

Improvement of Speaking Skills Through the Use of Arabic as an Introduction Language

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Abstract: Many Arabic learning strategies have been used to improve speaking skills. However, it turns out that not every learning strategy has succeeded in increasing speaking skills. This paper aims to understand (1) the contribution of using Arabic as the language of instruction, (2) the process of increasing student's speaking skills after attending lectures using Arabic as an introduction, and (3) analyzing efforts to improve the quality of lectures. So far, this aspect has not been paid attention to in existing studies. This research approach is qualitative with a case study model. The research data is collected through interviews, observation, and documentation methods. Data analysis starts from data collection, data description, and data reduction, then verification in detail. The results showed that students benefited from using Arabic as the language of instruction, namely the addition of new vocabulary and terms, mastery of sentence structures, and the courage to express themselves in Arabic. Improving speaking skills is characterized by increased self-confidence, fluency in speaking, and more information to support speaking skills. The need to improve the quality of lectures by squeezing and the leader motivates the lecturers to use Arabic as the language of instruction, provides many opportunities for students to be active, and Arabicization of linguistic terms is needed. The conclusion is that Arabic as an introduction to lectures can improve students' speaking skills. This article provides suggestions on the effective use of Arabic as a strategy for learning speaking skills.

Keywords: Improvement, Speaking Skills, Arabic, Introduction Language, Language Environment

1. Introduction

The statement that the use of Arabic as the language of instruction can reduce mastery of the material being taught is not entirely grounded. This is indicated by learning using the Arabic language, which can improve students' understanding, as has been done by several universities in Indonesia. The use of Arabic in several Islamic boarding schools and universities has no obstacles and has been running well until now, even more, encouraging students to use Arabic (Siddiq, 2018). On the other hand, there are terms in Arabic that are not represented in Indonesian, so Arabic feels more understanding than in other languages. Understanding the content of learning materials is not only caused by the language of instruction, but the good material design also has a significant role to play in helping learners understand the material (Bahrudin, Andrian, & Mubaraq, 2021)

So far, the learning process is considered more in-depth if using Indonesian because students have mastered the language so that there are no obstacles related to the language. This is different from Arabic, which is not perfectly understood by Indonesian students, where using it as the language of instruction for lectures will be an obstacle (Chairawati, 2014). Following formalism, in the 18th century, the use of L1 in teaching a foreign language was very common and it was most evident in the Grammar Translation Method (Nunan, 2020). However, Arabic does not always hinder the process of understanding if indeed students who are studying already have adequate Arabic language skills and are accustomed to using it both orally and in writing. In reality, the use of Arabic in communication, including service in the language of instruction for lectures, can produce other benefits not obtained by using Indonesian, including the habit of hearing Arabic and the habituation of a new language that was not previously used. Thus, it shows the urgency of using Arabic to improve language skills, especially speaking, because language learning's primary purpose is communication (Alif Cahya & Mohammad Syam'un, 2013). In learning a foreign language, communication plays a very important role. Moreover, without communication, there is no interaction, language teaching, or learning. Communication is considered very important and is increasingly being used as a useful tool for organizing student-centered learning (Myslihaka, 2016).

From this background, this study aims to understand (1) the benefits of using Arabic as the language of instruction, (2) the process of improving student speaking skills after attending lectures using Arabic as an introduction, and (3) analyzing efforts to improve the quality of lectures. So far, this aspect has received less attention in existing research. Some of these aspects are not paid attention to because of the growing opinion that increasing language competence is more due to the presence of appropriate methods, appropriate strategies, or the use of reliable media. The use of Arabic in communication impacts the creation of a language environment, which can be used for the language acquisition process. Acquisition of language is a process that someone can

unconsciously master a specific language. Among the media is the presence of speech and stimuli from outside. Thus, learning a language from the target language environment is more accessible than outside the target language environment.

