

How Does “SPEAKING” Work in Pesantren?: An Ethnography of Arabic Communication Based on Dell Hymes' Framework

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Abstract:

Arabic language learning in pesantren faces a paradox between the demands of active participation of students and a communication structure that emphasizes hierarchy, obedience, and ta'zim to *ustadz*. This study aims to analyze the communication model of Arabic language learning at the Al Muhsin Islamic Boarding School Metro Lampung using the communication ethnographic approach and the Dell Hymes SPEAKING framework. The study used a qualitative design with data collected over three months through participant observation of 12 learning activities and 8 informal interactions, recording of six 75-minute communication events, in-depth interviews with five informants, and documentation. Data are analyzed through condensation, presentation and verification of conclusions. The results of the study show that Arabic language learning communication takes place in a participatory-controlled communication pattern based on adab. *Ustadz* still has linguistic and epistemic authority in determining the material, the turn of speaking, the choice of code and the accuracy of the answers, while the students gain space to imitate, ask questions, dialogue, translate and help their peers. Arabic is positioned as the language of knowledge, religion and identity of Islamic boarding schools, while code transfer to Indonesian functions as pedagogical scaffolding, a means of collaboration and comprehension support. The norm of waiting for the turn of the speaker functions as a class management as well as strengthening the manners and authority of the *ustaz*. Theoretically, these findings extend the use of the SPEAKING framework from simply mapping the elements of communication to an instrument for uncovering language ideologies, power relations, epistemic authority and negotiations between obedience and participation in traditional religious institutions. This study concludes that learning Arabic in Islamic boarding schools can develop the active participation of students without eliminating hierarchy and adab values, if the authority of the *ustadz* is accompanied by a space for dialogue, peer assistance, pedagogical code transfer, and contextual communication practices.

Keywords: Ethnography of Communication; Dell Hymes SPEAKING Model; Arabic Language Learning; Controlled Participatory Communication.

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Bagaimana Praktik “SPEAKING” Berlangsung di Pesantren?: Sebuah Etnografi Komunikasi Bahasa Arab Berdasarkan Kerangka Kerja Dell Hymes

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Abstrak:

Pembelajaran bahasa Arab di pesantren menghadapi paradoks antara tuntutan partisipasi aktif santri dan struktur komunikasi yang menekankan hierarki, kepatuhan, serta ta'zim kepada ustadz. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis model komunikasi pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Pondok Pesantren Al Muhsin Metro Lampung menggunakan pendekatan etnografi komunikasi dan kerangka SPEAKING Dell Hymes. Penelitian menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan data yang dikumpulkan selama tiga bulan melalui observasi partisipan terhadap 12 kegiatan pembelajaran dan 8 interaksi informal, perekaman enam peristiwa komunikasi berdurasi 75 menit, wawancara mendalam terhadap lima informan, serta dokumentasi. Data dianalisis melalui kondensasi, penyajian dan verifikasi kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi pembelajaran bahasa Arab berlangsung dalam pola komunikasi partisipatif-terkendali berbasis adab. Ustadz tetap memiliki otoritas linguistik dan epistemik dalam menentukan materi, giliran berbicara, pilihan kode dan ketepatan jawaban, sementara santri memperoleh ruang untuk menirukan, bertanya, berdialog, menerjemahkan dan membantu teman sebaya. Bahasa Arab diposisikan sebagai bahasa ilmu, agama dan identitas pesantren, sedangkan alih kode ke bahasa Indonesia berfungsi sebagai pedagogical scaffolding, sarana kolaborasi dan dukungan pemahaman. Norma menunggu giliran berbicara berfungsi sebagai manajemen kelas sekaligus penguatan adab dan otoritas ustadz. Secara teoretis, temuan ini memperluas penggunaan kerangka SPEAKING dari sekadar pemetaan unsur komunikasi menjadi instrumen untuk mengungkap ideologi bahasa, relasi kuasa, otoritas epistemik dan negosiasi antara kepatuhan dan partisipasi dalam institusi keagamaan tradisional. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pembelajaran bahasa Arab di pesantren dapat mengembangkan partisipasi aktif santri tanpa menghilangkan hierarki dan nilai adab, selama otoritas ustadz disertai ruang dialog, bantuan teman sebaya, alih kode pedagogis, dan praktik komunikasi yang kontekstual.

Kata Kunci: Etnografi Komunikasi; Model SPEAKING Dell Hymes; Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab; Komunikasi Partisipatif Terkendali.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools have long been an Islamic educational institution that not only serves as a center for religious knowledge, but also as a fortress of culture and scientific tradition in Indonesia. Arabic, as the language of revelation and the classical treasure of Islam, occupies an important position in the Islamic boarding school education system. Mastery of Arabic allows students to understand authoritative texts, such as the yellow book which is the main source of Islamic knowledge. Therefore, Arabic is not only a means of linguistic communication, but also a symbol of the cultural and religious identity of students (Umam, 2021). Its existence strengthens the legitimacy of pesantren as an institution that produces Muslim scholars and scholars.

