

Enhancing Arabic Reading Motivation through Blended Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of a Blended Learning model integrated with Extensive Reading (ER) to enhance learners' motivation in reading Arabic at PPPA Daarul Quran Yogyakarta. Employing a Classroom Action Research design, the study involved 18 learners from diverse educational backgrounds and was conducted in two cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and reading assessments, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument. The intervention combined face-to-face instruction with online learning via a WhatsApp group, where learners engaged with 25 varied and level-appropriate Arabic reading texts supported by visual aids. The findings reveal that the blended approach fostered active learner participation, increased interaction between learners and instructors, and created a flexible learning environment. Moreover, the use of extensive reading significantly improved learners' motivation and engagement in reading Arabic texts. Despite minor challenges such as limited internet access, the overall results indicate that integrating Blended Learning with Extensive Reading is effective in supporting Arabic language acquisition and promoting positive learning attitudes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic has been recognized by the United Nations (UN) as a language of significant importance, both in its spoken and written forms. Mastering Arabic not only enables a deeper understanding of the Qur'an but also expands one's knowledge in Islamic studies. Learning Arabic involves developing four key skills: *istima'* (listening), *muhadatsah* (speaking), *qiraah* (reading), and *kitabah* (writing). These skills are interconnected and cannot be taught in isolation, making an integrated teaching approach essential.

As stated by Muflihah, Sholehah, and Muhammad Baihaqi in [1], the integration between these four skills allows learners to develop language abilities holistically, so that they can communicate more effectively in social and academic contexts. In addition, research by Rahmah, S in [2] shows that a good command of Arabic can enhance understanding of religious texts and Arabic culture, which in turn enriches learners' learning experience. Therefore, mastery of Arabic has a very important role, not only in the linguistic context, but also in understanding and appreciating the cultural heritage and values contained in Islamic teachings. To achieve this goal, teaching Arabic needs to be done with a comprehensive and integrated approach, so that learners can master various aspects of the language effectively. One method that can be applied in learning Arabic is the utilization of information and communication technology.

The utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) today greatly supports the learning process, causing significant changes in the pattern of interaction between educators and learners. Communication in learning is no longer limited to face-to-face in the classroom, but can now be done through various social media platforms and technological devices such as computers, the internet, and smart phones. Ritonga, M. et al in [3] stated that the utilization of technology in Arabic language learning can increase learners' motivation while expanding their access to various learning resources. One prominent application of technology is the Blended Learning model, which



combines the advantages of face-to-face and online learning. This model not only provides greater flexibility in the learning process, but also allows learners to learn in an interactive and engaging way [4]. In face-to-face learning, learners can interact directly with educators, creating important social interactions and providing opportunities for guidance [5]. On the other hand, online learning allows access to materials around the clock, so learning activities can be done anytime and anywhere. Hameed in [6] adds that materials in online learning can be accessed repeatedly if learners need repetition or recall forgotten information.

One example of Blended Learning implemented by Ke Wang, et al in [7] is Game-Based Learning which includes; (a) Feedback: Providing timely individual feedback to learners, providing feedback to groups and commenting on each group's performance. (b) Quizzing: Planning a quiz session for learners. (c) Game design: The game should be designed in such a way as to demonstrate how the presence of knowledge, skills, and attitudes can affect project performance. (d) Group size: the size of the student group should be limited. Feedback will be difficult in large groups.

The Blended Learning model applied in Arabic learning at PPPA Daarul Quran focuses on the Graha Tahfidz program, where face-to-face learning methods are combined with online learning. This approach is designed to produce learners who not only excel academically, but also have a deep understanding of the Qur'an through mastery of the Arabic language. The approach chosen is Extensive Reading (ER), which has long been recognized as an effective and enjoyable instructional method for improving language skills. According to Chiu-Kuei et al in [8], one of the best ways to improve foreign language acquisition is to live in an environment where the language is actively spoken; however, an equally effective alternative is through extensive reading. The term Extensive Reading (ER) is often known by various names, such as reading for pleasure, self-selected reading, voluntary reading, and wide reading (Qiu Rong Ng et al.,[9]. Various studies show that Extensive Reading (ER) has many benefits, including improved reading skills [10], reading comprehension [11], language skills [9], writing ability [12], as well as improved reading levels on descriptive texts. In addition, ER also makes reading activities more fun [13], increases motivation [8], and helps reduce anxiety in learning languages [14].

