

## Problems of Learning Arabic in Elementary School

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American Psychological Association 7th Edition Style Citation

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### Article History

Received 22 September 2025

Revised 22 March 2026

Accepted 24 March 2026

### Keywords

Problematics; Arabic  
Language Learning;  
Elementary School

### Subjects

Arabic Language Education;  
Elementary Education

### Article Structure

Introduction  
Method  
Findings and Discussion  
Conclusion  
References

### Abstract

Arabic language learning plays an important role in Islamic-based educational institutions in Indonesia because it is closely related to religious practices and Islamic knowledge. However, the implementation of Arabic language learning at the elementary school level often faces various challenges that affect the effectiveness of the learning process. This study aims to identify the challenges encountered in Arabic language learning at the elementary level and to analyze the strategies used by teachers to address these challenges. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach and was conducted at SDIT Robbani Singosari Malang. Data were collected through interviews and classroom observations involving an Arabic language teacher. The data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the challenges in Arabic language learning arise from both linguistic and non-linguistic factors, such as students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters, differences in educational background, and low learning interest. To overcome these challenges, teachers apply several strategies including the singing method, peer tutoring, and the use of pocket dictionaries to support vocabulary learning. These strategies help create a more engaging learning environment and improve students' participation in the classroom. The results of this study highlight the importance of varied and interactive teaching methods to enhance the effectiveness of Arabic language learning at the elementary school level.



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## A. Introduction

Arabic is one of the local contents in learning activities in educational institutions in Indonesia. Arabic is a subject that has great urgency, especially for Islamic-based educational institutions because it has become a characteristic that is closely attached and cannot be separated (Andriani, 2015). This is supported by the majority of Indonesia's population who are followers of Islam. Arabic language goes hand in hand with other Islamic education subjects to meet the needs of the Muslim community for Islamic insight and Islamic religious communication tools (Pane, 2018). Arabic is now a subject that exists at every level of education in Indonesia. However, in the context of current learning, Arabic language learning at the elementary school level often faces various challenges that are fairly complex so that teachers have difficulty in providing effective Arabic language learning (Islam & Sumatera, 2023; Stošić & Guillén-Gámez, 2024).

Several studies on Arabic language learning for young learners emphasize that teaching Arabic at the elementary school level requires approaches that are adapted to the developmental characteristics of children (Syukur et al., 2024). Learners at the primary level tend to learn languages more effectively through concrete experiences, visual support, repetition, and enjoyable learning activities. Therefore, the learning process should not only focus on linguistic knowledge but also on interactive and engaging activities that stimulate students' curiosity and participation. Methods such as language games, songs, storytelling, visual media, and simple communicative practices are often recommended to create a more meaningful learning experience for elementary school students (Sutri et al., 2024).

The problems faced by teachers can be caused by limited learning time, differences in the ability levels of students, uninteresting teaching methods, and lack of teacher qualifications (Sakdiyah & Sihombing, 2023). These things can hinder the Arabic language learning process, especially in the understanding and success of students. These problems can be in the form of material achievements that are not in accordance with planning and differences in understanding between one learner and another. In addition, other problems can also be the emergence of boredom in students and the lack of teacher knowledge of learning methods that suit the needs of their students (Afril et al., 2024). These problems will greatly impact the learning process and student learning outcomes.

In the context of elementary education, several researchers highlight the importance of using age-appropriate learning strategies in Arabic language teaching. The application of communicative approaches, contextual learning, and activity-based instruction is considered effective in increasing students' motivation and participation (Sya'diah, 2024). Learning activities that involve movement, collaboration, and visual aids are also believed to help students understand vocabulary and basic sentence patterns more easily. Therefore, teachers are required to be creative in designing learning activities that match students' cognitive and emotional development.

Schools and teachers need to be a supportive environment for students in learning Arabic. Of course, a supportive environment for Arabic language learning can be realized by implementing efforts to overcome problems that occur in Arabic language learning (Nurtresnaningsih, 2020). In addition, the teacher's sensitivity to the problems that occur holds an important key in solving these problems. Sensitive

teachers always try to observe anomalies in their classes. That way, teachers can immediately identify problems and find appropriate solutions.