Outside the context of Islamic boarding schools, Arabic also has international recognition. Since 1973, the United Nations has designated Arabic as one of the world's official languages, on a par with English, French, Russian, Spanish, and Chinese. This designation encourages many formal educational institutions in Indonesia, both public and private, to integrate Arabic subjects into their curriculum (Putri et al., 2024). This shows that the position of the Arabic language is not only important for Islamic studies, but also relevant in the context of globalization and international diplomacy.

On the other hand, Arabic also has a very strategic position in Islamic education, especially in Indonesia, which is known as the country with the largest number of Islamic boarding schools in the world. This is inseparable from its role as a primary language in understanding the sources of Islamic teachings such as the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as classical and contemporary Islamic scientific treasures (Jufrih et al., 2022).

However, the reality is that the communication model of Arabic learning in Islamic boarding schools is greatly influenced by the social relationship between *kiai*, *ustadz* and students. *Kiai* is seen as the center of authority and charisma, so communication patterns tend to be top-down. This is reflected in the yellow book recitation method, where the *kiai* plays the role of the main source of knowledge, while the students listen and take notes passively (Hidayat, 2017). This communication pattern shows a spiritual as well as an intellectual dimension, because respect for the *kiai* is considered part of the manners of seeking knowledge.

In addition, distinctive learning methods such as *bandongan*, *wetonan*, and *sorogan* strengthen the identity of pesantren as traditional educational institutions. *Bandongan*, for example, allows the *kiai* to read the yellow book by being listened to together by many students, while *sorogan* gives the opportunity for the students to read in front of the *kiai* individually. On the other hand, modern Islamic boarding schools adopt a formal education system that resembles a school with classical methods, lesson schedules and more systematic academic evaluations (Rahmawati, 2017). Nevertheless, both traditional and modern pesantren still maintain the close relationship between *kiai* and *santri* which is a characteristic of the pesantren world (Nurdin, 2016).

Although Arabic is the main identity of Islamic boarding schools, its implementation in the field often faces obstacles. Many students are afraid of making mistakes in speaking Arabic, so they prefer to be silent rather than trying to communicate. In addition, the application of Arabic is often inconsistent, only used in certain activities while in daily life students tend to use regional languages or Indonesian. Another obstacle is the involvement of non-language teachers who do



not support Arabic-speaking environment programs and the application of punishments that are not fully effective in fostering learning motivation (Yazid & Fauzi, 2025).

Another limitation arises in the application of learning methods. Formal methods, such as *nahwu* and *sharaf* teaching, tend to emphasize grammatical and memorization aspects, but leave less room for oral communication practices. In contrast, communicative methods that encourage everyday conversation are often considered to lack attention to the precision of language structure. As a result, students experience a gap between theoretical understanding and practical speaking skills (Al Usman et al., 2023). In fact, in the context of global communication, the ability to speak is the main skill that is needed, both for academic, social, and professional interests (Afyuddin et al., 2023).

Previous studies have highlighted the role of Islamic boarding schools in learning Arabic. For example, research (Hartono, 2016) Discussing communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools involving *kiai*, *ustadz* and students in social-scientific dynamics. (Ahmad Wasil, 2024) emphasizing the importance of Arabic as a second language in Islamic boarding schools, while research (Nuridin, 2016) highlighting the tradition of communication that is characteristic of the Islamic boarding school world. However, most of these studies focus more on learning strategies, the urgency of mastering Arabic, or communication traditions in general.

There are still few studies that specifically examine the communication model of Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools through an ethnographic approach to communication. In fact, in practice, there is a paradox between learning objectives that require students to actively speak, ask, discuss, and express opinions with the social structure of pesantren that emphasizes hierarchy, obedience, and *ta'zim* to *kiai* and *ustadz* (Haq et al., 2025; Muradi, 2014; Rochmawati et al., 2024; Sanusi et al., 2024). On the one hand, the norm of respect serves to maintain ethics, teacher authority, and the regularity of learning, but on the other hand it can limit the courage of students to take turns speaking, convey differences of opinion, ask for clarification, or correct the speech of those who have higher authority. The ethnographic approach to communication offered by (Hymes, 1974, 2013) and developed by (Saville-Troike, 2003) especially through the framework of SPEAKING, allowing the paradox to be analyzed more comprehensively. Through the elements of setting and scene, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genres, the research can identify situations when students gain space for participation, parties who determine the right to speak, the goals that underlie the interaction, the form of speech that is considered polite, and the norms that limit or support the courage to communicate. Thus, SPEAKING is not intended to eliminate the value of *ta'zim*, but rather to bridge obedience and participation by showing that the activeness of speaking, asking questions, and opinions politely can be understood as part of learning manners. This research is important to fill the gap in the study of pesantren communication, especially in explaining how Arabic not only functions as a medium of learning, but also as a means of negotiating identity, authority, traditions, and social relations in the pesantren environment.

