

The Impact of Arabic Textbooks on Students' Motivation and Reading Skills in Higher Education

Khoirin Nikmah¹, Alin Safaraz Himam², Muhammad Asdi Nurkholis³,
Shinta Adella⁴, Retno Wulandari⁵, Alfin Nurfauzi Sinaga⁶

¹²³⁴⁵⁶Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto; Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail; khoirinnikmah@ump.ac.id

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the influence of using *Arabiyah Bayna Yadayk* and *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* as instructional media in Arabic language learning at the higher education level, with a specific focus on improving reading skills (*maharah qirā'ah*). The research employed a descriptive qualitative design. The primary data sources consisted of students enrolled in the Arabic Language Education Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. Meanwhile, the secondary data sources consisted of two Arabic textbooks, namely *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* and *Al-'Arabiyyah Bayna Yadaik*. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to assess students' engagement, participation, and reading behavior during the learning process. Documentation in the form of students' reading test results was also collected to support the findings. Data analysis was conducted in several stages. Questionnaire responses were analyzed descriptively and thematically. Then, observation data were analyzed by comparing classroom behavior with students' reading test results. Furthermore, content analysis was applied to examine the characteristics of both textbooks. The results showed that both textbooks demonstrate a strong correlation with students' motivation in learning the Arabic language. The supportive design, accessible vocabulary, and cultural elements of *Arabiyah Bayna Yadayk* particularly enhance reading skills and encourage consistent engagement. Meanwhile, *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* contributes to vocabulary expansion and sustained reading practice, thereby reinforcing students' overall linguistic competence and academic confidence.

Keywords

Students' Motivation, Reading Skill, *Silsilah Ta'lim Al Lughah Al 'Arabiyyah*, *Al 'Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk*.



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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, communicating in a foreign language has become an essential skill for every learner. Students should have competence, either active or passive (Hindun, 2024; Khoiriyah, 2020). Arabic is one of the foreign languages widely used in many countries, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East, and North Africa (Aminuzal et al., 2024). Arabic plays a significant role in Islamic education, as it serves not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for learning and forarning Islam (Fatimah et al., 2025; Azhari et al., 2024; Kamalia et al., 2022). Arabic has also emerged as one of the world's major languages, not only in terms of its large number of speakers but also in its significant roles in religious, political, and cultural aspects (Kamal, 2025). In Indonesia, a foreign language is in an essential position, alongside English. However, Arabic has linguistic cdistinguishesidisit tinguishest from English. Based on phonological, morphological, and syntactical forms, it may complicate learning, particularly in the areas of writing and reading (Alramamneh et al., 2023).

Many formal institutions, such as elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, and universities, teach students (Afroni, 2022). Generally, students who learn Arabic from elementary school may understand some basic vocabulary related to family, school, hobbies, and activities. They also learn Arabic pronunciation (*makharijul huruf*), reading (*qiraah*), writing and connecting every single Arabic letter (*kitabah*), and listening (*istima'*) when the teacher plays some videos for students. They have those experiences in learning Arabic.

Meanwhile, students who continue to learn Arabic at junior high school until they enter senior high school can understand basic grammar and essential skills, and seek enhancement, as those who want to demonstrate their Arabic skills in higher education. In learning Arabic, students are encouraged to improve their language competencies as well as listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qiraah*), and writing (the *kitabah*), because those are the foundations of foreign language learning (Abdilah et al., 2025; Ritonga, 2021). Improving reading skills (*maharah qiraah*) is crucial for students learning Arabic. When students study the ability to read texts, they can enrich their knowledge about various fields. One onecan are able to understand the meaning of the Quran while reciting it. On the other hand, they may also enhance their knowledge of other fields, as a large number of books at the beginning of their expansion used Arabic as the language of instruction, including in science and technology (Qomari et al., 2022).