This research is intended to understand and analyze the challenges faced by teachers in the process of learning Arabic at the elementary level as well as the steps to overcome them, so that the analysis carried out can provide deep insight into the dynamics of learning Arabic at the elementary level. In conducting this research, researchers have undergone interviews with Arabic language teachers at SDIT Robbani Singosari Malang as a form of primary data collection. SDIT Robbani Singosari Malang is an Islamic elementary school that pays attention to academic and religious fields. Arabic is an important subject taught to students. During the process of learning Arabic, of course, schools and teachers face various kinds of problems. This is what supports researchers to examine the challenges and the steps taken.

Some phenomena that arise in students in the form of boredom during Arabic language learning takes place. Boredom in these learners can reduce the level of focus of students during the delivery of material. As a result, the understanding of the material in each learner becomes uneven. In addition, differences in educational background hinder the digestion of material for some learners so that learners assume that Arabic material is difficult material to learn. This mindset can have a negative impact on learners' interest and motivation during learning.

Studies that have been conducted so far only tend to concentrate on how to overcome problems in Arabic language learning from the teacher's side (Jirman, 2018; Zakiah, 2021). Of course, teachers are the main observers in the classroom who are able to recognize problems in learning (Rahman, 2019). However, some studies do not link the participation of learners, teachers, and schools together in overcoming these problems. In fact, the harmonious support of each party responsible for educating a child is necessary for the development of a child's personality. This support is of course needed during the learner's learning period and has a positive impact. Another aspect is the lack of research studies conducted in primary schools. Most of these studies focus on secondary and higher education (Khairani et al., 2024; Pratama et al., 2022). Of course, the research subjects used are learners above the age of 12 years. The Arabic language materials used are certainly not adapted for the primary level.

Although several studies have begun to discuss Arabic language learning for young learners, research focusing specifically on the challenges faced by teachers in the elementary school context is still relatively limited. Most existing studies focus more on curriculum development or teaching methods, while fewer studies examine the practical challenges experienced by teachers during the learning process and the strategies they use to address these challenges (Syamsiyah et al., 2024). Therefore, further research is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Arabic language learning at the elementary school level.

There are similarities in the focus of these studies, namely the identification and analysis of problems that arise in Arabic language learning. Although the context is different, namely from Madrasah Tsanawiyah students, Madrasah Aliyah, university students, to Arabic language education students, the object of research remains in the realm of Arabic language education. Related to the efforts to solve the existing

problems, although the proposed efforts to overcome learning problems vary in each study, all of them aim to improve and increase the effectiveness of Arabic language learning, either through increasing motivation, utilizing appropriate learning methods, recruiting teachers with Arabic language education backgrounds, or providing better learning resources. Thus, although there are differences in the context and approach used, these studies have similarities in focus, object of research, problem-solving efforts, and the approach methods used. The difference between these studies lies in some key factors, such as the object of research, the methods used, the supporting and inhibiting factors, and the efforts made to solve the problems of Arabic language learning.

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The existence of this study reaches a wider range of subjects by examining the problematics of Arabic language learning at the primary school level which may provide a more comprehensive insight into the problematics and not cause limitations in subject representation. The research emphasizes internal factors in learning, but it is also important to consider external factors such as school support and administration. This study provides more detailed conclusions regarding the findings so that it can help in designing more effective and sustainable interventions in Arabic language learning.

The purpose of this study is to identify in depth the problems that arise in Arabic language learning and analyze the efforts that can be made by teachers in overcoming these problems. The existence of this research is expected to be a complement to previous studies by presenting more holistic and informative results. This research is also expected to be a form of concrete contribution in scientific research, especially those that study Arabic language learning in the future.

## **B. Method**

This study is a field research conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach. It is not a library research, as the data were obtained directly from the field through interviews and classroom observations. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore and understand social phenomena in depth based on participants' experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2015). The research was

conducted at SDIT Robbani Singosari Malang as the research locus to provide a more specific and contextual understanding of Arabic language learning at the elementary school level. The selection of this research locus is based on the consideration that SDIT Robbani Singosari Malang is an Islamic elementary school that actively implements Arabic language learning as part of its curriculum, making it relevant to the focus of this study. The participants in this study consisted of one Arabic language teacher who actively teaches at the elementary level. The participant was selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely having experience in teaching Arabic and being directly involved in the learning process in the classroom, so that the data obtained are relevant and in accordance with the research objectives.