Based on this presentation, the Al Muhsin Metro Lampung Islamic Boarding School was chosen as a purposive research location because it has characteristics that are relevant to the focus of the research. This Islamic boarding school actively



organizes Arabic language programs, both in the form of oral communication and text-based learning, thus providing diverse communication events to be observed in the learning process. In addition, the interaction between *kiai*, *ustadz* and students takes place in the social structure of the pesantren that emphasizes hierarchy, obedience, and ta'zim values, but at the same time learning Arabic requires students to actively speak, ask, respond and participate in learning activities. This condition forms a distinctive communication culture and makes the Al Muhsin Metro Lampung Islamic Boarding School a case rich in information to examine the relationship between communication practices, Arabic learning goals and social norms of Islamic boarding schools. The selection of this location is also supported by access to learning activities, informants and adequate data sources, thus allowing in-depth data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation.

The results of this study are expected to be able to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic educational communication studies, especially in the field of Arabic language learning. Practically, this research is also expected to be an input for Islamic boarding schools in developing more effective learning strategies. With a deeper understanding of communication models, pesantren can design language programs that not only emphasize cognitive aspects, but also strengthen the social, cultural, and religious aspects of students.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach (Moleong, 2019) with communication ethnographic design (Kuswarno, 2019) to examine the communication model in the Arabic language learning process at the Al Muhsin Metro Islamic Boarding School. The field research was carried out for 3 months, namely from August to October 2025. Participant observation was carried out in 12 learning activities and 8 informal communication activities. Observations were focused on the pattern of interaction between ustaz and students, the change of speaking turns, the use of Arabic, the form of questions and responses, correction of language errors, and communication norms that arise in formal learning and informal interactions between students.

Audio-visual data was obtained through the recording of 6 communication events, with a total duration of 75 minutes. All recordings were transcribed and selected based on their relevance to the ethnographic components of communication, especially the context of interaction, speech participants, communication objectives, sequence of communicative actions, tone of communication, use of language codes, interaction norms and types of speech events.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 5 informants who were purposively selected based on their involvement and knowledge of Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools. The informants consisted of 2 Arabic teaching ustaz, 1 language administrator and 2 students. The interview lasted for 12 minutes for each informant. Interview data was used to understand the informants.

The research documentation includes language usage rules, language activity schedules, learning materials, records of language violations, photos of activities and relevant audio-visual archives. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources by comparing information from *kiai*, ustaz, administrators, and students as well as technical triangulation. Data are analyzed using interactive



models (Matthew B. Miles et al., 2020), which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis was carried out repeatedly from the data collection process to find communication patterns, interaction norms, social relationships, and cultural meanings that form the Arabic language learning communication model in pesantren.

Code	Status Informan	Education	Role in Arabic Language Learning
INF-1	<i>Ustadz</i> Language Section	Master's degree in Arabic Language Education	Language Builder
INF-2	Arabic Subject Teacher	Bachelor's Degree in Arabic Language Education	Subject Teacher
INF-3	Language Manager	Grade 5 (2 MA)	Language Program Implementer
INF-4	Senior Student	Grade 4	Language Learners
INF-5	Junior Student	Grade 2	Language Learners

Table 1. Demografi Informan

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication Patterns in Arabic Language Learning

The results of the research conducted at the Al Muhsin Metro Islamic Boarding School provide a comprehensive overview of communication practices in Arabic language learning that take place in the pesantren environment. Observations were made in various contexts of activities, such as the learning process in formal classes, *muhawahah* activities, and student interaction in the pesantren environment. Through this direct observation, the researchers found that communication between the *ustadz*, senior students and junior students not only serves as a means of conveying learning material but also acts as a vehicle for the internalisation of religious values, discipline and linguistic etiquette. The communication pattern formed shows a combination of authoritative models typical of the pesantren tradition and a participatory approach that encourages the active involvement of students. This makes the results of observation the main basis for understanding the ethnographic dynamics of communication in Arabic language learning.

Observations in formal classes show that the communication process between *ustadz* and students takes place in a structured and academically oriented pattern. *Ustadz* plays a dominant role as the main source of knowledge, starting the activity with an explanation of the material "*as-saa'ah*", then providing applicative examples in the form of sentences and simple conversations. Although communication patterns tend to be one-way in the early stages, *ustadz* gradually encourage students to imitate, respond, and practice the use of Arabic in the context of daily conversation. In some learning sessions, two-way communication begins to be built through light discussions, questions and answers, and direct correction of



pronunciation errors or sentence structure. This shows a shift from a transmission communication model to a more participatory transactional model. The use of Arabic in daily instruction, greetings, and responses is a hallmark of classroom learning, which serves not only to improve students' linguistic abilities but also to form a religious and academic language environment.