Reading is the ability to interact with text (Sholiha et al., 2023). In this skill, students are encouraged to understand the entire concept (Hasibuan & Fitriani, 2023). Moreover, it plays an important role as a gateway to achieving linguistic proficiency. It is not only an academic necessity but also a means of intercultural understanding (Saepudin et al., 2024). Reading is the foundation of reflective thinking and various facets, including evaluation, assessment, analysis, problem-solving (Khuluq & Imamah, 2024). It has a crucial role in intellectual and academic development. Students not only extract meaning from text but also understand language structure, including words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and discourse. In addition, the ability to get the main message of the text, retrieve information, follow instructions, and enjoy reading both literally and conceptually is also required (Hamidah & Abdullah, 2025). Reading skill (*maharah qiraah*) has become one of the important parts of learning Arabic. When students have a large Arabic text, it means they are familiar with and have memorized a substantial amount of vocabulary—the ability to read Arabic texts enriches their knowledge and understanding of the Quran and various texts. Teachers may use or combine methods that match students' needs, age, knowledge, and goals (Asse et al., 2024).

Reading is also defined as a learning process that aims to obtain information or messages in the text. This activity may achieve higher cognitive abilities, including explaining, creating ideas, analyzing, evaluating, and solving problems. In addition, it also involves memory, experience, knowledge, language skills, and psychological and emotional state. Therefore, this skill receives the attention of language teachers (Ilmiani & Delima, 2021). According to the global literacy survey, a significant challenge to achieving education goals is the low level of reading comprehension, including proficiency in foreign languages. UNESCO reported that approximately 40% of students in developing countries face difficulty in understanding foreign language texts. Meanwhile, the result of PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) in Indonesia showed that Indonesian students' literacy skills, especially in foreign languages, were still under the global average (Khasanah & Insania, 2025). Literacy is one of the primary aspects of Arabic learning, particularly in improving *maharah qiraah*. It is a challenge in this era of independent curriculum. Competency-based learning requires an innovative approach to enhance students' reading skills, as it encourages them to be more active, creative, and independent (Khasanah & Insania, 2025).

Digital technology has been widely used over the past two decades. It has brought about significant transformation across various sectors of life, including higher education (Darman et al.,

2025). Several factors support Arabic reading skills, including the use of technology (e-books, electronic teaching systems), orthography, motor skills, students' social and economic backgrounds, curriculum adjustments, and educational policies (Sultan & Yahya, 2024). In the process of language learning, teachers may offer textbooks or e-books to help students learn Arabic, which aligns with its goal and curriculum because these are essential components that support students in foreign language learning (Ediyani et al., 2020). Teachers may use books that are suitable for the students' background and their goals. It will support students not only in the classroom but also when they learn independently. It will also enhance students' intercultural understanding (Uzum et al., 2021).

This research aims to explore the impact of Arabic textbooks on students' motivation and reading skills in higher education. *Al Arabiyah baynand Levelilahlhvel 1*) and *Levelilah Talim Al Lughah Al* are the level books used in the Arabic books that are used in the Arabic Education Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. On a basic level, *Al Arabiyah Bayna Yadayk* is considered a compatible medium for learning Arabic. Students from various backgrounds may use *Al Arabiyah Bayna Yadayk* (level 1) to start their learning process. It consists of topics related to Arab cultural views, presented through illustrations and texts. Meanwhile, *Silsilah Talim Al Lughah Al Arabiyyah* (Level 2) is offered to students at the second level. Some vocabulary and various texts may enrich students' knowledge of either language competencies or cultures. Therefore, students not only learn the micro language but also learn about its culture.

Language and culture are important to teach to teach foreign languages; the teaching involves avoiding learning its language cultures (Endodi, 2024). When students learn a foreign language, they will learn cultural context automatically (Kerras & Baya Essayahi, 2022). Teachers have to encourage students to enrich their language knowledge and understand communication across cultures through textbooks (Aburub, 2023).