Therefore, this study seeks to combine the Blended Learning model with the Extensive Reading (ER) approach. For Extensive Reading (ER) materials, researchers provided reading materials that were interesting, easy to understand, and equipped with pictures to help learners gain better understanding through a variety of reading texts. In addition, learners are given the freedom to choose the type of reading that suits their interests. This approach is in line with Tarigan's view in [15], which states that extensive reading involves several techniques, such as (1) survey reading, (2) skimming, and (3) shallow reading. The Blended Learning model in this context not only increases learners' engagement, but also enriches their learning experience. Research by Alammary, A., Sheard, J., & Carbone, A in [16] shows that the combination of face-to-face and online learning can create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment, which in turn can improve learners' motivation and learning outcomes. In this context, extensive reading emerges as a relevant alternative to meet learners' needs in learning Arabic. This method can help overcome the various challenges faced by learners related to language acquisition, while providing appropriate exposure in the language acquisition process. According to Awwaludin, et al in [17], language acquisition has a more central role than language learning in the context of second language use. The concept of "intake" refers to the source of language acquisition, which is part of the linguistic input that helps individuals in mastering the language. Therefore, the function of the second language classroom is to provide the necessary intake for the acquisition process. However, creating effective materials and contexts to provide this intake is a major challenge in the field of applied linguistics. As stated by Ellis in [18], the importance of creating a learning environment rich in linguistic input is crucial to support the language acquisition process. Thus, an approach that emphasizes extensive reading in the Blended Learning model can be an effective solution to improve the Arabic language skills of learners at PPPA Daarul Quran.

Furthermore, the delivery of diverse qiraah materials is essential, focusing on two main elements: convenience and appeal. These materials consist of several reading sheets that are organized by considering the level of vocabulary and grammar that matches the learners' linguistic competence and their interest in the material. With this approach, learners are expected to do continuous, uninterrupted, silent reading, so that they can independently select the texts they read. This approach is different from the intensive reading method, which requires learners to read with high focus, including the identification of main ideas, main sentences, and explanatory sentences. One example of the application of extensive reading that has been researched before is reading novels in Arabic, which is proven to promote vocabulary growth and improve learners' verbal fluency. In addition, this method also contributes to improving learning ability and grammar comprehension, as well as enriching learners' general knowledge [19].

By integrating the Blended Learning and Extensive reading models, learners are expected to be more active in understanding texts through one of the social media platforms, namely WhatsApp. This model not only facilitates a more dynamic interaction between learners and teachers, but also allows learners to discuss and share their understanding of the material they have read. This study aims to describe (1) the implementation of Blended Learning in learning Arabic through extensive reading method, and (2) learners' motivation in reading Arabic.

2. METHOD

This study adopted an Action Research approach using qualitative methods, which applied action research steps in a spiral model. These steps include: a) planning, b) acting, c) observing, and d) reflecting [20]. According to Kemmis et al in [21], Action Research is an effective approach to improving educational practice through reflection and collaboration. By involving learners in the learning process, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of the methods applied and increase their motivation and involvement in learning Arabic. This research aims to encourage the development of reflective thinking and discussion among PPPA Daarul Quran learners, who have diverse educational backgrounds.

In this study, the researcher acted as the main instrument (human instrument) who conducted interviews, observations, and tests in two cycles. Each cycle consists of five stages, namely diagnosis, plan, action, observation, evaluation, and reflection. This research was conducted in eight meetings, where the first cycle included four face-to-face meetings, while the second cycle also consisted of four face-to-face meetings and online meetings.