In addition to the vertical interaction between the *ustadz* and the *santri*, the findings of the observation also indicate that horizontal communication amongst the *santri* plays an important role in supporting the Arabic language learning process at the Al Muhsin Metro Islamic Boarding School. This pattern of communication is mainly seen in *halaqah* activities, class deliberations, small group discussions and informal conversations in the *pesantren* environment. The students exchange insights on linguistic rules, translate Arabic texts, or practise their speaking skills through short dialogues. This form of communication reflects a strong culture of collaborative learning, in which the students play an active role not only as recipients of information but also as facilitators for their peers. In this context, a simpler form of two-way communication emerges, which encourages the students to be more confident in using Arabic and sets it apart from the hierarchical structure typically found in the study of religious texts. This interactive and participatory atmosphere highlights the social function of Arabic as a unifying force within the learning community and a means of fostering scholarly solidarity.

Halliday's theory of the functions of language, for example, asserts that language essentially functions as a tool for interaction that enables communication and the formation of communities (Laely & Kusnawati, 2023). In agreement with this, (Nasution et al., 2025) states that Arabic language learning strategies which employ an interactive approach can foster a collaborative learning environment that promotes the development of learners' linguistic and communicative competences. In addition, the social-psychological dimension of language learning highlights that Arabic not only serves as a means of communication, but also as a medium to strengthen scientific solidarity and create common understanding among learning communities (Taqi & Abby, 2022). Consequently, the application of a participatory approach in Arabic language learning has the potential to strengthen social cohesion and enrich the development of collective knowledge within the academic environment.

The boarding school environment here generally encourages the use of Arabic through internal policies and everyday practices known as *bi'ah lughawiyah* (Language environment). Every student is encouraged to use Arabic in greetings, casual conversation and during official activities at the *pesantren*. In addition, activities such as daily vocabulary, speech competitions, Arabic-language drama and announcements in Arabic help to foster a communicative atmosphere within the *pesantren*. However, the findings of the observation also revealed a few challenges, such as the use of a mixture of Arabic, Indonesian and regional languages, as well as the fact that some students remain passive for fear of making mistakes. Nevertheless, on the whole, the implementation of a language-rich environment has created a social space that encourages students to practise Arabic in a functional and natural way, thereby making the learning process more meaningful and contextual (Ahmad Wasil, 2024; Yazid & Fauzi, 2025).



Figure 1. Communication in Arabic Language Learning in Formal Classrooms



Figure 2. Muhawaroh session for junior students





Figure 3. Muhawaroh session for senior students



Dell Hymes' SPEAKING Framework

To understand in depth the dynamics of communication in learning Arabic at the Al Muhsin Metro Islamic Boarding School, the results of observations and interviews were analyzed using the SPEAKING framework developed by (Hymes, 1974). This framework is a key tool in the ethnographic approach to communication, which seeks to illustrate how linguistic behaviour is always closely linked to the social and cultural context in which communication takes place. Through eight components of analysis (Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre), researchers can systematically map the elements that shape communication patterns within the pesantren environment. Pendekatan ini membantu mengungkap bahwa komunikasi di pesantren bukan sekadar proses pertukaran informasi linguistik, tetapi juga



merupakan praktik sosial yang sarat dengan nilai, hierarki, serta simbol-simbol religius.

The first point is "Setting and Scine", at this stage the researcher found a communication model of Arabic language learning in several activities such as learning in formal classes, speaking practice of junior students, senior students and the pesantren environment. At this stage, the researcher found that the communication process in the classroom mostly uses Arabic, but if the teacher finds that the students do not understand what he is saying, some other students help to translate the intention conveyed by the teacher.

Another communication process that occurs in the classroom is with the teacher delivering the material "as-saa'ah" which is then followed by all students, this is done to arouse the enthusiasm and courage of students in pronouncing the language. (Hellermann, 2003) revealed that the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern can provide opportunities for students to speak actively because students are asked to repeat sentences often and are directly related to the assessment of student responses. In line with this (Uswatun Hasanah et al., 2024) revealed that the IRF pattern can facilitate a structured communication flow between teachers and students so that it can increase students' activeness in speaking. This learning process was carried out for 80 minutes, namely at 08.00-09.20 WIB.

Another form of communication is evident in the muhawarah sessions, both in the Junior and Kibar classes. Lessons take place after the congregational Fajr prayer at the mosque. The communication model for this activity proceeded in a calm, relaxed and serene atmosphere; the session began with an icebreaker led by the teacher for the senior class and by the senior students for the junior class. This is done to relieve the drowsiness of the students in the morning and continues with singing Arabic with the theme "حيا بنا", this shows the value of communication culture shown in this pesantren.

