

Students' Difficulties in Reading Unvowelled Arabic Texts: A Qualitative Study of Maharah al-Qira'ah

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Abstract

Reading skills (maharah al-qirā'ah) play a crucial role in Arabic language learning, particularly in enabling students to comprehend unvowelled Arabic texts accurately. However, many students encounter difficulties in reading such texts due to both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. This study aims to analyze students' difficulties in reading unvowelled Arabic texts and to examine the factors contributing to these difficulties. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach involving nine mahasantri at Ma'had Aly Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Telukan, Sukoharjo. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, reading tests, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that students' difficulties are influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include low reading motivation, limited mastery of nahwu and sharaf, and insufficient vocabulary knowledge. External factors involve limited learning resources, inadequate instructional media, and less adaptive teaching strategies. These findings indicate that students' limited grammatical and lexical competence significantly affects their ability to comprehend unvowelled Arabic texts.

Keywords: *Arabic Language Learning; Reading Skills; Unvowelled Arabic Texts; Reading Difficulties.*

Abstrak

Keterampilan membaca (*maharah al-qirā'ah*) memiliki peran penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab, khususnya dalam memahami teks Arab tanpa harakat secara tepat. Namun, banyak mahasiswa mengalami kesulitan dalam membaca teks tersebut akibat faktor linguistik dan non-linguistik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesulitan mahasiswa dalam membaca teks Arab tanpa harakat serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang memengaruhinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan subjek sembilan mahasantri di Ma'had Aly Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Telukan, Sukoharjo. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, tes membaca, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesulitan membaca dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal dan eksternal. Faktor internal meliputi rendahnya motivasi membaca, keterbatasan penguasaan nahwu dan sharf, serta minimnya kosakata. Faktor eksternal meliputi keterbatasan sumber belajar, kurang optimalnya media pembelajaran, dan strategi pembelajaran yang belum adaptif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa keterbatasan kompetensi gramatikal dan leksikal secara signifikan memengaruhi kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memahami teks Arab tanpa harakat.

Kata kunci: Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab; Keterampilan Membaca; Teks Arab Tanpa Harakat; Kesulitan Membaca.

A. Introduction

Arabic plays a central role in Islamic education as it serves as the primary language for understanding the Qur'an, the Hadith, as well as classical and contemporary Islamic literature.¹ Therefore, Arabic language instruction in Islamic educational institutions is directed toward mastering the four language skills (*maharah*), namely *maharah al-istima'* (listening), *maharah al-kalam* (speaking), *maharah al-qira'ah* (reading), and *maharah al-kitabah* (writing). Among these four skills, *maharah al-qira'ah* occupies a particularly important position because it serves as the main gateway for accessing and understanding various sources of Islamic knowledge.²

Maharah al-qira'ah is not merely the ability to pronounce texts phonetically but involves complex cognitive processes, including vocabulary recognition, understanding grammatical structures, and interpreting meaning based on context.³ In the context of the Arabic language, the ability to read texts without vowel marks (*harakat*), commonly known as unvowelled texts (*teks gundul*), requires an applied mastery of Arabic grammatical rules, particularly *nahwu* and *sharaf*.⁴ Readers must be able to determine the syntactic function of words in a sentence and understand the changes in word endings (*i'rab*) influenced by their position and grammatical role. Errors in determining the correct *i'rab* may lead not only to mistakes in pronunciation but also to misunderstandings of the intended meaning of the text.

Learning difficulties refer to conditions in which students experience obstacles in achieving expected competencies due to internal and external factors.⁵ In Arabic language learning, internal factors may include limited vocabulary mastery, inadequate understanding of grammatical rules, and low learning motivation. Meanwhile, external factors may involve teaching methods, the intensity of practice, and a language environment that does not adequately support the learning process.⁶ Previous studies have indicated that difficulties

¹ Allam Tri Mufadhol and Neni Nuraeni, "Pentingnya Bahasa Arab Dalam Mengembangkan Pemahaman Islam Yang Mendalam: Analisis Tentang Metode Pembelajaran Dan Penerapannya," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 3, no. 2 (2025): 101–9.

² Ahmad Asse et al., "Al-Intiqaiyyah Method to Improve Maharah Al-Qira'ah Skills in Arabic Language Learning," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 4 (2024): 1245–60.

³ Muhammad Syihabul Ihsan Al Haqiqy et al., "Pembelajaran efektif Maharah Qira'ah untuk siswa non pesantren," *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 7, no. 2 (2024): 740–48.