The subjects of this study were tahfidz learners of the Arabic language Graha Tahfidz program at PPPA Daarul Quran Yogyakarta, consisting of 18 learners who actively participated in Arabic language learning activities. The data collected focused on two main aspects: (1) the implementation of the Blended Learning model in Arabic language learning through the extensive reading method, and (2) the motivation of learners in reading Arabic at PPPA Daarul Quran.

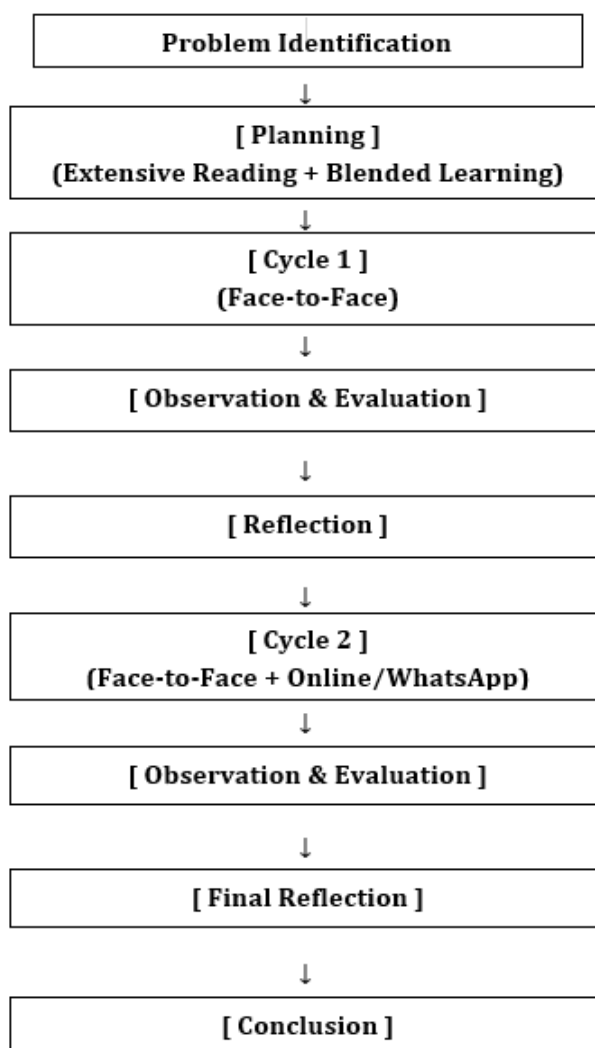


Figure 1. Method Research Diagram

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Extensive Reading through the Application of Blended Learning

The implementation of Blended Learning in Arabic lessons through extensive reading was carried out from the beginning of the first semester in January to May in the 2023/2024 school year. The study load learners must take in taking Arabic lessons for a semester starts in January to May. To achieve the desired target, it is scheduled to have 2 meetings in one week. To implement Blended Learning in Arabic language learning, lectures are conducted by

combining conventional learning (face-to-face) and online learning. The details of the implementation of Blended Learning in the extensive reading course are as follows:

3.1.1 Online College (Whatsapp Group)

At this stage, lecture activities are carried out online. Learners can take part in online lectures by accessing qiraah material provided by the teacher as many as 25 readings with varied and interesting titles. The readings are accompanied by various images, such as pictures of schools, daily activities, isra miraj activities, Indonesian countries, hajj, prayer, Ramadan fasting, residence, science, hobbies, and other images. The variety of pictures will make it easier for beginner and intermediate learners to understand the reading. After direct reading, the teacher asks learners individually to make detailed notes wherever possible related to what they read and then the results are discussed in groups.

This online course provides a discussion forum that involves the use of internet-based social networks, specifically a whatsapp group with the name “ahlullugah bilqiraah” which is used as a forum for questions and answers related to these materials. In addition, this feature is also used to collect assignments given by the teacher online. However, the intensity of online discussions in the whatsapp group is still considered very low. This can be seen from some uploads from teachers that are only responded to by a few learners. This is due to network connection limitations. In addition, the most basic obstacle is related to the lack of motivation, and insight into Arabic. To support online discussions, the teacher is required to provide motivation to read Arabic readings, and provide quite interesting readings. In the next meeting, learners got good feedback, this was evidenced by the many questions, suggestions and additions in the discussion through the Whatsapp group. From several readings, learners read one theme in sequence. After that, they discussed and answered questions from the reading with other groups.