Communication practice in the Senior class is led directly by the teacher with the theme "كأس العالم" while the Junior class is led by senior students in the language section with the theme "وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية". The communication culture in these two groups is very different; the Senior class is given vocabulary and more communication practices while the Junior class students are given a lot of mufrodad pronunciation drills.

In general, the setting and scine in the Arabic communication process runs solemnly, the communication pattern is not only aimed at academic and social as a language but there are religious elements contained during this communication. This is in line with the four communication functions expressed by the (Basit, 2018) that is, to provide information, educate, entertain and influence. In terms of communication that occurs at the al muhsin Islamic boarding school, Arabic communication functions as information, which is used to exchange information related to the learning process and as language education, both academic and religious. In addition, (Siddiq, 2018) explained that learning which takes place in an atmosphere of spirituality and high discipline makes communication an integral part of the academic ritual, serving not merely to transfer knowledge but also to strengthen the ethics and spirituality of the students.

Although the IRF pattern, repetition drills, and a solemn learning atmosphere may promote classroom order and enhance students' initial confidence, these



practices do not necessarily produce dialogic and spontaneous communication. (Walsh, 2002) emphasizes that teachers' dominance in controlling topics and turn-taking may restrict student engagement. (Nassaji & Wells, 2000) likewise demonstrate that the IRF pattern becomes productive only when teachers' feedback encourages further explanation and the development of ideas. In the pesantren context, this limitation may be reinforced by hierarchical structures that discourage students from asking questions or expressing differing views (Haq et al., 2025). Therefore, the success of instruction should be evaluated based on students' autonomy in using Arabic, rather than merely on classroom order and collective responses.

The second point is "Participants", in this study the participants are senior teachers, junior teachers, senior students and junior students. The researcher observed and participated in Arabic language learning activities in formal classes with senior teachers, while in muhawarah activities the participants were junior teachers, senior and junior students.

Ustadz Andi Azzhuri, S.Pd.I. As a senior *ustadz* is a learning facilitator and an intensive second grade student as a student. The teacher plays the role of the main director in the learning process that regulates the rhythm of language in the classroom. It not only serves as a presenter of the material but also serves as an example in the use of good and correct Arabic. Meanwhile, students play the role of recipients as well as active participants who respond, repeat the teacher's words, and practice speaking according to the theme of the lesson. The pattern of relationships that has developed reflects a combination of hierarchical and participatory communication: teachers are respected as sources of knowledge, but two-way interaction is maintained to reinforce the students' understanding. This pattern reflects the characteristics of pesantren communication which is full of adab values and respect for scientific authority, *kiai* and *ustadz* play a role not only as teachers but also as symbols of moral authority in shaping the character of students (Yulista, 2019).

Meanwhile, the participants of the muhawarah activity consisted of two groups, namely senior students and junior students, each of whom was accompanied by a different supervisor. The Senior class is guided directly by the language teacher, while the junior class is accompanied by the senior students in the language section. This division of roles shows a multi-level communication model: the teacher acts as the main director as well as the linguistic role model, while the senior student serves as a mediator who bridges the understanding between theory and practice among junior students. This kind of communication pattern shows a typical mentoring system of Islamic boarding schools, where the authority of knowledge is not only vertical from teacher to student, but also horizontal through more egalitarian and collaborative interaction between students.

The third point is "Ends", the purpose of communication in this learning activity focuses on mastering Arabic language skills as well as strengthening manners in learning. In particular, the material used is sourced from the book *Al-'Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik* with the theme *As-Sa'ah* (hours/time), which is combined with daily speaking practices that are relevant to the context of the students' lives. The learning goal is not only limited to mastering the language structure, but also how students can use Arabic communicatively and contextually in social interaction. On the other hand, implicitly, this activity also has a spiritual purpose, which is to



instill awareness that learning Arabic is part of worship and a means of understanding Islamic teachings.

Meanwhile, the main purpose of muhawarah activities is to train the ability to speak (maharah kalam) with actual themes that are relevant to daily life. Senior class practicing themed conversations “كأس العالم” while the Junior class raised the theme “وسائل الاعلام الاجتماعية”. These themes were chosen so that students can use Arabic in a global and contemporary context, not just in religious topics. The Senior class emphasizes more on the interactive dialogue and improvised aspects of conversation, while the Junior class focuses on monologues and the absorption of new vocabulary. This approach shows the difference in the level of ability that is pedagogically accommodated, while showing how communication in pesantren is directed to form contextual and communicative Arabic language skills.

Some of the findings identified to support the learning objectives include ‘ishlahul lughah’ that is, language correction where words and sentences are written on small boards for the students to see and memorise, so that previous mistakes are not repeated.