This research aims to describe students' motivation through those textbooks. Language learning motivation can be described as the factors that affect students when they decide to learn a language. Motivation is an important part for students because it determines their own learning outcomes (Susiawati, 2024). It also yields dynamic outcomes; these can change throughout the learning process. It depends on students' motivation when they face obstacles while learning. Therefore, students should increase their ability to enhance their learning process, and can be able to enhance their motivations (Improve, 2020). Students who have good motivation in learning Arabic, are generally able to improve their skills, because it is a key factor that determines competence

in language learning (Shofiyani & Mukti, 2025). According to the research, gender has a significant impact on language learning. Girls are significantly able to learn language. However, significantly, they are not. It could be language that is the primary data in the learning process. When they exhibit activity and strong motivation, they can break that stigma (Hidayah et al., 2022).

Previous research on the relationship between Arabic language motivation and learning outcomes has been published. "The Effectiveness of the Arabic Language Learning through Learning Management System" (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021). It indicated that the use of a learning management system improved student motivation in Arabic language acquisition. "The Effectiveness of the Arabic Language Learning through Learning Management System" (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021). The results showed a strong correlation between the spiritual standing of the Quran, hadith, and Islamic belief, as well as strong motivation to learn and lead (3). "The Impact of Using Technology on Arabic Language Learning Motivation" (Hidayat, 2023). It indicated that technology has a positive influence on enhancing students' motivation. Utilizing technology, such as Arabic language applications and interactive tools, can effectively provide motivation. "The Effectiveness of the Arabic Language Learning through Learning Management System" (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021). (4) "The Effectiveness of the Arabic Language Learning through Learning Management System" (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021). Interaction can provide more interactive content which can be presented in Arabic language learning. "The Effectiveness of the Arabic Language Learning through Learning Management System" (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021). (5) "The Effectiveness of the Arabic Language Learning through Learning Management System" (Fauzi & Anindiati, 2021). The result showed that the motivation to learn a language has a positive correlation with students' level of competence. Therefore, the ability to innovate in teaching Arabic by using technology is important for Arabic teachers because it has an innovative impact on increasing students' motivation (5). "Project: Improving Qira'ah Skills in The Independent Learning Curriculum" (Khasanah & Insania, 2025). It implied that project-based learning encourages students to understand the theory and apply it in practical projects involving complex text analysis. Practical project use of technology increases students' literacy, reading interest, and supports active learning.

This research is based on the support of ex-learning, as *Arabiyah bayna Yadayk* and *Silsilah Talim Al Lughah Al Arabiyyah* books are both widely used by many students in Indonesia. Moreover, those books contain Saudi Arabia and feature Arabic and cultural content that encourages students to identify with the texts. To encourage students to recognize the importance of using those books to enhance studentivation and their reading skills is crucial to explore.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the impact of Arabic textbooks on students' motivation and reading skills (*maharah qiraah*) in higher education. The research was conducted at the Arabic Language Education Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. The primary data sources consisted of students enrolled in the Arabic Language Education. In contrast, the program included two Arabic textbooks as secondary data sources: *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* and *Al-'Arabiyyah Bayna Yadaik*. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on students who had used both textbooks in their learning process.

Primary data were collected through a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions related to students' learning motivation, reading interest, and experiences in learning Arabic, particularly reading skills using the two textbooks. Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to assess students' engagement, participation, and reading behavior during the learning process. Documentation in the form of students' reading test results was also collected to support the findings, which were conducted in several stages. Questionnaire responses were analyzed descriptively and thematically to identify patterns of students' motivation and perceptions. Observation data were analyzed by comparing classroom behavior with students' reading test results. Furthermore, content analysis was applied to examine the characteristics of both textbooks, focusing on reading materials, vocabulary presentation, text difficulty, and instructional design.