Data were collected through two main techniques, namely interviews and classroom observations. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to obtain in-depth information regarding the challenges faced by teachers in Arabic language learning and the strategies used to overcome these challenges, while classroom observations were carried out to observe directly the learning process, student responses, and the implementation of teaching methods used by the teacher. The data obtained were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consist of three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2014). Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming the raw data obtained from interviews and observations into a more organized form relevant to the research objectives. The condensed data were then presented systematically through data display to facilitate understanding and interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified based on patterns, relationships, and findings that emerged from the data. To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied data triangulation techniques by comparing the results obtained from interviews and observations. Triangulation is used to increase the credibility and reliability of qualitative research findings, so that the data obtained are more comprehensive and accurate regarding the challenges and solutions in Arabic language learning at the elementary school level (Sugiyono, 2013).

### C. Findings and Discussion

The problem of Arabic language learning in elementary schools is something that requires the right solution so that learning objectives can be achieved in accordance with lesson planning (Marwanda & Zulheddi, 2025). This research is to find out the various conditions of Arabic learning at SDIT Robbani Singosari through interviews with one of the Arabic teachers. Based on the results of the interview, researchers found several challenges or problems faced by Arabic language teachers:

**Table 1. Main Challenges in Arabic Language Learning at SDIT Robbani Singosari**

No	Identified Problem	Category	Description Based on Interview
1	Students' ability to read Hijaiyah letters	Internal factor	Some students are not able to read Hijaiyah letters well because they have not previously learned to read the

			Qur'an.
2	Differences in students' educational background	External factor	Transfer students from schools without Arabic subjects experience difficulties in following the learning process.
3	Low learning interest	Internal factor	Some students show boredom and low motivation during Arabic lessons.
4	Monotonous learning methods	External factor	Learning methods that are not varied can reduce students' attention and participation.
5	Lack of support from the home environment	External factor	Limited parental support and lack of learning resources at home affect students' motivation.

The table above summarizes the main problems identified from the interview with the Arabic language teacher. The findings show that the challenges in Arabic language learning arise from both internal and external factors. Internal factors relate to students' individual abilities and motivation, while external factors are related to the learning environment, educational background, and teaching methods used in the classroom.

### Student Language

Linguistic problems in learning Arabic in elementary schools are influenced by several internal and external factors. The internal factors include students' ability to read the Hijaiyah letters (Linda, 2023). This is related to the ability of students to learn to recite or read the Qur'an beforehand. Students who have been equipped with good recitation skills are usually easier to recognize and understand hijaiyah letters, while students who do not have the ability to read the Qur'an well enough tend to have various difficulties in learning Arabic (Husnawati et al., 2023).

While the problematic external factors in Arabic language learning that teachers often find such as the learning environment and students' educational background. For example, students who move from schools, where previously there was no Arabic language learning or learning to recognize and understand hijaiyah letters and face the challenge of adapting to the new curriculum, namely the independent curriculum (Sari et al., 2025). In addition, parental support and the availability of educational resources also play an important role. A home environment that does not support Arabic language learning or the lack of appropriate learning materials at school can also add to the linguistic problems faced by students (Nurbaiti & Handican, 2023). So that teachers are required to develop learning strategies that can overcome learning problems.

Based on the interview results, the teacher indicated that the most dominant factor affecting students' learning difficulties is the difference in students' basic abilities, particularly in recognizing and reading Hijaiyah letters. Students who already have experience in reading the Qur'an tend to adapt more easily to Arabic language learning because they are familiar with Arabic script and pronunciation. Meanwhile, students who lack this basic skill require more time and assistance to follow the learning process.

In addition, external factors such as family support and previous educational background also significantly influence students' learning outcomes. Students who

come from schools that previously introduced Arabic or Qur'anic reading generally demonstrate better readiness in learning Arabic. On the other hand, students who do not receive sufficient support at home often show lower motivation and slower learning progress. These findings indicate that both internal and external factors interact and influence students' success in learning Arabic at the elementary level.