⁴ Arfakhsyadz Rusyana Anzaldin Maulidan, "Maharah Al-Qira'ah Dan Maharah al-Kitabah Sebagai Fondasi Studi Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *AR-RIYADH: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Bahasa Arab* 1, no. 2 (2025): 1–13.

⁵ Fathur Riyadhi Arsal et al., "Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dengan Menggunakan Media Audio, Visual, dan Audiovisual di MTsN 1 Kota Makassar," *TADRIS AL-ARABIYAT: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 2 (2024): 155–69.

⁶ Mahmudi Mahmudi et al., "Kemampuan Menulis Ayat Al-Qur'an Mahasiswa Pai Dalam Mata Kuliah Khat Imla' Di Iain Palangka Raya," *EDUCATIONAL: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan & Pengajaran* 5, no. 1 (2025): 177–86.

in *maharah al-qira'ah* are generally caused by weak mastery of *nahwu* and *sharaf*, as well as insufficient practice in reading Arabic texts without vowel marks.⁷

Ma'had Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Telukan is an educational institution whose daily activities focus on *tahfidz* (Qur'anic memorization) and *tahsin* (improvement of Qur'anic recitation). The students consist of nine individuals with diverse educational backgrounds, including three graduates from Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and six graduates from Madrasah Aliyah as well as Muhammadiyah senior high schools or vocational schools. In the process of Arabic language learning, particularly in the material related to *i'rab*, it was found that some students experienced difficulties in understanding the grammatical reasons behind changes in verb endings, such as the difference between *jazm* and *fathah* readings. Students tended to memorize forms without fully understanding the underlying grammatical rules, which created obstacles when they attempted to read Arabic texts without vowel marks independently.

Based on observations conducted at the institution, several problems related to *maharah al-qira'ah* were identified. One of the main issues is the diversity of students' educational backgrounds, which influences their prior exposure to Arabic language learning. Another issue relates to students' relatively low interest in reading, particularly in reading Arabic texts. When asked to read Arabic texts, some students encounter difficulties and demonstrate hesitation in reading them fluently. Additionally, some students experience feelings of fear or anxiety during Arabic language classes because they perceive themselves as incapable of understanding the material. Furthermore, Arabic language learning activities in the classroom tend to focus more on written exercises and memorization of vocabulary or grammatical rules, resulting in fewer opportunities for students to develop practical reading skills through direct engagement with Arabic texts.

Despite growing attention to Arabic reading difficulties, previous studies tend to focus on general comprehension problems without specifically addressing the challenges of reading unvowelled Arabic texts. In particular, limited attention has been given to how grammatical complexity and the absence of vowel marks influence students' reading performance, highlighting the need for a more context-specific analysis. Previous research has identified general reading difficulties; however, it has not systematically examined the specific forms of errors, particularly those related to *i'rab* (grammatical inflection). Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyze students' difficulties in reading unvowelled Arabic texts and to

⁷ Yasmin Laila Fauziah et al., "Analisis Kesalahan Nahwu Dalam Membaca Teks Arab Gundul Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Angkatan 2019 Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang," *Masterpiece: Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2023): 15–23.

examine the factors contributing to these difficulties as a basis for developing more effective learning strategies.

The novelty of this research lies in its analytical focus on the specific forms of students' difficulties in determining *i'rab* when reading Arabic texts without vowel marks. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize general reading difficulties, this study provides a more detailed examination of the grammatical errors that emerge during the reading process and connects them with students' educational backgrounds and learning experiences. In addition, the research context at Ma'had Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Telukan, which integrates *tahfidz* and *tahsin* activities with Arabic language learning, offers a unique perspective on how grammatical competence influences students' ability to interpret unvowelled Arabic texts. Through this approach, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between grammatical mastery and reading competence in Arabic language learning.

B. Research Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze students' difficulties in mastering *maharah al-qirā'ah*, particularly in reading unvowelled Arabic texts. The research was conducted at Ma'had Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Telukan, an Islamic educational institution that integrates Arabic language learning into its academic curriculum.⁸ The participants consisted of nine students selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in Arabic reading activities. The participants had diverse educational backgrounds, including graduates of Islamic boarding schools, Madrasah Aliyah, and general or vocational high schools, allowing for varied perspectives on learning experiences and reading abilities.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, reading tests, and documentation. Observations were carried out during Arabic reading classes to examine students' reading performance and learning behaviors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both students and the instructor to explore their experiences and perceived difficulties. The reading test involved unvowelled Arabic texts and was used to identify students' reading accuracy and types of errors, particularly in grammatical interpretation (*i'rab*) and vocabulary comprehension.⁹

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on identifying patterns of difficulties and categorizing errors into grammatical and lexical aspects.