The assumption underlying this study is that the use of Arabic in communication can impact or benefit increasing language competence, both for users and listeners. The results of previous research show that Arabic learning through this communicative active method requires some activities to be undertaken by each student. These activities are very supportive and have a positive impact in helping Arabic proficiency especially speech. Such activities include questioning, discussion, problem-solving, vocabulary and sentence enhancement, muhadharah (lectures), muhadastah (conversations) and additional activities that support this method such as drama and acting competitions, nasyid, debates and so on (Marpuah & Sulton, 2019), Islamic boarding school culture that implements daily communication habits with foreign languages is an effective way to practice language skills and can be adopted by other institutions (Afif, 2019). This study's novelty is that the use of language in communication is a different strategy that is suitable for developing student speaking skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The creation of environment learning Arabic

The language environment is a set of media related to language, whether material or non-material, which influences the language acquisition process, both directly and indirectly, in motivation to use language without any pressure (Bahruddin, 2018). In line with that, Halimi Zuhdi (2009) said that the language environment is physical and non-physical that can affect the language learning process and increase students' willingness to learn the language and apply it in everyday life. The Arabic learning process requires a conducive language environment. Language learning will be easy to implement if students can acquire language directly without feeling the learning burden. Acquisition of speech that does not burden the participants themselves requires the availability of a language environment.

The development of a language environment has been carried out by several institutions that teach Arabic, primarily to support spoken language. This can be seen in several Islamic schools or colleges that make Arabic a priority foreign language (Rachma, 2020). And the educational stakeholders' sensitivity in the sense that teachers' and learners' perception toward the learning environment influences the way they learn and they teach (Sağlam & Sali, 2013). The effort to acquire a second language would have opportunities with a language environment so that the percentage of language acquisition can be more optimal. A teacher's existence in the development of a language environment is significant, especially if the language teacher is a native speaker or comes from a language community to minimize errors (Fahrur, 2014). Students will find it easier to see examples of using language by imitating the teacher's behavior in language. Simultaneously, the teacher's language behavior is a separate motivation for their students (Bahruddin, 2018). Al Faozan (1435H) said that Arabic teachers have an essential role in learning, including managers, directors, and motivation triggers.

2.2. The Concept of Increasing Speaking skills

In this modern world, communication skills play an important role and one must have mastery of these skills to achieve success in their respective fields. So speaking is the most important skill among the four language skills to communicate well in this globalized world (Srinivas, 2019). Also, speaking skills are essential skills among other skills. This is because, in essence, language is speaking (Bahruddin, 2018). People who learn the language are learning to speak. Furthermore, Al Faozan (1435H) said that learning speaking skills should get a more significant portion than other skills because communication is the primary language learning goal. Even if a person can read Arabic books without vowels, that person is not said to have the ability to speak Arabic before he can speak orally. Dawud & Bahruddin (2018) said that speaking skills sign a language's life, including Arabic. If it is not spoken by people orally, any language in this world is considered an extinct language. Thus, learning vocabulary should realize that speaking skills are the most important language skills so that the portion in practicing and getting used to language should emphasize speaking skills more.

Realizing this, various efforts to improve Arabic speaking skills have been carried out. This is marked by a change in language learning orientation, which was previously oriented towards learning language rules to sharpen reading skills, to being oriented towards mastery of speaking skills. As the result of Aladdin's research (2017), Arabic learning orientation consists of three categories, namely instrumental, intrinsic and integrative. The traditional direction is learning the language to understand religious texts, while the new orientation is to make language a means of communication. The ideal exposure is to integrate the two. The consequence of this change in learning Arabic requires that all Arabic elements be taught, namely phonetic, vocabulary, and structure, as requires teaching all language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The learning method used is also not a traditional method but must meet the learning needs to improve learners' speaking ability (Bahruddin, 2017).

2.3. Arabic Learning Strategies

The inner method has an important role in the success of the Arabic learning process. There is still a lack of effective and interesting, and relevant Arabic teachers' methods in reality so that students feel bored and bored in learning Arabic. Besides the method, the position of the learning strategy is the same. Language learning strategies are the plans, rules, or steps that Arabic teachers will play in the teaching-learning process inside or outside the classroom to realize the learning objectives that have been planned. To streamline the Arabic learning process requires an appropriate strategy so that the perception of difficult to learn Arabic is not proven.