Figure 4. Vocabulary Board



Thus, classroom communication serves as a cognitive medium for understanding language and as an affective medium for instilling religious values. This is in line with (Saepullah, 2021) that Islamic boarding school cultural communication is a form of inheritance of values and strategies for the preservation of Arabic as a language of religious identity. Thus, the purpose of communication does not stop at linguistic mastery but includes the formation of spiritual awareness.



The fourth point is "Act Sequence", the practice of communication in the classroom begins with the reading of basmalah, this reflects the spiritual values applied in the learning process, then the teacher begins the learning by introducing the theme to be conveyed, namely as-saa'ah. The teacher starts the communication practice by using the IRF model by giving initiation to the students and then the students respond to the stimulus given by the teacher and the teacher again gives feedback. From this, the researcher sees the courage that emerges from students in practicing communication in the classroom. This is also in line with the research that has been carried out (Uswatun Hasanah et al., 2024) which found that the IRF approach can provide students with the motivation and confidence to practise Arabic in their daily lives as boarding school pupils.

Meanwhile, the muhawarah activity begins with morning dhikr and singing Arabic songs typical of the Islamic boarding school, which serves as a spiritual strengthening as well as a strategy to build a positive atmosphere. After that, the practice of communication continues using the audio-lingual method, where the teacher or supervisor listens to words or sentences, then the students imitate and practice it in the context of conversation. This pattern of communication shows a continuity between ritual and instructional aspects: dhikr instills the value of spirituality, while conversational practice trains practical language skills. This systematic sequence of activities makes learning not only linguistically effective, but also emotionally and spiritually meaningful.

In practice, students are given the opportunity to imitate speech, ask questions, or give examples of sentences according to the learning context. The activity ended with the reading of the closing prayer as a form of gratitude and hope for the blessings of knowledge. This kind of communication structure shows the continuity between pedagogical and religious aspects, where the learning process becomes a means of knowledge transfer as well as the formation of the character of the students through language and prayer rituals. This is also in line with the findings of the study (Luthfiah et al., 2025) which reveals that learning activities that begin with religious pedagogical activities will strengthen the spiritual bond between teachers and students.

The fifth point is "Key", the tone and style of communication that runs in the communication practice in this class is formal, the communication process runs solemnly and on several occasions there is a light humorous atmosphere or praise given by the teacher to the students in the class which fosters the seriousness and motivation of the students' learning, this can be seen the warmth that occurs between teachers and students.

The change of tone from serious to relaxed tone or vice versa maintains the dynamics of a non-monotonous learning atmosphere, emotional closeness between teachers and students is formed which shows that communication in this pesantren is informative and humanistic. In terms of key ethnography, communication shows the combination of formal communication styles and familiarity, showing the balance of communication as found by (Kuswandi, 2018) that students in modern



Islamic boarding schools show a polite, humorous and flexible communication style without diminishing respect for teachers.

Meanwhile, the tone of communication in muhawarah activities took place solemnly but was still interspersed with a light atmosphere. The teacher starts by reading a word or sentence which is then repeated together by the students. Although some students looked sleepy because of the very early hours of the activity, the supervisor tried to maintain the spirit with a variety of intonation and humor inserts, this reflected the typical character of the pesantren that balances firmness with affection. This kind of approach not only maintains communication discipline but also creates a humane and inclusive learning atmosphere.

The sixth point is "Instrumentalities", the means and media of communication used in communication practice is to speak Arabic fusha, both in the instructions given by the teacher, dialogue between teachers and students, students and students as well as the language of instruction in explaining the material. However, sometimes teachers use Indonesian to help students understand the meaning explained or difficult sentence structures, in other circumstances students also sometimes use Indonesian in explaining the material given by the teacher. The use of two languages in communication practice in communication ethnography reflects code switching that functions as a pedagogical rather than just forming language habits. In addition, inter-students also often help their friends in explaining the meaning of words in Arabic and Indonesian, this shows that there is a process of communicative collaboration between students.

The media used in the learning process in the classroom include textbooks, namely al arabiyah baina yadaika, whiteboards, markers, erasers and direct media such as wall clocks and direct communication that strengthen face-to-face interaction typical of pesantren learning. In this aspect, ethnographic communication practice shows that there is code switching between Arabic and Indonesian in Arabic language learning as an adaptive strategy to facilitate understanding while maintaining the dominance of Arabic as the language of scientific communication for pesantren (Safitri & Mujiyanto, 2021).

Meanwhile, in muhawarah activities, the language used in this activity is Arabic as the main language, but it is often interspersed with Indonesian to clarify the meaning or instructions, especially for junior students. In the senior student class, the learning facilities are supported by laptops, internet, and projectors to display interactive materials such as conversation texts and thematic images, while the Junior class uses markers, whiteboards, and LED strip lights as simple visual aids. The utilization of technology in the senior class demonstrates the integration between traditional and modern methods in Arabic language learning, while the simple approach in the junior class emphasizes hands-on practice that is communicative in nature. This variety of facilities shows the adaptation of pesantren to digital developments without abandoning their traditional values.



