

The Direct Method In Arabic Language Teaching: A Theoretical Study And Its Relevance In The Modern Era

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Abstract	
<p>The learning of Arabic is often perceived as a challenging process, particularly for learners who do not have a background as native speakers. This study aims to examine in depth the concept of the direct method and to understand its implementation in Arabic language learning. This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach using library research as the primary framework for examining the issues, with data collected from both primary and secondary sources and subsequently analysed critically to reveal patterns, conceptual relationships, and contributions to the development of understanding regarding Arabic language teaching methods. This approach places emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills as the primary foundation for language mastery; furthermore, the direct method emphasises the intensive use of Arabic during the learning process, so that vocabulary and grammatical structures are introduced gradually and naturally through interactions occurring during the learning process. As a result, learners do not merely gain a theoretical understanding of the structure and forms of the language, but are also trained to use it communicatively. This approach encourages them to interact in a variety of more realistic and contextual situations, thereby enabling their language skills to develop in a more natural and functional way.</p>	<p>Keywords: Arabic language; Direct method; Theoretical study.</p>
Abstrak	
<p>Pembelajaran bahasa Arab kerap dipersepsikan sebagai proses yang menantang, khususnya bagi peserta didik yang tidak memiliki latar belakang sebagai penutur asli. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam konsep metode langsung (direct method) serta memahami implementasinya dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode studi pustaka (library reseach) sebagai kerangka utama dalam mengkaji permasalahan yang datanya terkumpul dari data primer dan sekunder dan kemudian dianalisa secara kritis guna mendapatkan hasil untuk mengungkapkan pola, relasi konseptual, serta kontribusi terhadap pengembangan pemahaman tentang metode pembelajaran bahasa Arab.</p>	<p>Kata Kunci: Bahasa Arab; Metode Langsung; Kajian Teoritis.</p>

Pendekatan ini memberikan penekanan pada pengembangan keterampilan berbicara dan menyimak sebagai fondasi utama dalam penguasaan bahasa, di samping itu juga metode langsung menekankan penggunaan bahasa Arab secara intensif pada proses pembelajaran sehingga kosakata dan struktur tata bahasa diperkenalkan secara bertahap dan alami melalui interaksi yang berlangsung pada saat proses pembelajaran. Dengan demikian peserta didik tidak sekedar memahami struktur dan bentuk bahasa secara teoritis, melainkan juga terlatih untuk menggunakannya secara komunikatif. Pembelajaran ini mendorong mereka untuk berinteraksi dalam berbagai situasi yang lebih nyata dan kontekstual, sehingga kemampuan berbahasa berkembang secara lebih alami dan fungsional.

Received : 10 February 2026; Revised: 20 April 2026; Accepted: 1 May 2026

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Program Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam
Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara



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1. Introduction

Learning and understanding foreign languages has now become an urgent necessity in this era of globalisation, both to support one's career and for academic purposes. This is particularly true of Arabic, which is a fundamental requirement for students in Islamic educational institutions. This is because Arabic serves as a means of deepening religious understanding and advancing Islamic scholarship. The Arabic language holds a highly strategic position in Islamic education, as it is the language of revelation specifically chosen by Allah SWT to convey the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet SAW (Irfandi et al., 2025, p. 2). Mastery of the Arabic language thus serves as a spiritual bridge that enables an authentic understanding of religious messages.

In Indonesia, the teaching of Arabic forms an important part of the Islamic education system, particularly as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings; it is taught progressively from primary level through to higher education. This practice takes place in various educational institutions, such as madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic higher education institutions, each of which has its own distinct characteristics and approach to the learning process. Structurally, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has established a national Arabic language curriculum for madrasahs on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant to the expected developments of the times; Arabic language learning needs to be optimised so that students are able to master the language competently (Triani & Riyadi, 2025, p. 16).