Teachers face a big problem in bridging this language gap. It requires teachers to provide appropriate methods to cater for the diverse learning styles and abilities of students in the classroom. The language gap not only hinders the development of lagging students, but it also affects the whole class, requiring teachers to go the extra mile to create and plan effective lessons.

Various methods have been tried by teachers so that all students can understand learning well. One of the effective methods used is the singing method (Santoso et al., 2024). The singing method is used by the teacher to pronounce new vocabulary or mufrodāt in Arabic. Based on the interview results, at the elementary school level, especially the third grade level, good Arabic language skills focus more on memorizing mufrodāt. Students who have a good vocabulary can follow the learning better. Teachers always prepare new songs in each learning theme to make it easier for students who are left behind and still lack understanding of the hijaiyah letters to be able to follow the lessons better. By singing students not only recite or memorize vocabulary, but also enjoy the learning process, so that the ability gap in the classroom can be resolved properly.



**Figure 1. Arabic Vocabulary Song**

Figure 1 is one of the methods used by teachers to make learning more interesting and effective. Figure 1 is a screen shot of a song uploaded by the teacher through a social media account. The singing method in the picture is a learning theme about animal names in Arabic. The song instrument used to assemble the vocabulary of animal names using instruments from VJ Raja Oloan. Through this instrument, students are invited to get to know and indirectly memorize the vocabulary of animal names in Arabic in a fun and memorable way. The intonation in the melody is very precise and according to the original song. Based on the results of the interview, the teacher said that such songs are very effective in learning

Arabic at SDIT Robbani level 3 and have a positive impact on learning Arabic in the classroom.

The singing method used by the teacher gave positive results. Students can recite and memorize the names of animals more than 10 Arabic vocabulary. It shows that the singing method is successful in helping students remember vocabulary. Without the singing method, some students may experience difficulties in pronouncing and memorizing a large number of mufrodad. But with the singing method, the memorization process becomes easier. The use of the singing method not only helps individuals who do not have enough ability to read and recognize hijaiyah letters, but also makes the process of learning Arabic and memorizing vocabulary easier.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the singing method, the teacher observed students' participation and vocabulary acquisition during the learning process. Before the implementation of the singing method, only a small number of students were able to remember Arabic vocabulary correctly. After applying the singing method, most students showed greater enthusiasm and were able to memorize more vocabulary.

**Table 2. Student Vocabulary Mastery After Using the Singing Method**

Category	Number of Students	Description
High comprehension	10 students	Able to memorize more than 10 Arabic vocabularies correctly
Moderate comprehension	7 students	Able to memorize 5–10 vocabularies
Low comprehension	3 students	Able to memorize less than 5 vocabularies

The table above illustrates the improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after the singing method was implemented. Most students were able to memorize more than ten new vocabularies related to the learning theme. In addition to improving vocabulary mastery, the singing method also increased students' participation and attention during the learning process.

### **Student Learning Interest**

Learning interest plays an important role in foreign language learning including Arabic language learning in elementary schools. Learning interest is one of the internal factors that encourage students to be actively involved in the learning process, seek deeper understanding and achieve better academic achievement than before (Siregar et al., 2024). In Arabic language learning, interest in learning, is able to help students to overcome the challenges encountered during the learning process, such as the pronunciation of letters, words and sentences, the ability to read and write Arabic. Identifying students' interest in learning Arabic is key to designing effective learning strategies (Haq, 2023).

Students' interest in learning Arabic is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. The internal factors include students' interest in the language itself, individual motivation to learn the language, and students' interest in the usefulness and relevance of Arabic in present and future life (Sadat et al., 2024). In addition, students' previous experience in learning Arabic can also affect students' interest in learning. The external factors that influence students' interest in learning

such as support from parents and the school environment also have an important role in increasing students' interest in learning Arabic. Therefore, planning, strategies and learning methods are important to increase and maintain interest in learning Arabic (Supanto et al., 2023).

Based on the results of the interview, the teacher also found the main obstacles and problems in learning Arabic, namely the low interest in learning in students. From the teacher's observation, the factors that influence the decline in interest in learning in students are caused by many factors, such as students' lack of understanding of the learning delivered by the teacher, the methods used by the teacher are too monotonous and external factors such as lack of support from the home environment. This shows that varied strategies are needed to make learning more interesting and interactive so that students' interest in learning Arabic has increased significantly.