In language learning, many strategies can be used, including education using cooperative learning. The learning strategy with the collaborative learning model is expected to be one of the successful solutions for learning Arabic, emphasizing students' speaking skills. Students and teachers sit together as partners who help each other in the learning and teaching process (Munawaroh, 2016). According to Baer (2003) there have been studies at the college level that show cooperative learning groups when grouped by academic levels, homogeneously, show growth for high achieving students and middle achieving students. Furthermore, Baer explained that low-achieving students did equally as well as students not grouped homogeneously (Wyman & Watson, 2020). Sangid & Muhib's research results (2019) show that some strategies can be used in teaching speaking skills, including discussion strategies, lectures, question and answer, demonstrations, reading, everyone is a teacher, requests for information, and peer lessons.

3. Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study research type. Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomenon of students taking lectures using the Arabic language of instruction and to analyze the improvement of speaking skills based on the subject's experience in a holistic manner. This is based on describing words and language in a natural context with the scientific method (Moleong, 2007).

This type of case study research is based on student opinions and learning activities using Arabic as an introduction (Yin, 2003). In this study, the authors explore data from research subjects in depth. The reason for choosing the case study type was because the researcher wanted to explore and reveal cases as a whole and comprehensively about student opinion after attending lectures using Arabic as the language of instruction at the Postgraduate Program at the Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang. Researchers want to show that interesting things can be concluded from students' opinions in lectures and the benefits of improving speaking skills from lectures, and their proposals for learning improvement. Thus, researchers can explore a phenomenon and interpret it into a comprehensive unit in the lectures and benefits obtained.

Data collection was carried out using interview, observation, and documentation techniques. Interviews were conducted with two lecturers who gave lectures using Arabic as the language of instruction and ten semester two students who had attended lectures in the Arabic Language Education master program, Postgraduate, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University Malang, even semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. The research sample was taken using random sampling technique, in that each individual has the same possibility to be selected as an informant. The researcher then chooses a random sample to collect data about student opinions on a predetermined research focus.

Researchers made observations to obtain information about the lecture process using Arabic as the language of instruction. Researchers also use documentation to collect information about lecture journals and learning activities from course plans.

The data analysis process starts from data collection, data description, data reduction, and verifying in detail. Data collection starts before the end of the even semester lecture for three weeks. After collecting data, the researcher reduces the data by selecting the data needed to sort out the unnecessary data. The data verification process is carried out at this stage so that researchers can determine primary data as important data in this study.

The steps taken by the researcher in analyzing the data are as shown below:

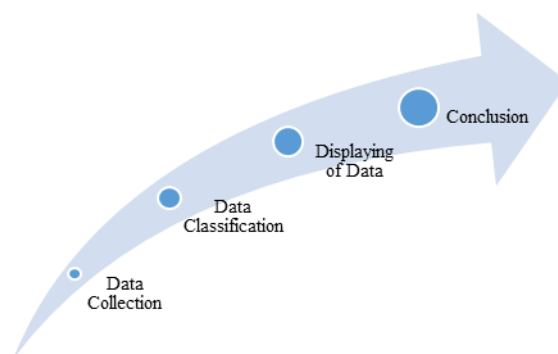


Figure 1: Data Analysis Procedure

In Figure 1, the steps for analyzing the data are described as follows:

- **Data Collection.** Researchers collected data from interviews and observations. Researchers recorded the results of interviews and observations related to students and lecturers' opinions on the lecture process using Arabic as the language of instruction at the Postgraduate Program at the Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang. Likewise, researchers collect data through lecture documents in the form of journals and course plans.
- **Data Classification.** The researcher reduced the data obtained in the first step, then made a classification related to the benefits of lectures using Arabic as the language of instruction, the process of improving speaking skills, and student suggestions for the development and improvement of lectures.
- **Displaying of Data.** After the data classification is carried out, the researcher then carries out the process of presenting the processing data, which includes: the process of identifying, organizing, and explaining objectively and comprehensively, which ultimately leads to interpretation.
- **Conclusion.** The final step in the data analysis process is concluding. At this stage, the researcher concludes the research findings according to their classification and interpretation.

4. Results and Discussion

The use of Arabic as the language of instruction for subjects other than Arabic has not been used as a strategy to improve students' language skills. Conversely, Indonesian as the language of instruction can improve student mastery of the material being taught. In this study, something different is shown that in Arabic as an introduction to lectures, there is indirectly a language acquisition process, especially the acquisition of listening skills and language elements such as sounds, vocabulary, and structures.