However, the reality of implementation on the ground shows that these reform efforts have not yet been fully effective. Various challenges are still frequently encountered, particularly those relating to teaching methods that tend to be conventional, the uneven quality of teaching staff, and the limited availability of learning resources that support effective learning. This situation highlights a gap between the ideal curriculum design and current teaching practices, necessitating strategic efforts to bridge the two.

The Merdeka Curriculum (KM), with its various components, provides an effective solution for improving the quality of Arabic language learning. Elements such as objectives, learning outcomes and learning modules make it easier for teachers to design learner-centred learning processes. The implementation of this Merdeka Curriculum policy is expected to significantly improve students'

understanding and skills in Arabic. From a pedagogical perspective, the choice of methods plays a crucial role in the success of the learning process. Methods are not merely tools for delivering content, but also serve as a bridge connecting the learning objectives which are formulated with due consideration for the needs and characteristics of the learners (Rathomi, 2025, p. 490).

An adaptive, contextual and innovative approach will pave the way for the more effective achievement of learning objectives. One Arabic language teaching method that has proven to be effective is the direct method (*Thariqat al-Mubasyarah*). This direct method emphasises the development of speaking skills and views language as a living and dynamic entity.

Studies on the direct method in language learning highlight the active and contextual use of language; in the case of Arabic in particular, numerous researchers have focused on its effectiveness in improving communication skills. Research conducted by Asyrofi indicates that the application of the direct method is capable of significantly improving speaking skills (*maharah kalam*); this is supported by the intensive use of Arabic during the learning process, which encourages learners to become accustomed to thinking and responding directly in the target language (Asyrofi, 2016, pp. 145–160). Furthermore, research conducted by Hafidhotur Rohmah provides an insight into the teaching of Arabic, which is enhanced by the use of digital technology; this is reflected in the fact that the integration of technology into Arabic language learning presents its own set of challenges. Technology enables learners to be exposed to the Arabic language more frequently in various contexts, thereby accelerating the process of comprehension and language acquisition. However, the findings of this study also indicate that learning that relies too heavily on technology has the potential to diminish the value of direct interaction between teachers and learners, even though such relationships play a crucial role in shaping understanding and learning behaviour (Rohmah & Yusuf, 2025, p. 528).

Based on the above, it is clear that the direct method is an approach with great potential for improving the quality of Arabic language learning, particularly in terms of communicative skills. Amidst the developments of the modern era, characterised by technological advancements, this method is not only relevant but can also be developed in a more adaptive manner through the integration of digital media. Therefore, research in this study is important to theoretically examine the concept of the direct method and to analyse its relevance in addressing the challenges and needs of Arabic language learning in the modern era.

2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using library research as the primary framework for examining the issues. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the phenomena in greater depth through narrative data without intervening in or manipulating the variables under investigation. Through library research, this study utilises the literature as the primary source or primary data in tracing the interrelationships between various concepts and theoretical developments within the paradigm of Arabic language education. Secondary data, meanwhile, was obtained from studies supporting the themes of this research.

The data collection process was carried out in stages through the identification, selection and in-depth analysis of literature relevant to the focus of the study. Each source was critically analysed to reveal patterns, conceptual relationships and its contribution to the development of an understanding of Arabic language learning methods (Sugiyono, 2013).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Basic Concepts of the Direct Method in Arabic Language Teaching

A teaching method can be understood as a systematic approach devised by educators to deliver subject matter to learners, with the aim of achieving desired learning outcomes. A method (method/الطريقة) can essentially be understood as a set of general rules that serve as a guide for teachers in carrying out the learning process, having first prepared the various techniques and steps to be used (Baroroh & Rahmawati, 2020, p. 182). In other words, a method is not merely about how to teach, but also reflects a planned and systematic framework for the delivery of content. This understanding aligns with Edward Anthony's view, who regards a method as a comprehensive, purposefully structured plan, particularly in organising how learning content is presented in a systematic, orderly, and mutually integrated manner. Within this framework, each component of learning is arranged harmoniously and without contradiction, and is based on a specific approach that serves as the foundation for the learning process. (Anthony, 1976).