To overcome the problem of declining student interest in learning, Arabic teachers at SDIT Robbani school use the singing method, which aims to make learning more interesting and requires all students to play an active role in the learning process. The singing method used by the teacher succeeded in making students who were previously not very active become active and involved in learning. Singing can help students memorize new vocabulary in a fun and interactive way, so students' interest and motivation to learn Arabic has increased.

Nevertheless, the singing method is indeed effective. However, using the singing method repeatedly and continuously without variation makes students feel bored and causes students to lose interest in learning, because students do the same activity continuously without any new challenges. This shows that although the singing method is effective, it should be noted that it is important to combine it with other methods to keep students' interest and enthusiasm high.

These findings indicate that the singing method can serve as an effective strategy in teaching Arabic vocabulary at the elementary school level. Young learners generally respond positively to rhythmic and musical activities because they create a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. However, relying solely on one method may reduce its effectiveness over time. Therefore, teachers need to combine singing with other interactive learning methods such as games, storytelling, visual media, and collaborative learning activities to maintain students' motivation and engagement.

الأحداث الطبيعية => Peristiwa Alam
صَبَاحٌ => Waktu Pagi
نَهَارٌ => Waktu Siang
مَسَاءٌ => Waktu Sore
لَيْلَةٌ => Waktu Malam
مَطَرٌ => Itu Hujan
رِيَاحٌ => Berangin
عَاصِفَةٌ => Badai
صَافِيَةٌ => Cerah

**Figure 2. Pocket Arabic Dictionary**

To overcome the boredom of using the singing method, teachers use various other strategies. One of the strategies used is peer tutoring. The teacher asks

students to deposit the memorized vocabulary with songs to peers. This creates collaborative learning among students. The teacher also makes a pocket dictionary as shown in figure 2, which is adjusted to the level, to make it easier for students to repeat and look up vocabulary outside the classroom. Students who are in charge of listening to the memorization will also put a check mark on the pocket dictionary. The strategies used by teachers not only increase motivation and interest in learning, but also increase students' sense of responsibility in the learning process (Maulana et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings of this study reveal that the challenges in Arabic language learning at the elementary school level are mainly influenced by three factors: students' basic linguistic abilities, differences in educational background, and students' interest in learning. To address these challenges, teachers apply various strategies such as the singing method, peer tutoring, and the use of supporting learning materials such as pocket dictionaries. These strategies help create a more engaging learning environment and support students in improving their Arabic vocabulary and participation during the learning process.

Problems found in the Arabic language learning process are a challenge for teachers. Identifying the cause is the first step to achieving learning goals. Problems that arise during the learning process have a very useful value for teachers to stimulate and spur creativity and improve professionalism in work (Rahma et al., 2024). To overcome existing problems, requires special abilities such as teacher competence who also has an educational background that is in accordance with Arabic language subjects. Teacher experience is needed to overcome challenges in the learning process. In addition, a special training agenda is also needed, so that teachers can gain new insights including strategies, methods and so on in learning Arabic, that way, Arabic teachers are able to develop and apply Arabic learning methods more effectively and interestingly to improve the quality of Arabic in elementary schools.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study aimed to identify the problems that arise in Arabic language learning at the elementary school level and to analyze the efforts made by teachers to overcome these problems. Based on the results of interviews with Arabic language teachers at SDIT Robbani Singosari Malang, the findings show that the main challenges in Arabic language learning are students' linguistic difficulties, particularly in reading Hijaiyah letters, and the decline in students' interest in learning caused by monotonous teaching methods. Differences in students' educational backgrounds also contribute to the gap in students' abilities in the classroom. To address these challenges, teachers implement several strategies, including the singing method to introduce and reinforce Arabic vocabulary in a more enjoyable way. However, continuous use of the same method can lead to boredom among students; therefore, teachers complement this approach with other strategies such as peer tutoring and the use of pocket dictionaries to encourage collaborative learning and support vocabulary reinforcement. These findings indicate that the use of varied and interactive learning methods plays an important role in maintaining students' motivation and improving the effectiveness of Arabic language learning at the elementary school level. In addition, teachers'

competence, creativity, and professional development are essential in addressing learning challenges and designing more engaging Arabic language instruction.

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