following discussion examines these issues in relation to the literature and the characteristics of Arabic language learning.

E. Discussion

The most prominent finding is the moderate positive relationship between the drill method and students' interest in learning Arabic. This result is pedagogically plausible because well-structured repetition can make learning expectations clear and can provide students with frequent opportunities to experience small successes. When a learner repeatedly practices vocabulary, pronunciation, or a sentence pattern and notices that the task becomes easier, the sense of improvement may encourage continued participation. This interpretation is consistent with studies showing positive student responses to drill activities when the method is implemented with guidance, interaction, and reinforcement (Mawaddah, 2022; Munthe & Agustia, 2023).

The finding should not be interpreted to mean that repetition is inherently interesting. The motivational value of drill depends on how repetition is organized. A short sequence of progressively challenging items accompanied by immediate feedback can create a sense of competence. In contrast, prolonged repetition of identical items without contextual variation can produce boredom. This dual possibility helps explain why drill is sometimes viewed as effective and at other times criticized as mechanical. The present result suggests that, in the MTs At-Taqwa context, students who perceived stronger drill implementation tended to report higher interest, but the study did not measure which specific drill features were most responsible for that association.

The role of teacher feedback is therefore important. Drill practice is most educationally useful when errors are identified early and students understand how to correct them. Without feedback, repeated practice may simply reproduce misunderstanding. In Arabic learning, this is especially relevant for pronunciation, morphological forms, and grammatical patterns where small errors can become habitual. Teachers should monitor whether students are repeating accurately, explain the reason for corrections, and gradually reduce support as competence improves. This approach transforms drill from repetitive recitation into guided practice.

The significant relationship with interest is also compatible with the idea that structured practice can reduce uncertainty. Students who find Arabic difficult may avoid participation when they are immediately required to produce complex language. Drill can provide a lower-risk stage in which students first practice a limited pattern, become familiar with it, and then use it in a broader task. When students know what response is expected and receive multiple opportunities to try, anxiety may decrease and participation may increase. Such a sequence is particularly useful in heterogeneous classrooms where not all students begin with the same level of Arabic exposure.

In contrast, the relationship between the drill method and Arabic learning outcomes was weak and not statistically significant. This result does not necessarily mean that drills have no instructional value. Previous studies have found improvement in specific Arabic skills or classroom achievement after structured drill practice (Alimuddien et al., 2022; Fauzi & Darmawan, 2019; Rizal et al., 2023). The difference may arise from the design and outcome measures used. Those studies examined performance that was more directly linked to the practiced skill or used action-research or quasi-experimental approaches. The present study used cumulative report-card scores, which may contain many components not directly targeted by drills.

Measurement alignment is therefore a key issue. If drill activities primarily practice vocabulary recall, pronunciation, or specific sentence patterns, the most sensitive outcome measure would be a test that assesses those same abilities. A report-card score may combine written assignments, oral performance, reading, grammar, attendance, projects, and teacher judgments across an entire grading period. Even if drill improves one component, the improvement may be diluted when combined with other components. This methodological characteristic provides one plausible explanation for the weak correlation with learning outcomes and should be considered before concluding that drill is ineffective.

The first contextual factor identified in the study is the mismatch between students' interest and cognitive aptitude. Interest can motivate students to participate, but enthusiasm does not automatically produce mastery. A learner may enjoy repetitive activities while still requiring conceptual explanation, additional time, or differentiated support to understand the underlying language system. Conversely, a student with strong prior knowledge may achieve high scores even if the drill method is not particularly engaging. Thus, interest and achievement are related educational constructs, but they are not interchangeable (Ricardo & Meilani, 2017; Slameto, 2010).

The second factor is heterogeneity of educational background. Students who previously attended Islamic elementary schools may have had more exposure to Arabic vocabulary, Qur'anic reading, or religious terminology than students from general elementary schools. These baseline differences can influence both the speed at which students respond to drills and the level of difficulty they require. A uniform drill may therefore create different experiences: for some students it reinforces foundational knowledge; for others it may be too advanced or too repetitive. This supports the need for differentiated drill tasks, for example by varying the number of prompts, scaffolding, or complexity of sentence patterns.

The third factor is instructional time. Drill requires sufficient repetition to strengthen performance, but repetition also has diminishing returns if it is not well paced. Limited class time may prevent students from receiving enough practice, while excessive allocation to drills may reduce opportunities for explanation, meaningful communication, reading comprehension, or creative use of language. Effective planning therefore requires balance. Drill is best treated as one phase within a broader lesson: modeling and explanation can be followed by controlled practice, then by contextual or communicative application. This sequence preserves the benefits of repetition without allowing the method to dominate the entire learning experience.

The fourth factor is family support. The study identifies weak reinforcement at home as a possible reason why drill practice did not correspond strongly with learning outcomes. Foreign-language learning benefits from distributed practice across time. If students practice only during limited classroom periods, newly learned vocabulary and patterns may fade between lessons. Family support does not require parents to be proficient in Arabic; it can include providing study time, encouraging completion of practice tasks, monitoring learning routines, or supporting access to learning materials. Munthe and Agustia (2023) similarly identify environmental and family factors as relevant to the implementation of drill-based Arabic learning.