Table 1. Extensive Reading Text

No	Title	Meaning
1	في المدرسة	in the school
2	الاعمال اليومية	daily activity
3	ذكر ليلة الاسراء والمعراج	celebration of isra mi`raj
4	اندونيسيا	Indonesia
5	الحج	haji
6	الصلاة	salat
7	صوم رمضان	ramadhan fast
8	التعارف	introduction
9	السكن	boarding house
10	العلم	knowledge
11	الهواية	hobby
12	المهنة	profession
13	القران	Alquran
14	محمد رسول الله	prophet Muhammad
15	نزول القران	nuzulul quran
16	هجرة الرسول	migration of the prophet
17	عمر بن عبد العزيز	Umar bin abdul aziz
18	المصائب	accidents
19	السوق	market
20	وسائل الاتصال	communication
21	وسائل السفر	transportation
22	المستشفى	hospital
23	المتحف	museum
24	النجاح	the success
25	السياحة	travelling

From the table above, there are several readings that must be read and discussed through the whatsapp group, from student notes there are several readings which they think are still relatively easy, have been memorized before, are easy to understand, are often used, they are used to hearing these words, so get a good response, for example in the reading في المدرسة, الاعمال اليومية, الصلاة, صوم رمضان, التعارف, العلم, القران, نزول القران. While the theme that received an unfavorable response was in addition to the nine themes, with the reason that they rarely heard the vocabulary contained in the text, vocabulary was still unfamiliar according to them, combining words with other words in understanding the text. The reason for the difference in response that occurs is due to the level of text comprehension, vocabulary mastery, educational background, and motivation.

3.1.2 Classroom Meeting

In this process, the lecture activities were held in the Assyifa class in the PPPA II Graha Daarul Quran. This lecture program discusses qiraah material that has been discussed in online groups, such as text understanding, good reading strategies, and readings they find from magazines and newspapers that they have read in groups and learned at home. The teacher starts this lecture by giving several questions about the content of the qiraah material so that the learners can give each other answers and feedback from each question. Then, the teacher revisits the qiraah material. After this process is complete, learners discuss some difficult words and correct pronunciation. Next, the lecture ended with learners in front of the class to retell the qiraah material. In this activity, learners seemed very enthusiastic about the learning process. They are actively involved in discussion activities in the classroom. This is because they are ready with the material to be discussed at the meeting.

Learners give a positive response to the implementation of Blended Learning through extensive reading. Almost all learners feel that the intensity of interaction between learners and between instructors and learners will increase the activity in the learning process by using the Blended Learning model. Learners can discuss each other not only in the classroom, but they can also discuss using an online group so that the learning process is not bound by place and time. In addition, increasing interaction between learners and instructors so that the language acquisition process will be conveyed through interesting reading, light and make them relax using digital devices, such as what`up. This is in line with what was stated by Hameed et al [6], revealed that the use of technology is very useful in supporting face-to-face learning activities and increasing the intensity and quality of interactions among learners and between teachers and learners.

Using the Blended Learning model, learners discuss more about reading material, both from understanding Arabic texts and vocabulary. In addition, learners can discuss matters relating to the reading presented. Learners can more easily access information from the teacher. Learners can also communicate directly with the teacher if there are problems in learning through online devices. However, there are still some learners who express their limitations in participating in online learning, due to several things, such as limitations in using mobile phones (dormitory stays), data packages, and some other activities. But most of them expressed their pleasure in taking part in learning with the Blended Learning model. They are confident in their understanding and satisfied with the learning that is followed. The satisfaction of learners is generally expressed because this model makes it easier for learners to understand learning material. They feel satisfied with the existence of learning resources that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. They do not have to wait for the presence of instructors in the classroom to obtain learning material because they can interact with the instructor or fellow learners without being bound by time. In general, learners give a positive response to this learning model and expect that this learning model is also applied to other subjects. This is in line with the findings of Demirci in [22], which revealed that Blended Learning in the form of giving home assignments online received a positive response from learners. Learners state that this learning is effective in facilitating learners to learn and motivate learners to learn.