In the context of the direct method developed by Charles Berlitz, it serves not only as a technique for delivering content, but also as a conceptual framework that guides the learning process so that it proceeds in a planned and meaningful manner. Each stage is designed with consideration of various interrelated factors, such as the characteristics of the learners, and the level and nature of the material's difficulty (Sudjana, 2005).

The direct method is also fundamentally rooted in the ideas of Jacob Gouin, who emphasised that language learning should be carried out through dramatisation and role-play. This approach is based on modern principles, such as association, visualisation, and learning that engages the five senses. For Gouin, the sentence is the basic unit of language and plays a fundamental role. Sentences are not studied in isolation, but must be linked to other sentences to form a coherent and contextual chain of meaning (Makruf, 2009, p. 40).

According to J.C. Richards, as quoted by Anton D. Pratomo, the direct method is essentially rooted in the natural method, which is a language learning process that resembles the way children acquire their first language. It is clear that, from this perspective, language is a living and dynamic entity (Rahman, 2017, p. 52).

This method also emphasises the use of Arabic without the use of translation or as a direct component of the learning process. In practice, the teacher delivers the material entirely in Arabic as the medium of instruction, so that learners gradually become accustomed to understanding and responding to the language directly, resulting in a more natural learning process. This method is considered effective in improving speaking skills and the ability to understand spoken language (Al-Khalil, 2020, pp. 10–12). Learners are not merely required to memorise linguistic structures, but are encouraged to understand and actively use them in real-life communicative contexts. However, the success of this method depends heavily on a supportive learning environment, as well as on teachers who possess active and communicative Arabic language skills.

It can thus be understood from these definitions that, in practice, the direct method does not stand alone, but is supported by several interrelated approaches that form a coherent whole. There are at least three methods that are closely interlinked and form an integral part of the application of this method, namely:

- a. The psychological method, which focuses the learning process on observing pupils' mental development and the mechanisms of

association in thinking. Through this approach, learning is designed to align with the way pupils' minds work.

- b. The phonetic method, an approach that emphasises the use of phonetic notation in the presentation of material, rather than simply the conventional spelling commonly used. In practice, this method usually begins with listening exercises focusing on the sounds of the language, thereby enabling learners to become accustomed to recognising or distinguishing pronunciations accurately.
- c. The natural method, which is an extension of the phonetic method. It relies on everyday habits and interactions that occur naturally, seeking to align the process of learning a foreign language with the way one acquires one's mother tongue (Hermawan, 2013, pp. 179–180).

Essentially, these three branches of methodology do not merely exhibit fundamental differences. They all share the same focus on emphasising direct application in the process of learning a foreign language; consequently, this approach is believed to be capable of creating a more immersive learning environment, allowing the language acquisition process to unfold more naturally and effectively

3.2 Characteristics and Principles of the Direct Method

This method is essentially based on the assumption that foreign language learning is not significantly different from the acquisition of one's mother tongue. Language is understood and mastered through intensive, direct use in communicative contexts, so that learners become accustomed to interacting naturally with the language being studied. Within this framework, the direct method has distinctive characteristics in its application. Among the characteristics of the method are:

- a. This method prioritises listening and speaking skills over reading and writing skills.
- b. This method consistently avoids the use of translation in the learning process. Instead, learning is directed towards the direct use of the target language through various meaningful expressions and contexts.
- c. In this method, language rules are not conveyed directly in the form of theoretical explanations, but are introduced through various examples of contextual usage (Gunawansyah & Mutmainah, 2021, pp. 34–35).
- d. The learning materials in this method focus on vocabulary and sentence structures commonly used in everyday life.
- e. This method utilises the techniques of *al-taqlid wa al-hidz* (imitation and memorisation).
- f. The active involvement of the teacher and, even more so, the pupils must be balanced in order to foster an active learning process (Bakri, 2017, pp. 6–7).