The nonsignificant simultaneous result further reinforces the need to avoid a single-method explanation of learning. Students' interest and achievement arise from multiple interacting influences. Drill may contribute to one part of the learning

process, but teacher explanation, instructional media, prior knowledge, peer interaction, assessment quality, classroom climate, and independent study also matter. The absence of a significant multivariate result suggests that the drill-method score alone did not account for a sufficiently strong joint pattern in the two dependent variables within the sample.

A methodological issue also deserves explicit attention. The normality test for learning interest yielded $p = .040$, indicating that the assumption of normality was not fully satisfied. With a sample of 40, Pearson correlation can sometimes remain reasonably robust, especially when the relationship is approximately linear and there are no severe outliers, but distribution plots and outlier diagnostics were not included. Therefore, the significant correlation with interest should be interpreted cautiously. A nonparametric sensitivity analysis using Spearman's rho would be useful in future reanalysis to determine whether the direction and significance of the relationship remain similar without the same normality assumption.

The correlational design provides another limitation. Because students were not randomly assigned to different instructional conditions, the study cannot separate the drill method from other classroom characteristics that may co-occur with it. For example, teachers who use drills consistently may also provide clearer explanations, stronger classroom management, or more frequent feedback. Students who are more interested may also participate more actively and therefore perceive drill implementation more positively. These alternative explanations are inherent in correlational data and reinforce the need to interpret the findings as associations rather than direct causal effects.

The small sample and single-school setting also limit external generalization. The 40 participants provide useful evidence about the local context of MTs At-Taqwa Samarinda, but the relationship may differ in schools with other curricula, teacher practices, student backgrounds, or amounts of Arabic exposure. Replication across several madrasahs would help determine whether the moderate association with interest is stable. A larger sample would also make it possible to examine whether educational background, grade level, or initial Arabic competence moderates the relationship between drill and learning outcomes.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings support the continued use of drill, but not as a stand-alone method. Teachers can preserve the strengths of repetition while integrating communicative, contextual, and technology-supported activities. Vocabulary drills, for example, can be followed by short dialogues, matching tasks, digital quizzes, sentence construction, or reading activities that require the same words in new contexts. Grammar drills can progress from pattern completion toward guided writing or speaking. Such combinations help students move from recognition and recall to meaningful use.

Feedback and formative assessment should also be embedded in drill activities. Instead of waiting until the end of a unit, teachers can use short checks to identify which students have mastered the target and which students continue to make the same error. Practice can then be adjusted. Students who already demonstrate mastery may receive more complex tasks, while students who need support can receive additional examples or scaffolded prompts. This approach responds directly to the heterogeneity identified in the study and can prevent drill from becoming either frustrating or unnecessarily repetitive.

The findings also have implications for how learning interest is used in instructional evaluation. A method that increases interest can be valuable even if

immediate achievement effects are not visible, because engagement is part of the learning process. However, teachers should not assume that positive student reactions are sufficient evidence of learning. Interest should be considered together with skill-specific assessment. In practical terms, teachers need two kinds of evidence: evidence that students are willing to participate and evidence that they can perform the targeted Arabic skill with increasing accuracy and independence.

Future research should therefore use designs that better align intervention and outcome. A quasi-experimental study could compare a drill-based class with a comparison class while measuring baseline competence and post-instruction performance. Researchers could also measure specific outcomes such as vocabulary retention, pronunciation accuracy, reading fluency, or grammatical application rather than relying only on cumulative report-card scores. Repeated measurements would make it possible to examine whether increased interest precedes later achievement gains or whether the two variables develop independently.

Another useful direction is to examine the quality, not only the frequency, of drill implementation. Observation rubrics could document task variation, feedback, pacing, student response opportunities, use of media, and the transition from controlled to meaningful practice. These process indicators would help explain why the same label, 'drill method,' can produce different results across studies. The evidence reviewed here suggests that successful drill is not simply more repetition; it is repetition that is purposeful, accurately guided, responsive to learner differences, and connected to broader communicative learning.

F. Conclusion

This study found a moderate positive relationship between the implementation of the drill method and students' interest in learning Arabic at MTs At-Taqwa Samarinda ($r = .593$, $p < .001$). In contrast, the relationship between the drill method and Arabic learning outcomes was weak and not statistically significant ($r = .168$, $p = .302$), and the reported multivariate analysis did not show a significant simultaneous relationship with learning interest and learning outcomes ($p > .05$). These findings indicate that drill practice was more consistently associated with students' engagement than with their cumulative report-card achievement. The results should be interpreted within the study's methodological boundaries. The design was correlational, the sample consisted of 40 students from one school, the achievement measure was based on report-card scores, and the normality test for learning interest yielded $p = .040$. Consequently, the study does not establish that the drill method directly causes changes in interest or achievement. Rather, it shows a local statistical pattern that can inform instructional reflection and future research. For practice, Arabic teachers are encouraged to use drills selectively for skills that benefit from repetition while combining them with communicative activities, contextual tasks, varied media, differentiated support, and formative feedback. Future studies should employ larger samples, skill-specific achievement measures, robust assumption checks, and experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Such research would clarify when drill is most effective, for which learners, and how increased engagement can be translated into stronger Arabic learning outcomes.

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