Figure 5. Communication Practice Media for Students in the Islamic Boarding School



The seventh point is "Norms", norms and rules in the practice of Arabic learning communication in the classroom has been expressly agreed upon between teachers and students, students are not allowed to answer or speak before getting their turn to speak. This norm is part of the values that exist in Islamic boarding schools and emphasizes politeness and order in learning.

In the communication practice that takes place in the classroom, students who want to ask questions or answers, they must raise their hands first until the teacher gives them permission to speak, this learning process not only maintains the order of the learning process but also trains the discipline of the students and respects the speech of others.

Likewise, in muhawahah activities, students are not allowed to answer questions before getting their turn and are required to wait for a cue from their teacher or supervisor. A This tour reflects the application of the principles of learning ethics (adab fi al-ta'allum) which are highly upheld in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, any form of communication should be delivered politely and using good language. These norms have a dual function, namely as a control of students' verbal behavior as well as an instrument of character formation. The moral values contained in this norm make communication in the classroom an integral means of character education that functions as an instrument of character education, training discipline and respect for the authority of science (Meisareni & Arif, 2022).

The eighth point is "Genre", the type of discourse and form of communication in the learning process in the formal classroom is an interactive lecture which is then combined with discussion and question and answer. At the beginning of the learning activity, the teacher delivered the material using Arabic while on another occasion the students were given the opportunity to dialogue and practice speaking in Arabic with the theme "as-saa'ah". This pattern is a form of integration between traditional



and modern methods applied in the pesantren education system. The lecture method reflects ta'dib, which is value education, while the discussion method reflects the application of communicative methods in language learning.

Thus, the genre in the communication process in learning Arabic in the formal class of the al muhsin Islamic boarding school is not only informative but also participatory which strengthens the purpose of learning Arabic as a means of social and spiritual interaction. These findings are in line with (Luthfiah et al., 2025) which states that pesantren with interactive and discussion systems affirm the sustainability of the bandongan tradition, halaqoh and adapt traditional communication models to be dialogical without losing their sacred value.

Meanwhile, this muhawarah activity combines two types of discourse, namely the communicative approach and the audio-lingual method. In the senior student class, the activities are more in the form of interactive conversations and improvisation, while in the junior student class, the form of monologue and word repetition is the focus. In learning in formal classrooms, teachers still apply the lecture and question and answer discussion model which is then re-practiced in daily muhawarah activities. This combination of genres shows the continuity between traditional and modern approaches, namely lectures function as knowledge transfers, while discussion and communication practices are a means of application.

Although the eight components of the SPEAKING framework indicate that Arabic instructional communication at Al Muhsin Islamic Boarding School remains structured through teacher dominance, predetermined activity sequences, the IRF pattern, and norms requiring students to obtain permission before speaking, the findings of this study demonstrate that such control does not entirely inhibit student participation. Peer-assisted translation, senior-student mentoring, the use of humor, code-switching, question-and-answer activities, and muhawarah practice reveal the existence of negotiated spaces for participation within the pesantren's communicative structure. These findings extend the arguments of (Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Seedhouse, 2004; Walsh, 2002), who maintain that teacher control and IRF-based interaction may constrain learner autonomy when classroom exchanges merely culminate in the evaluation of students' responses. Recent research further suggests that, although hierarchical structures in pesantren may restrict the open expression of critical perspectives, communicative language learning can still develop through contextual adaptation to local religious and cultural values (Haq et al., 2025). The shift from absolute obedience to conditional obedience likewise indicates that respect for authority does not necessarily eliminate students' capacity to ask questions, evaluate information, and adopt rational positions (Rochmawati et al., 2024). Moreover, structured interaction, discussion, presentation, and peer communication have been shown to enhance learner engagement and Arabic language proficiency (Irsad et al., 2024). Accordingly, the communication model at Al Muhsin may be conceptualized as controlled participatory communication, in which student participation develops within the boundaries of proper conduct, institutional hierarchy, and the pedagogical authority of the pesantren.