3.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Direct Method

This learning strategy offers a number of notable advantages, particularly in terms of time efficiency and the clarity of its implementation structure. Each stage is systematically designed so that the learning process is more focused and easier to follow. Furthermore, this approach also makes a significant contribution to learners who experience learning difficulties. This is reflected in the benefits it delivers, such as:

- a. Motivating learners to consistently think in Arabic during the learning process.

- b. Motivating learners to be able to identify and understand vocabulary and sentences in a foreign language more effectively.
- c. Helping learners or pupils to understand the symbols of a foreign language through the use of simple vocabulary that is close to everyday language.
- d. The use of a variety of engaging and interesting teaching aids, thereby increasing learners' interest and involvement in the learning process (Chalik, 2020, p. 165).

Alongside the various advantages it offers, this strategy also has limitations that need to be taken into account. The weaknesses of this method are illustrated by:

- a. The lack of opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion or exploration can lead to underdeveloped problem-solving skills, as they are not accustomed to thinking critically.
- b. This requires teachers who possess a high level of proficiency and fluency in Arabic.
- c. Difficulties in delivering engaging learning activities that reflect real-life situations in the classroom, thereby limiting pupils' learning experiences (Yanti & Afrani, 2018, p. 237).

Consequently, if this strategy is subsequently used exclusively and on an ongoing basis, it has the potential to hinder the development and higher-order thinking skills of these learners.

3.4 The Implementation of the Direct Method and Its Relevance in the Modern Era

The direct method can be explained through concrete examples using lectures and demonstrations, with Arabic serving as the sole medium of instruction. In practice, the application of the direct method today requires creative and innovative adaptation in the face of globalisation and rapid technological advancements.

There are several approaches that can be applied in the process of learning Arabic which directly support the development of a method that is not only theoretically relevant but also practical in addressing the challenges of learning Arabic in the modern era; these include:

- a. Utilising technology as a teaching aid, such as language learning apps.
- b. Using audiovisual and visual media to clarify linguistic meaning.
- c. Implementing project-based learning in Arabic
- d. Developing communicative activities initiated by the teacher or tutor, such as role play and discussions.

This will spark an interest in learning the language among students, which will indirectly have an impact on the learning process. The learning process is illustrated as follows:

- a. The activity focuses on listening skills with the book closed. The teacher gives clear instructions, such as "listen carefully, then read the dialogue or write it down".
- b. The learning activity is directed towards the process of listening and understanding with the book open; the teacher's instructions, such as "look at the lesson carefully", are intended to direct the pupils' focus on both the text and the audio simultaneously. If pupils experience difficulty in understanding the dialogue (illustrations), the teacher is advised to provide explanations using visual aids as supporting materials.

- c. The teacher emphasises to pupils the importance of active engagement in the learning process through listening exercises and group repetition with the book open. This process aims to train pupils in pronunciation, enabling them not only to listen but also to speak fluently.
- d. Guide pupils to practise listening repeatedly on an individual basis. This can improve pupils' memory as the lesson material is repeated (Hasanah et al., 2024, pp. 44–45).

Furthermore, technological advances in the modern era have further enhanced the effectiveness of this method. The availability of various digital media, such as learning apps, interactive videos and communication platforms, helps to open up wider opportunities for learners to engage in authentic language practice. The direct method holds a significant position in Arabic language learning in the modern era. Its ability to adapt to the changing times makes this method not only relevant but also effective in building learners' communicative competence.

4. Conclusion

The direct method strategy can be understood as a structured learning approach, with the teacher playing a central role in delivering the material explicitly and systematically. In practice, the teacher functions not only as a conveyor of information but also as a facilitator of the learning process, ensuring that each stage proceeds logically and continuously. This approach demonstrates significant effectiveness in improving student learning outcomes, particularly in the cognitive and psychomotor domains, which is attributable to the clarity of direction and sequence of learning that helps learners understand the material in a more focused manner.

Furthermore, this method is recognised as one of the more effective approaches to developing learners' speaking skills. Its primary basis rests on the assumption that the process of learning a foreign language is essentially similar to the acquisition of one's mother tongue.

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