⁸ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (SAGE Publications, 2017).

⁹ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (SAGE, 2014).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied source and method triangulation by comparing data from multiple participants and data collection techniques.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Internal Factors Contributing to Reading Difficulties

Based on the results of the research conducted at Ma'had Aly Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Telukan, Sukoharjo, the researcher identified several internal factors that contribute to students' difficulties in *maharah al-qira'ah*, particularly in reading Arabic texts. One of the most prominent internal factors is the lack of interest and motivation in reading Arabic texts. Classroom observations indicate that many students demonstrate limited engagement during reading activities and rarely take initiative to improve their comprehension skills. This low level of motivation creates psychological barriers, such as anxiety and lack of confidence, which ultimately hinder their reading performance. In the context of foreign language learning, motivation is widely recognized as a key determinant of successful language acquisition, as it influences learners' persistence and engagement in the learning process.¹⁰

Another internal factor identified in this study is the limited understanding of Arabic grammatical structures, particularly *nahwu* and *sharaf*. In language learning, the selection of appropriate teaching methods and learning materials should be adjusted to the students' level of ability so that the learning process can be followed effectively. When the teaching methods or materials used do not correspond to students' level of competence, students often experience difficulty in understanding the material being presented. The findings show that students' weakness in understanding *i'rab* the changes in word endings that indicate grammatical functions within a sentence constitutes one of the primary causes of errors when reading Arabic texts without vowel marks. Errors in determining the correct form, such as distinguishing between *jazm* and *fathah*, significantly alter the meaning of a sentence. Students tended to memorize forms without fully understanding the underlying grammatical rules, which created obstacles when they attempted to read Arabic texts independently.¹¹

In addition to grammatical difficulties, limited vocabulary mastery (*mufradat*) also plays a significant role in students' reading difficulties. In learning a foreign language, one of the most essential elements is the mastery of vocabulary. When students have

¹⁰ Ahmad Asse et al., "Al-Intiqaiyyah Method to Improve Maharah Al-Qira'ah Skills in Arabic Language Learning," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 4 (2024): 1245–60.

¹¹ Yasmin Laila Fauziah et al., "Analisis Kesalahan Nahwu Dalam Membaca Teks Arab Gundul Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Angkatan 2019 Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang," *Masterpiece: Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2023): 15–23.

limited vocabulary knowledge, they inevitably encounter difficulties in understanding texts and expressing ideas. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in developing reading comprehension skills, particularly in learning Arabic as a foreign language.¹² Reading comprehension is a skill that must be developed gradually through continuous exposure to vocabulary and language structures. Without sufficient vocabulary mastery, students face challenges in interpreting sentences and grasping the meaning of written texts. The research findings indicate that vocabulary knowledge significantly influences students' mastery of the four Arabic language skills, including *maharah al-qira'ah*. While grammatical competence is essential for understanding sentence structures, vocabulary mastery is equally important because it directly affects students' ability to comprehend written texts.¹³

Another important internal factor influencing students' reading ability is their educational background. The recruitment of students at Ma'had Aly Ki Bagus Hadikusumo is not limited to graduates of Islamic boarding schools. Graduates from general educational institutions, such as senior high schools and vocational schools, are also given the opportunity to enroll as students. However, there is no specific standard related to Arabic language proficiency that is used as a requirement during the admission process. This situation creates variations in students' initial Arabic language competence. Based on the results of interviews conducted with the students, most of them come from non-pesantren educational backgrounds, which means that they have relatively limited prior exposure to Arabic language learning. As a result, many of them are still unfamiliar with Arabic. For these students, Arabic language learning represents a relatively new experience, and they often require more time to absorb and integrate new linguistic information. This condition indicates that students' interest and aptitude for learning Arabic tend to be relatively low compared to those who previously studied in Islamic boarding schools.¹⁴

2. External Factors Contributing to Reading Difficulties

In addition to internal factors, the findings of this study also indicate that several external factors contribute to students' difficulties in mastering *maharah al-qira'ah*, particularly in reading Arabic texts. One of the external factors influencing students'

¹² Michael J. Kieffer and Nonie K. Lesaux, "Knowledge of Words, Knowledge about Words: Dimensions of Vocabulary in First and Second Language Learners in Sixth Grade," *Reading and Writing* 25, no. 2 (2012): 347–73.