Unit of analysis	Participant /Activities	Communication findings	Language function or ideology	Pedagogical implications and power relations
Senior teacher and language teacher	Teachers become facilitators, language models, material directors, turn organizers and answer assessors	Arabic language (Fusha) is used as the main code, Indonesian is used when students have difficulties	Arabic language is positioned as the language of knowledge, religion, truth and a symbol of competence and scientific authority	Teachers have the linguistic and epistemic authority to determine the correct language, the theme of the conversation, the turn of the speech, as well as when code switching is allowed
Senior Student	Advanced participants in muhawarah activities	More dialogue, improvisation, questions and answers, and actual themed conversations	Fluency in Arabic is seen as a sign of maturity, proficiency, and improved language status	Senior students have greater space for participation and communicative autonomy than junior students
Senior students in the language department	Mediator between teachers and junior students	Provide examples, translate, explain vocabulary, lead drills, and correct the speech of junior students	Language authority can be delegated in stages to students who are considered more competent	Senior students remain under the authority of the teacher, but have linguistic authority over junior students
Junior Student	Beginner participants who need intensive mentoring	More imitation, repeating vocabulary, following monologues, waiting for their turn and receiving corrections	Initial competence is understood as a stage that requires control, habituation, and discipline	Speaking opportunities are more limited and participation depends on the direction of the ustaz or senior students
Arabic-Indonesian code	Teachers switch to Indonesian	Indonesian is the language of explanation,	Functions as pedagogical scaffolding	Helps with understanding, but at the same



switching by teachers	when there is difficulty understanding the meaning, structure, or instruction	while Arabic remains the main language	and adjustment to the level of competence of students	time shows that the teacher controls the choice of code and the limits of its use
Exchange Arabic– Indonesian code between students	Students translate and explain the material to their friends	Horizontal support takes place through peer-to-peer communication	Indonesian serves as an auxiliary language, while Arabic remains the ideal language	Creating solidarity, collaboration and distribution of understanding beyond vertical communication between teachers and students
Code switching and a sense of psychological security	Indonesian is used for clarification when students have difficulty understanding Arabic	Students can still take part in learning without having to understand or respond to all speech in Arabic perfectly	Code switching has the potential to create psychological safety and reduce language anxiety	It can increase the courage to ask questions and maintain the involvement of students, but it has not been proven through the informant's direct statement
Code switching and hierarchical	Arabic language is dominant in formal situations, while Indonesian is used for help and explanation	Arabic signifies formality and authority; Indonesian language marks proximity and accessibility	Code switching has an ambivalent function: it maintains while reducing social distancing	The dominance of Arabic strengthens the authority of teachers, but the switch to Indonesian can make relationships more intimate and explanations more acceptable
Norms of the turn of the conversation	Santri raised his hand, waited for permission, and did not	Participation takes place through a teacher-defined procedure	Norma functions as class management as well as the formation of	Maintain order, train listening skills, and instill respect for teachers and other



	interrupt the conversation		adab fi al-ta'allum	participants' turns
The Cognitive Authority of the Teacher	The teacher determines who speaks, when to speak, the answers received, and when the talks end	Students can participate, but initiation and evaluation are mostly controlled by the teacher	Knowledge and forms of language that are considered correct are legitimized by teachers	Norms of decency not only govern the classroom, but also reproduce the hierarchy of knowledge and authority of the teacher
Participation negotiation space	There are questions and answers, dialogue, humor, peer help, and conversation practice	Students still get space to speak within the boundaries of the norms and structure of the pesantren	Participation is understood as purposeful and courteous participation	Teacher authority does not completely shut down two-way communication, but generates a pattern of licensed participation or participatory-controlled communication

Table 1. Synthesis of Participant Analysis, Instrumentalities and Norms in the SPEAKING Framework.



CONCLUSION

This study shows that Arabic language learning communication at the Al Muhsin Islamic Boarding School Metro Lampung takes place through a participatory-controlled communication pattern based on adab. This pattern brings together two seemingly opposite tendencies, namely the authority of teachers as a source of knowledge and the demand for students to actively use Arabic. In formal learning and muhawarah activities, students gain space to imitate, answer, ask, dialogue, translate and help their peers. However, the participation still takes place within the boundaries of the theme, the sequence of activities, the turn of the speaker, the norms of politeness, and the evaluation that are largely determined by the teacher or supervisor. Thus, the participation of students is not completely free, but in the form of licensed participation that is negotiated through the values of ta'zim, discipline and adab fi al ta'alum.

Theoretically, these findings enrich the theory of Ethnography of Communication Hymes because it shows that the SPEAKING component not only serves to describe the elements of communication but can also be used to uncover the ideology of language, power relations and scientific authority within traditional religious institutions. The Participants component shows the difference in the turn of speaking between teachers, senior students, and junior students, Instrumentalities show the function of code switching as a pedagogical aid and a means of building closeness, while Norms shows that the rules of decency function as a classroom management as well as a reinforcement of teachers' cognitive authority. Thus, the application of the SPEAKING framework in pesantren expands the understanding that communication is not only influenced by social and cultural contexts, but also by religious values, hierarchy, manners, and the negotiation process between compliance and participation.

This research also has limitations in only being carried out on one pesantren so that the findings cannot represent the diversity of communication traditions in salaf, modern, integrated, and pesantren with different social and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, future research needs to be carried out multisite by comparing modern and integrated salaf pesantren so that it can be known the variations in the application of the SPEAKING component in different institutional structures.



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