Furthermore, in implementing extensive reading, learners are expected to be able to understand interesting text discourse that is related to social, cultural and religious values. Therefore, each student must actively listen, read, and respond to reading through extensive reading activities. In this case, learners think the workload in this course can be overcome by using the Blended Learning model. Their opinions are determined by the constraints of internet connection. Workload will be light if there is an internet connection, and vice versa. This is in line with that expressed by Syarif in [23] that through the Blended Learning model, the learning process will be more effective because the conventional teaching and learning process will be assisted with e-learning learning which in this case stands on infrastructure information technology so that it can be done anytime and anywhere. Thus, if learning using the Blended Learning model is not fulfilled with supporting facilities, the implementation of this learning will not run smoothly.

Blended learning also proved effective to be applied to learning because of the conducive climate that comes from the benefits derived from combining face-to-face learning and online learning. Learners feel that the learning climate in the classroom is fun. They are motivated to be able to understand the material they are learning online so they can take part in learning in the classroom with confidence. They can also interact intensively with each other discussing the subject matter they like and will certainly establish intimacy with each other. This is in line with what expressed by Vaughan in [24] that if Blended Learning can be effectively implemented, the potential results that can be obtained is an educational climate conducive to active learning of learners. In other words, it can be concluded that the learning process using Blended Learning was successfully implemented well in learning Arabic through the extensive reading of PPPA learners Daarul Quran Yogyakarta.

3.2 Benefits and Components of the Extensive Success of Reading in Teaching Arabic through the Blended Learning model

Based on the seven benefits of extensive reading previously described, of course extensive reading has a very urgent role in improving learners' qiraah skills, because it is able to provide comprehensive input and help the process of language acquisition from relaxed and interesting reading with a free or risk-free learning atmosphere. In addition, extensive reading can motivate learners to read diligently. This is because the reading material is tailored to the learners' interests. Meanwhile, online learning is able to answer the problem of learning all the time, where learning can be accessed anytime and anywhere, and as often as possible if something is forgotten in face-to-face learning, in

addition to producing a greater sense of togetherness compared to learning that only uses traditional models or uses e-learning models. As a result, this research shows that there is an increase in students' motivation and learning outcomes with extensive reading using the blended learning model. The results of classroom action research carried out during one semester through face-to-face and online with two cycles, can be said to be successful, it can be proven from the results of observations, interviews and text reviews. In the first cycle, the researcher conducted a diagnosis, to find out the constraints of students in learning Arabic, such as giving questionnaires and conducting interviews with several students. From their answers, the researcher concluded that there was a weakness in understanding long texts. Then the researcher explained that by reading extensively they would improve their reading skills. Furthermore, the last is evaluation, from the results of observations, questionnaires and interviews. In other words, extensive reading tasks can increase students' reading motivation.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the implementation of Blended Learning through Extensive Reading is done in two ways, namely online lectures (whatsapp group) and face-to-face lectures. In the online lecture, learners have to read the qiraah provided in the group and give feedback to each group. Learners have a positive perception of this learning model. The intensity and quality of interaction between learners and the interaction between learners and teachers are increasing. It is characterized by the activity of learners asking questions, giving input and learners also feel satisfied with learning using this model. The workload that must be done by learners is moderate. Therefore, an effective Blended Learning model in learning Arabic is through Extensive Reading. Although Extensive Reading activities have long been known and their benefits have been known together, their role in Arabic language learning is still not optimal. This study shows that with the inclusion of Extensive Reading into the curriculum, the language acquisition process of Arabic learners can run faster.

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