¹³ Redab Al-Janaideh et al., "Morphology and Reading Skills in Arabic-Speaking Syrian Refugee Children," *Reading Research Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2023): 391–405.

¹⁴ Muhammad Syihabul Ihsan Al Haqiqy et al., "Pembelajaran efektif Maharah Qira'ah untuk siswa non pesantren," *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 7, no. 2 (2024): 740–48.

learning difficulties is the family environment. An individual's personality and learning attitude are strongly influenced by their family environment. Based on the findings of this study, many families provide encouragement and support for their children's learning by supervising their study activities and motivating them to complete assignments given by teachers. Such support plays an important role in fostering students' learning motivation and discipline. However, the study also found that some students receive limited support from their families. The lack of parental attention and encouragement may reduce students' focus and motivation in learning, making it more difficult for them to develop effective study habits and achieve optimal learning outcomes. The learning environment significantly influences students' attitudes and personalities, and a supportive environment can encourage students to practice language skills more actively, while a less supportive environment may hinder their progress.¹⁵

Another important external factor is the availability of learning resources, particularly textbooks. Books represent a key component of the educational system and serve as one of the most prominent forms of instructional media. The presence of well-designed textbooks can significantly support both teachers and students in the learning process. For teachers, textbooks provide a structured guide that facilitates lesson planning and instructional delivery. For students, textbooks serve as an important reference that helps them better understand the learning materials presented in the classroom. Therefore, the quality and accessibility of learning materials can greatly influence students' comprehension and overall learning experience. The research findings indicate that when teaching methods or materials used do not correspond to students' level of competence, students often experience difficulty in understanding the material being presented. As a result, they may struggle to follow the learning process and fail to develop adequate reading skills.¹⁶

In addition, instructional media also plays a crucial role in supporting the learning process. The researcher assumes that learning media and instructional techniques can influence students' reading abilities. This assumption is supported by the results of classroom observations, which indicate that improvements in teaching methods, along with the integration of additional instructional media and techniques, can enhance students' engagement and participation in Arabic language learning. The use of

¹⁵ Fathur Riyadh A. A. et al., "Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dengan Menggunakan Media Audio, Visual, dan Audiovisual di MTsN 1 Kota Makassar," *TADRIS AL-ARABIYAT: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 2 (2024): 155–69.

¹⁶ Judith A. Bowey, "Grammatical sensitivity: Its origins and potential contribution to early word reading skill," *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 90, no. 4 (2005): 318–43.

appropriate learning media can stimulate students' interest and increase their motivation to participate in learning activities. Educational media can make the learning process more dynamic and engaging by incorporating visual, auditory, or interactive elements that help students better understand the material being taught. In several cases observed during the research, the teaching methods applied in the classroom were perceived as monotonous and less engaging, which made Arabic language learning appear less interesting and sometimes even boring. Consequently, the effective use of instructional media can contribute to improving students' engagement and facilitate the development of their language skills, particularly in reading Arabic texts.¹⁷

Furthermore, teaching strategies significantly influence students' reading development. The findings reveal that classroom instruction tends to emphasize memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules rather than direct practice in reading texts. As a result, students have limited opportunities to develop practical reading skills. This condition highlights the importance of implementing more student-centered and practice-oriented strategies that facilitate direct interaction with unvowelled Arabic texts, enabling students to integrate grammatical knowledge and reading comprehension more effectively.¹⁸

3. The Role of Vocabulary and Grammatical Competence in Reading Comprehension

The findings of this study demonstrate that vocabulary knowledge and grammatical competence are interconnected factors that significantly influence students' ability to read Arabic texts effectively. Reading comprehension is a skill that ideally should be developed from an early stage of learning, especially when studying foreign languages such as Arabic, where language proficiency is built upon the mastery of four fundamental skills. Among these skills, *maharah al-qira'ah* plays an essential role because students' vocabulary comprehension often serves as an indicator of their overall language proficiency. The research reveals that students who possess stronger vocabulary mastery demonstrate better ability to understand Arabic texts, while those with limited vocabulary struggle to interpret sentences and grasp the meaning of written materials. This finding aligns with previous studies that emphasize vocabulary as a fundamental component in

¹⁷ Haitham Taha et al., "The Effect of the Linguistic Status of Text Previewing in Arabic on the Reading Comprehension Outcomes Among Second and Sixth Grade Native Arabs Readers: A Cross-Sectional View," *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 52, no. 6 (2023): 2661–76.