To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation techniques were employed, including data triangulation (utilizing questionnaires, observations, and documentation), methodological triangulation, and theoretical triangulation. These procedures were used to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Maharah qiraah is a mental process involving symbols, where the interpreter highlights the meaning of the symbols. Several elements can impact the *qiraah* learning process, including purpose, strategy, media, and method. There are three purposes of *maharah qiraah* learning. First, for the basic level, students know symbols or words with good intonation and *makhraj* correctly. Students also

understand the meaning of every sentence. They can identify the main idea, connect related ideas, and express it correctly. Third, for the advantage level, students can learn to make primary points of the texts (Hartati & Hanafi, 2022).

Learning methods that connect learning materials with real-world situations may give an advantage to students. Applying real-world problems in the learning process enhances students' understanding, as it increases their curiosity about the subject matter, allowing them to improve their critical thinking and analytical skills (Fikri et al., 2023). Some students struggle to understand a lack of vocabulary. Iased is a crucial problem for students, as they face difficulties in the learning process (Fikri et al., 2023).

Based on the research, there are 16 chapters in the Arabiyyah bayna Yadayk book (Part 1). The topics include introduction (*at tahiyah wa at ta'aruf*), family (*al usrah*), house (*as sakan*), daily activity (*al hayah al yaumiyyah*), food and beverage (*ath tha'am wa syarab*), ash shalat, (*ad dirasah*), profession (*al 'amal*), shopping (*at tasawwug*), weather (*al jawwu*), public facilities (*an nas wal amaakin*), hobby (*al hiwayat*), traveling (*as safar*), *al hajj wal umroh*, health (*ash shihhah*), holiday (*al 'uthlah*). All of the topics, including dialogue, text, and illustration, represent Arab culture. Moreover, most chapters of the book consist of ayat from the Quran and hadith.

The book encompasses Arab cultural values, which are reflected in vocabulary related to daily activities in Arab society, etiquette for visiting, family interactions, social life in the market, school, and public areas. Most of the dialogue began with salam and polite language. Furthermore, the introduction of Arabic names, conversational contexts, and social illustrations helps learners understand the lifestyle, social norms, and traditions of Arab society.

The dialogues in the book frequently illustrate Islamic ethics, such as showing respect for parents, practicing honesty, upholding trustworthiness, and emphasizing the importance of knowledge. Islamic moral values—such as discipline, cleanliness, and mutual assistance—are also implied in the activities and exercises provided. Thus, the book not only teaches the Arabic language but also instills Arab cultural values and Islamic manners that are essential for the character development of learners.

Meanwhile, from *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* students may learned 15 chapters with various topics such as: Sulaiman learn at Arabic Institute (*Sulaiman yadrusu fii ma'had ta'lim al lughah al 'arabiyyah*), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (*Al Mamlakah Al 'Arabiyyah As su'udiyah*), Short Trip (*Rihlah qashirah*), Hijrah to Habasyah (*Hijrah ila ardhil habasyah*), Ibrahim and his Community (*Ibrahim*

wa qaumuhu), Waraqah bin Naufal, Telephone, Musa and Fir'aun, Prevention is Better than Treatment (*Al wiqayah Khairun min 'ilaaj*), Holy Months (*Al asyhur al hurum*), Qiblat, Ziarah, Imam Muslim, Ibnu Jarir At Thabariy, and Honesty (*Ash shiddiq*). Those 15 topics represent Islam and Arab culture. It is demonstrated that a correlation exists between the languages, traditions, geographic environment, and social life of Arab society, as illustrated in the content.

Arab social culture is reflected in the etiquette of receiving guests, modes of communication, and moral values such as honesty and respect for guests. The narratives of prominent Arab figures such as Imam Muslim and Ibn Jarir al-Tabari further illustrate the rich intellectual tradition of the Arab world, their journeys in pursuit of knowledge, and their contributions to literature and scholarship.