4.1. The benefits of using Arabic as the language of instruction

The use of Arabic as a language of instruction positively impacts and benefits students who take part in the learning process. Among the benefits obtained is the addition of new vocabulary. Ft stated this in the interview:

"During my postgraduate study, I learned a lot about Arabic speaking skills, including getting new vocabulary, making it easier to speak Arabic" (Ft, 1st interview)

In line with Ft's statement, in lectures that use Arabic according to Ab, it can be a special attraction for listening and listening carefully. The benefits obtained by Ab. also can add to the vocabulary of Arabic, which according to his judgment, is still lacking. This was conveyed in an interview with Ab, who stated:

"After attending a lecture delivered in Arabic, I became interested in listening carefully because I remembered that my kalam skills were not there, even my vocabulary was still minimal. This gave me a lot of new vocabulary that I could practice later when I taught Arabic. I am happy when I meet lecturers who teach in Arabic, although it is difficult it becomes a memorable lesson "(Ab, 2nd interview)

The increase in new vocabulary is useful for understanding Arabic texts, making it easier to carry out lecture assignments. This was as conveyed by Fk in the interview, as follows:

"The impact or benefits received after attending lectures using Arabic, the benefits felt are an increase in Arabic vocabulary and being able to understand Arabic discourses when the lecturer assigns an analysis of Arabic books" (Fk, 3rd interview)

From the interview data above, it was found that Arabic as the language of instruction can provide benefits to students, namely by increasing Arabic vocabulary. This is also reinforced by observations of the lecture process,

which show that students initially had difficulty following lectures. However, at the third meeting, they were able to understand the lessons delivered in class well.

Besides adding new vocabulary, students' benefits after attending lectures using Arabic as an introduction can also add previously unknown terms. This is as stated by Kh as follows:

"He added vocabulary that was previously unknown, and also found many benefits, such as those that were foreign or we didn't know before" (Kh, 4th interview)

Terms obtained from the utterances of lecturers and colleagues can also be useful for correcting mistakes in terms that have been used by students, including being able to correct mistakes in using pronouns. This was conveyed by Ch in the interview as follows:

"I got a lot of things, such as vocabulary that I did not know before. Not only vocabulary, but I also learned how to compose good words. Without my realizing it, the Arabic that I understood before was still a lot of mistakes both in the arrangement and in the placement of the existing domirs. With the Arabic language lectures, I can improve it a little bit" (Ch, 5th interview)

In line with that, Mhd confirmed Ch's statement that improvements to Arabic expressions can be made after attending lectures with Arabic as an introduction. This was stated by Mhd as follows:

"Improve my mastery of academic-related vocabulary, be fluent in discussions, accustomed to listening to correct expressions so that I can change wrong expressions that are often spoken every day without having to learn qawaid first" (Mhd, 5th interview)

Not only adding Arabic vocabulary and terms, but it also turns out that the use of Arabic as the language of instruction for lectures can increase motivation and courage and use everyday Arabic. This is as expressed by Sr as follows:

"I found a lot of new vocabulary, how many terms in everyday life, so that it grows interest and courage" (Sr, 6th interview)

Sl confirmed the same statement. He added that in addition to vocabulary and terms, he could also learn sentence structure and the motivation to master Arabic. Sl stated this:

"After attending lectures, I got a lot of insights related to Arabic such as accent, new terms, tarkib sentences, and motivation to always try to improve Arabic skills to master speaking skills, so now I can begin to communicate and absorb knowledge of Arabic. good enough" (Sl, 7th interview)

The interview data shows that the use of Arabic in the language of instruction shows that it can add new vocabulary, new terms, sentence structure, and the courage to express with the target language, in this case Arabic. This is also confirmed by the results of observations, which show that student activeness in discussions using Arabic is getting higher after attending three lectures.

The research findings above are reinforced by the results of research conducted by Buska et al (2018), that the addition of language vocabulary and certain terms can be obtained by using various learning media, both oral and written media, while the use of spoken language is an integral part of spoken media that can be used to increase language skills. Further, acquisition of good oral proficiency is of paramount importance in the foreign language learning process. Creating a communicative environment encourages students to get engaged in the target language, and enhances their oral language development (Mart, 2013). The environment-based Arabic learning is more effective for developing language skills including speaking and writing. Including the first type is the use of language in daily oral communication, among them, are used as the language of instruction for lectures. Likewise, the courage to speak in the target language is due to examples from other people who use the language.