¹⁸ Andini Rahmawati and Fahrurrozi S, "Al-Taḥlīl 'an Ta'īim Mahārah al-Qirā'ah al-Qā'im 'alā Ṭarīqah al-Qawā'id Wa al-Tarjamah Wa Ḥifẓ Qawā'id al-Ṣarf Li-Ṭullāb al-Ṣaff al-Ḥādī 'Ashar Fī Madrasah Miftāḥ al-Salām al-'Āliyah al-Ahliyah Mīdān," *Al Mahāra: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 11, no. 1 (2025): 276–93.

developing reading comprehension skills, particularly in the context of learning Arabic as a foreign language.¹⁹

Grammatical competence, particularly mastery of *nahwu* and *sharaf*, emerges as another critical factor affecting students' reading abilities. In the Arabic language, the complexity of reading is increased by the morphological and syntactic system, which is strongly influenced by changes in word endings known as *i'rab*. When readers lack sufficient grammatical competence, the syntactic interpretation of sentences may become disrupted, ultimately affecting the comprehension of the overall meaning of the text.²⁰ The research findings indicate that errors in determining the correct *i'rab*, such as confusion between *jazm* and *fathah* readings, not only lead to mistakes in pronunciation but also result in misunderstandings of the intended meaning of the text. Students who demonstrated weak understanding of grammatical rules tended to rely on memorization of word forms without comprehending the underlying grammatical principles, which proved insufficient when they encountered new or unfamiliar texts. This observation underscores the importance of teaching grammar not as isolated rules but as an applied skill essential for accurate reading comprehension.²¹

The interaction between vocabulary knowledge and grammatical competence becomes particularly evident when students attempt to read Arabic texts without vowel marks. Such texts require readers to simultaneously recognize vocabulary items and determine their grammatical functions based on contextual clues. Students with limited vocabulary struggle to identify word meanings, while those with weak grammatical knowledge cannot correctly determine the syntactic relationships between words. The research reveals that these two linguistic components cannot be separated in the reading process; rather, they work together to facilitate text comprehension. Students who demonstrated better reading abilities showed evidence of integrated knowledge, where vocabulary recognition supported grammatical analysis, and grammatical understanding helped predict and confirm word meanings. This finding highlights the need for instructional approaches that integrate vocabulary teaching with grammatical instruction rather than treating them as separate components of language learning.²²

¹⁹ Arfakhsyadz Rusyana Anzaldin Maulidan, "Maharah Al-Qira'ah Dan Maharah al-Kitabah Sebagai Fondasi Studi Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *AR-RIYADH: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Bahasa Arab* 1, no. 2 (2025): 1–13.

²⁰ M. A. Al-Khuli, *Asalib tadris al-lughah al-Arabiyyah* (Riyadh: Dar al-Falah, 2010).

²¹ Mahmudi Mahmudi et al., "Kemampuan Menulis Ayat Al-Qur'an Mahasiswa Pai Dalam Mata Kuliah Khat Imla' Di Iain Palangka Raya," *Educational: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan & Pengajaran* 5, no. 1 (2025): 177–86.

²² Sri Nabilah Utami et al., "Analysis of Student's Arabic Reading Pronunciation Characteristics on Discourse Text," *International Journal of Arabic Language Teaching* 5, no. 01 (2023): 53–67.

Moreover, the research findings indicate that the diverse educational backgrounds of students create varying levels of foundational knowledge in both vocabulary and grammar. Students from Islamic boarding school backgrounds typically possess stronger vocabulary knowledge and grammatical understanding due to their prolonged exposure to Arabic texts and systematic instruction in *nahwu* and *sharaf*. In contrast, students from general education backgrounds often begin their Arabic language learning with minimal prior exposure, requiring more intensive support to develop the foundational knowledge necessary for reading comprehension. This variation poses significant challenges for instructors who must address the needs of students with widely differing proficiency levels within the same classroom. The findings suggest that differentiated instruction, where teaching strategies and materials are adapted to students' varying levels of competence, may be necessary to effectively support all students in developing the vocabulary and grammatical knowledge essential for *maharah al-qira'ah*.²³