On the other hand, the Islamic values embedded within the material are highly prominent, as many chapters discuss the stories of prophets and significant events in Islamic history, including the migration to Abyssinia (*Habasyah*), the mission of Prophet Ibrahim, the story of Prophet Musa, the revelation of the first divine message, and the change of the qiblah. The material also emphasizes core Islamic principles such as the importance of knowledge, trustworthiness, honesty, health, and reverence for the sacred months. Thus, the book not only teaches the Arabic language but also introduces Arab culture and Islamic values that shape the character, ethics, and worldview of the Arab-Muslim community.

Based on that analysis, both of those books are considered effective media for learning Arabic. Students may learn the Arabic language and also its culture. Then, measuring student learning and evaluation is conducted through observation of student learning outcome scores. The following are the scores of student learning outcomes for those who used *Arabiyyah bayna Yadayk* (ABY) and *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah*.

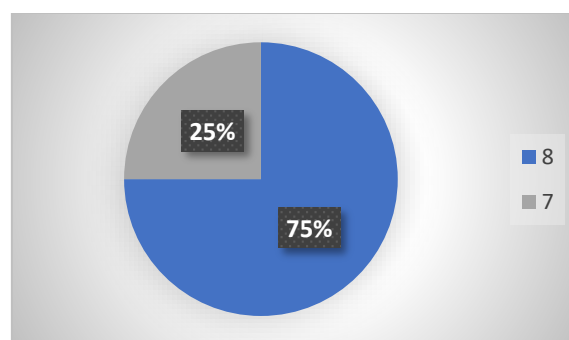


Figure 1. Student learning outcomes of using the ABY book

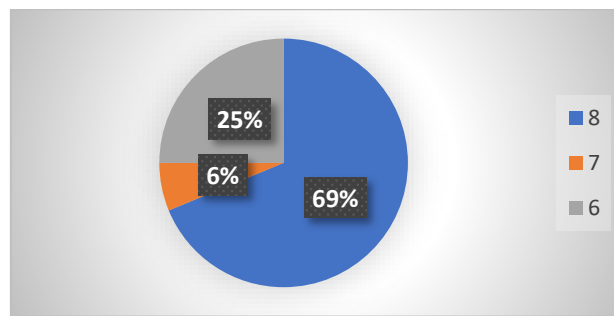


Figure 2. Student Learning Outcomes of Using the *Silsilah* Book

Diagram 1 illustrates that 12 students (75%) achieved scores above 80, while 4 students (25%) received scores higher than 70. Furthermore, Diagram 2 demonstrates that 11 students (69%) achieved scores above 80, while 1 student (6%) obtained a score above 70, and an additional 4 students (25%) recorded scores exceeding 60. This data was obtained from 16 students who studied Arabic using the ABY book in semester 1 and *Silsilah* in semester 2. This also suggests that most students can effectively utilize both books to improve their Arabic skills.

Those data correlate with student motivation. When they have a strong desire to learn Arabic, they will encourage themselves to increase their level of understanding. Therefore, students are asked to complete a questionnaire about their motivations for learning Arabic. The data showed that there are various motivations of students in learning Arabic, as well as:

1. Generally, their motivations for improving Arabic aim to understand the Quran, hadith, and Islamic literature. They believe that Arabic is important because it serves as the foundation of Islamic knowledge and learning.
2. Fluent communication in Arabic is the goal. Many students express a strong desire to communicate fluently in Arabic. They identify this ability as one of their primary motivations for studying the language.
3. The beauty of the language and its meaning. Another motivating factor for students is their admiration for the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the Arabic language. The intrinsic beauty of the language itself inspires students to engage more deeply with their studies and to pursue a more comprehensive understanding of Arabic.
4. Arabic is considered a global language for opening knowledge. Students are also motivated to learn Arabic because they regard it as a global language that provides access to a wide range of knowledge. As one of the world's major international languages, Arabic serves as a gateway to

diverse fields, including religion, history, literature, science, and contemporary scholarship produced across the Arab world.