4.2. The process of improving students' speaking skills through lectures uses Arabic as the language of instruction

As a learning process, through lectures using Arabic, students experience a process of change in themselves. The changes that occur are of course for the better. The habit of students hearing explanations from their lecturers in Arabic and their friends who discuss using Arabic makes students confident and confident in using Arabic orally. They started to speak up more than before. This was as conveyed by Ns in the interview as follows:

"What I got in the lecture process is to improve my Arabic speaking a little, and start to speak Arabic a little bit" (Ns, 8th interview)

Fr also felt the change from difficult to easy. After attending lectures using Arabic, I felt motivated so that it felt easy to speak in Arabic. This was conveyed in an interview with Fr:

"Of course, after attending the lecture process, I, who used to find it very difficult to speak Arabic, is now starting to have the courage to speak, even though there are still many shortcomings" (Fr, 9th interview)

Related to the growth of self-confidence, it is also confirmed by the statement from Ch in the interview as follows:

"Yes, there are changes that have occurred, especially in terms of Speaking skills. I have become more confident in speaking Arabic both in public and in front of my friends" (Ch, 5th interview)

Changes that occur in students are not only the emergence of confidence and ease in using Arabic. Students also experience changes in using Arabic orally to become more fluent. St. stated this in the following interview:

"During my study at the UIN Postgraduate Program, there was a change in speaking Arabic, namely I spoke Arabic more fluently than before" (Ft, 1st interview)

Sr. also felt fluency in using Arabic orally. She said:

"Of course there are a lot of changes, more courage in speaking in Arabic, confident in answering questions and more fluent in speaking" (Sr, 6th interview)

The habit of listening to conversations and discussions using Arabic can also make it easier for students to understand lessons and understand the information conveyed by lecturers well. This is as conveyed by Sl in the interview as follows:

"Can communicate in Arabic better, are accustomed to listening to lessons with the language of instruction in Arabic and can absorb the lessons well, do not consider Arabic a language that is difficult to understand, because the use of Arabic is very easy to understand" (Sl, 7th interview)

This is confirmed by data obtained from interviews with lecturers who use Arabic as the language of instruction:

At the initial meeting, students were not able to follow the lessons well. It seems like I don't understand the material presented in class. However, after that, lectures became more dynamic, as evidenced by their participation in discussions using Arabic (Stm, 11th interview)

From the interview results above, it was found that there was a process of improving students' speaking skills after they attended lectures using the Arabic language of instruction. Some of the students' changes were marked by increased confidence in using Arabic orally, became more fluent in speaking, and more and more were able to understand lessons and hear information as provisions for speaking.

This study's findings indicate that there are changes that occur in students after attending lectures that use Arabic as the language of instruction, namely an increase in their ability to speak Arabic. The results described by Vietor (1882) that the Direct Method help the students to understand language that help with ease of language. Language that depend upon the use of sentences how to communicate with each other not for the words (Nadia Batool, Muhammad Anosh, Anam Batool, 2017). The use of direct methods in learning Arabic can foster students' courage to speak the target language. The change that occurred was that before you could not speak boldly, after the lecture had the courage. In this study, it was also found that the fluency of the students' oral language also increased, this was due to the discussions held in class to discuss certain topics, and the discussion was carried out in Arabic. In the discussion process, there is a process of practice and habituation to use spoken language. This is in line with the research results conducted by Kountouris & Laios (2007) which shows that improving fluency in using foreign languages can be done with continuous habituation and practice.

4.3. Analysis of efforts to improve the quality of lectures by introducing Arabic

: Even though students have felt the benefits and an increase in speaking skills, it turns out that they still expect an increase in the learning process in the Arabic Language Education master program at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The hope of an increase was conveyed during an interview with some of the students, including those spoken by Ir

"In my opinion, not all lecturers at UIN Maliki Malang use Arabic in the teaching and learning process, maybe it can be instructed from the superior / head of the Arabic language study program that those who teach at PBA must use Arabic" (Ir, 10th interview)

Ir hopes that there will be instructions from the postgraduate leadership or the head of the PBA study program so that all lecturers who teach can use Arabic. This is confirmed by the statement given by Ft as follows:

"All courses in the MPBA must use Arabic, as well as the paper, without exception, so that students can study even harder" (Ft, 1st interview)

Students' hope is not only for instructions from the leadership to oblige the use of Arabic but also for training that can help students improve their speaking skills. Besides that, lecturers are also expected to be able to use methods that motivate students, of course, in using Arabic. This was conveyed by Ab:

"There is training that can improve the ability of kalam, methods of delivery that are motivating and easy to understand" (Ab, 2nd interview)

The importance of improving speaking skills among students and fluency in using Arabic was conveyed by Ns students as follows:

"What needs to be improved is to speak Arabic both from lecturers and students, so that the speaking is more fluent" (Ns, 8nd interview)

In order to improve students' speaking skills, lecturers are expected to have innovations in learning. The common method can provide opportunities for students to talk and express their thoughts and ideas using Arabic. This was conveyed by Mhd as follows:

"Innovation in terms of learning methods, I feel that too many lecturers use the lecture and discussion method, so that it does not provide opportunities for students to further express their thoughts using Arabic" (Mhd, 5th interview)

Besides all that, Kh proposed that all English terms could be found in Arabic. Kh conveyed this:

"I think what should be improved is the latest Arabic terms and synonyms. So that those who teach or teach the Socio-Linguistics subject must also know a lot of terms in Arabic, even though the theory is mostly absorbed from English" (Kh, 4th interview)

The results of interviews with subject lecturers who use Arabic as the language of instruction confirm that not all lecturers can use Arabic, so it needs to be emphasized again so that all lectures in the class use Arabic as the language of instruction. Ibn conveyed this:

"I personally try to use Arabic as the language of instruction for lectures, but not all lecturers can do that, especially those who don't have an Arabic background. Ideally, in my opinion, all lecturers can speak Arabic, so all lectures use Arabic as the language of instruction" (Ibn, 12th interview)

From the interview results above, it was found that to improve the quality of lectures, instructions from the leadership were needed so that all lecturers used the Arabic language of instruction because it was found that there were still lecturers who did not use Arabic in giving lectures. To provide more opportunities for students to be active in class, it is hoped that the lecturers will use methods that can leverage their abilities and provide more speaking opportunities for students. It is necessary for Arabic linguistic terms that are mostly adopted from English to be used in oral and written communication.

The research findings above indicate the importance of student activity in the teaching and learning process in class. Student activeness in attending lectures is an indicator of the learning process's success so that teachers or lecturers are required to use strategies that enable students to learn actively. Besides, the teacher's functions are to make students active in learning and comfortable in education. Among students' active forms in the language, the class is that there are sufficient opportunities for students to speak in the target language. For that, it is necessary to have an appropriate strategy for managing the class to be active and effective. The language teachers are required to have high competence to create strategies, creativity, and innovation to leverage the willingness of students who learn languages. In addition, Creativity and innovation can play an important role in the knowledge society, as the fruitful interdisciplinary debate presented in this report demonstrates. Creativity is conceptualized as a skill for all. It is an ability that everyone can develop and it can therefore be fostered or, likewise, inhibited. Educational actors have the power to unlock the creative and innovative potential of the young (Romina, Anuska, & Cachia, 2009).

5. Conclusion

The findings in this study are that Arabic as the language of instruction for lectures provides benefits to students. Namely it can add new vocabulary and terms, enrich the structure and application of sentences, and generate the courage to express in Arabic. The process of improving speaking skills is also felt by students, marked by increased confidence and fluency in speaking and getting more information to speak in Arabic. The results of the analysis in this study also show the need to improve the quality of lectures by participating in the leadership in motivating all lecturers to use the Arabic language of instruction, giving students many opportunities to be active in class and the Arabicization of linguistic terms, most of which come from English.

This research is limited to student opinions about lectures in the Arabic Language Education master program using Arabic as the language of instruction, which positively impacts students' speaking skills. This study also

explores student opinion on improving lecture improvements with the emergence of several suggestions for improvement and improvement. With these limitations, the next researcher can further research similar research by taking a wider area and sample and a more complex research design.

The success of learning writing skills is influenced by several determining aspects, such as student internal motivation, lecturer monitoring, adequate strategies and facilities, and accessible material. This study's results provide suggestions for using Arabic in the learning process as one of the strategies for learning speaking skills.

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