4. Implications for Arabic Language Instruction

The findings of this study carry several important implications for Arabic language instruction, particularly in institutions with diverse student populations such as Ma'had Ki Bagus Hadikusumo Telukan. First, the research underscores the critical need to strengthen students' mastery of both vocabulary and grammatical structures as foundational components for developing reading comprehension skills. Instructional programs should allocate sufficient time and resources to systematic vocabulary building and explicit grammar instruction, ensuring that students develop the linguistic knowledge necessary for reading Arabic texts independently. The findings suggest that vocabulary instruction should not be limited to word lists and memorization but should involve meaningful contexts that help students understand how words function within sentences and texts. Similarly, grammar instruction should emphasize applied understanding, where students learn to identify grammatical structures in authentic texts and understand how these structures contribute to meaning.²⁴

Second, the research highlights the importance of addressing students' motivational and psychological barriers to Arabic reading. Low interest, lack of confidence, and anxiety about reading Arabic texts emerged as significant internal factors affecting students' reading development. These findings imply that Arabic language instruction

²³ Fadilatur Rohma and Achmad Fawaid, "Analysis of Students' Difficulties In Reading Texts to Increase Reading Comprehension In Islamic Senior High School," *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 17, no. 3 (2023): 2003–18.

²⁴ William Grabe, *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from Theory to Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

must attend not only to cognitive aspects of learning but also to affective factors that influence students' engagement and persistence. Instructors need to create positive learning environments that reduce anxiety and build students' confidence in their reading abilities. This may involve selecting reading materials that are appropriately challenging yet accessible, providing supportive feedback that encourages risk-taking, and incorporating activities that make reading meaningful and enjoyable. The research suggests that when students perceive Arabic reading as relevant to their interests and goals, their motivation to engage with Arabic texts increases significantly.²⁵

Third, the findings emphasize the need for more effective utilization of instructional media and learning resources in Arabic language teaching. The research revealed that limited use of varied instructional media contributed to monotonous learning experiences that failed to engage students effectively. This implies that institutions should invest in developing and providing diverse learning resources, including well-designed textbooks, visual aids, audio materials, and digital resources that can support Arabic reading instruction. Instructors should be trained in selecting and integrating appropriate media into their teaching practices, ensuring that technology and learning resources are used not merely as supplementary tools but as integral components of effective instruction. The integration of varied instructional media can make the learning process more dynamic and engaging, thereby stimulating students' interest and increasing their motivation to participate actively in reading activities.²⁶

Finally, the research underscores the importance of considering students' diverse educational backgrounds in designing and implementing Arabic reading instruction. The finding that students from general education backgrounds face greater challenges in developing reading skills suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction is unlikely to be effective. Institutions should consider implementing placement assessments to identify students' initial proficiency levels and provide appropriate support based on their needs. Differentiated instruction strategies, where teaching methods, materials, and pacing are adapted to students' varying levels of competence, may be necessary to ensure that all students receive instruction appropriate to their developmental levels. Additionally, the findings suggest that peer learning opportunities, where more advanced students from pesantren backgrounds can support their peers from general education backgrounds, may provide valuable additional support for developing reading

²⁵ Brown H. D, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, 5th ed. (Pearson Education, 2007).

²⁶ Ayu Sekarsari et al., "The Role of Arabic in Islamic Education," *Quality: Journal Of Education, Arabic And Islamic Studies* 2, no. 3 (2024): 176–82.

skills. These implications point toward the need for more flexible, responsive approaches to Arabic reading instruction that recognize and address the diverse needs of learners in contemporary Islamic educational institutions.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that students' difficulties in reading unvowelled Arabic texts are influenced by the interaction of internal and external factors. Internally, limited motivation, insufficient vocabulary mastery, and weak understanding of grammatical structures, particularly *i'rab*, significantly hinder students' ability to interpret sentence meaning accurately. The findings highlight that reading unvowelled texts requires not only basic reading skills but also an integrated mastery of grammatical and lexical competence.

Externally, factors such as the learning environment, availability of instructional resources, and teaching strategies play a crucial role in shaping students' reading performance. Less adaptive teaching methods and limited use of engaging instructional media reduce students' opportunities to develop practical reading skills. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of Arabic reading instruction depends not only on students' linguistic competence but also on the quality of pedagogical practices.

Therefore, this study recommends the implementation of more student-centered and practice-oriented teaching strategies, supported by appropriate instructional media and differentiated learning approaches. Strengthening students' grammatical and vocabulary mastery should be prioritized to improve their ability to read unvowelled Arabic texts. Future research is encouraged to explore innovative instructional models that can enhance Arabic reading proficiency in similar educational contexts.

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