It correlates with the student's future job. Some students aspire to be Arabic teachers. However, career aspirations also play a significant role in motivating students to learn Arabic, particularly for those who intend to pursue professions related to language education. Several students express the desire to become Arabic teachers, especially within Islamic educational institutions, where proficiency in the language is a fundamental requirement. For these students, mastering Arabic is not only an academic pursuit but also an essential step toward achieving their future career goals.

Discussion

Reading skill (*maharah qirā'ah*) is a complex cognitive activity that is influenced by learning objectives, teaching methods, and the quality of the learning content. In learning Arabic, selecting reading materials appropriate to the level of students' competence is also important for increasing their interest and motivation (Hamidien et al., 2025; Nurhuda & Prananingrum, 2022), because motivation is a primary factor that can push students to enhance their spirit in learning and performance (Alim et al., 2024). Additionally, teachers must also pay attention to the development of their students. Moreover, when selecting textbooks from Arab countries, it is essential to consider the students' backgrounds. Those come from general/ vocational high schools, which receive special attention without reducing attention to students from Islamic boarding schools and Islamic high schools (Zulharby et al., 2021).

Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk and *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* are textbooks that come from Saudi Arabia. Those books represent Arab and Islamic culture in most of the texts (Nikmah et al., 2025). Both of them provide structured learning pathways that align with these stages, allowing them to develop reading competence gradually. This systematic progression enables learners to move beyond surface-level comprehension toward identifying main ideas and interpreting texts critically, which is essential for developing effective reading skills in higher education contexts.

Furthermore, the integration of real-world contexts and culturally familiar situations within the textbooks contributes significantly to students' comprehension and motivation. The cultural themes embedded in daily activities, social interactions, and religious practices enable learners to connect linguistic forms with meaningful contexts. This contextualization reduces abstraction and enhances vocabulary acquisition, which is particularly crucial given that limited vocabulary has

been identified as a major obstacle in reading comprehension. By presenting language within authentic and culturally rich settings, both textbooks support learners in developing skills and contextual guessing strategies, which are essential components of effective reading competence.

The strong presence of Arab culture and Islamic values in both textbooks also plays a vital role in shaping learners' affective and cognitive engagement. *Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk* emphasizes daily social etiquette, moral conduct, and religious practices, while *Silsilah Ta'lim al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* introduces historical narratives, prominent scholars, and significant Islamic events. This dual emphasis not only enhances linguistic input but also fosters character development and ethical awareness. Such integration supports the view that language learning is inseparable from cultural and moral education, particularly in contexts where Arabic is learned language of both religion and academia.

Finally, the improvement in students' learning outcomes and motivation demonstrates a positive relationship between culturally enriched textbooks and effective language acquisition. The majority of students achieved high scores after using both textbooks, indicating that these materials successfully support reading development. These results suggest that textbooks that incorporate learner motivation, linguistic structure, and cultural depth serve not only as instructional tools but also as catalysts for long-term academic growth and professional orientation in Arabic language instruction.

CONCLUSION

According to the research, textbooks have a strong correlation with students' motivation to learn a foreign language. Either *Arabiyyah bayna Yadayk* or *Silsilah Talim Al Lughah Al Arabiyyah* books are considered as one of the effective media that support students in learning Arabic. On the one hand, students can enrich their language knowledge. On the other hand, students may also enhance their knowledge of Arab culture. On the first level, improving reading skill (*maharah qiraah*) through the *Arabiyyah bayna Yadayk* book is very important. Some factors influence motivation due using this book. Students may understand some texts because of their basic vocabulary. Moreover, students also obtain Arab cultural knowledge through some content and illustrations. In addition, the book is designed in a colorful format with various topics, and it also supports students in learning with teacher guidance or independently. Those points can increase students' motivation to learn Arabic. On the other hand, the *Silsilah Talim Al Lughah Al Arabiyyah* book helps students to enrich their

vocabulary. Sometimes, difficulties arise due to a lack of vocabulary. However, it can motivate students to read those texts continuously.

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