

# Arabic Grand Speech Competition as a Medium for Curriculum Development in Islamic Boarding Schools at Gontor for Girls Campus 1

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Received: 16/09/2024

Revised: 20/10/2024

Accepted: 24/12/2024

## Abstract

This study examines the role of the Arabic Grand Speech Competition as a medium for curriculum development at Gontor for Girls Campus 1. Using a qualitative educational ethnography approach, the research explores how Arabic speech activities contribute to communicative competence, Islamic character formation, and institutional language culture within the pesantren environment. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving language supervisors, speech mentors, committee members, and participating students from the \*kibar\* and \*shighar\* categories. The findings reveal that the competition functions as a living curriculum that integrates performative Arabic learning, language immersion, hidden curriculum, and leadership training into students' educational experiences. The activities strengthen students' \*maharah kalam\* through repeated oral performance, rhetorical practice, and authentic communicative interaction. Furthermore, the integration of \*Haflah Tilawah Al-Qur'an\* reinforces the spiritual and da'wah-oriented dimensions of Arabic learning in pesantren education. The study concludes that curriculum development in Islamic boarding schools is culturally constructed through institutional traditions, communal interaction, and language-based educational practices beyond formal classroom instruction. This study contributes theoretically to Arabic curriculum development discourse and practically to communicative and culture-based Arabic learning models in Islamic education.

## Keywords

Arabic Grand Speech Competition; curriculum development; educational ethnography; communicative competence; Islamic boarding school.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) has developed beyond formal classroom instruction and increasingly emphasizes communicative competence through language immersion, cultural activities, and institutional language programs. In modern pesantren education, Arabic is not merely positioned as a religious language but also as a medium of communication, intellectual discourse, and character formation. Consequently, curriculum development in Arabic education requires not only structured instructional materials but also authentic linguistic



environments capable of cultivating students' speaking proficiency and communicative confidence (Hasan, 2020; Najwa et al., 2023).

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of integrated Arabic language programs in strengthening students' maharah kalam (speaking skills) within Islamic educational institutions. Arabic speaking competence can be effectively developed through communicative practices, language environments, and performance-based activities embedded in students' daily lives (Mahsunah et al., 2023; Mubaligh et al., 2022). Furthermore, curriculum development in pesantren contexts often involves hidden curriculum practices manifested through extracurricular activities, language discipline, and communal educational traditions that continuously shape students' linguistic habits and identities.

Among the educational activities that contribute significantly to Arabic communicative competence is the Arabic Grand Speech Competition. This activity functions not only as a language performance arena but also as a pedagogical instrument that integrates public speaking, rhetoric, memorization, pronunciation accuracy, emotional expression, and Islamic values simultaneously. In many pesantren traditions, speech activities become part of the living curriculum that supports students' language acquisition through repeated practice, peer interaction, and cultural immersion. In this context, the categories of *\*kibar\** and *\*shighar\** speeches represent tiered linguistic training adjusted to students' educational levels and communicative capacities.

At Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri Kampus 1, the Arabic Grand Speech Competition is conducted as part of institutional language cultivation programs designed to strengthen students' Arabic proficiency and Islamic leadership character. The activity is integrated with Qur'anic recitation performances (*\*Haflah Tilawah Al-Qur'an\**), reflecting the pesantren's educational orientation that combines linguistic competence, spiritual values, and da'wah preparation. Through systematic selection, mentoring, rehearsal, and final performances, students are trained to become future female Muslim preachers (*\*da'iyah\**) capable of communicating Islamic messages effectively in Arabic.

Previous studies on Arabic learning in pesantren have primarily focused on textbook development, integrated curricula, language management, and speaking strategies (Kholis & Mustofa, 2024; Yasin et al., 2023; Ardiansyah & Muhammad, 2020). However, limited research has specifically examined speech competitions as a medium for curriculum development within pesantren educational culture. Existing studies tend to discuss Arabic speaking skills from instructional perspectives, while the role of performative language activities as part of educational ethnography and hidden curriculum remains underexplored.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate how the Arabic Grand Speech Competition functions as a medium for curriculum development in Islamic boarding schools, particularly within the educational culture of Gontor for Girls Campus 1. Using a qualitative educational ethnography approach, this

research explores how language practices, institutional traditions, disciplinary systems, and communicative performances collectively construct Arabic learning experiences among students. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse of Arabic curriculum development in pesantren education and practically to the implementation of communicative and culture-based Arabic learning programs.

## **2. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach using educational ethnography as the primary research design. Educational ethnography is appropriate for examining cultural practices, social interactions, institutional traditions, and language behaviors that occur naturally within educational environments (Beach & Vigo-Arazola, 2021). Ethnographic research enables researchers to understand how educational values, communicative practices, and curriculum implementation are socially constructed and reproduced through daily activities and institutional culture (Green et al., 2020). In the context of Islamic boarding schools (\*pesantren\*), ethnography is particularly relevant because language learning is inseparable from disciplinary systems, communal interaction, religious values, and hidden curriculum practices embedded in students' everyday lives.

This research was conducted at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri Kampus 1, particularly during the implementation of the Arabic Grand Speech Competition categorized into \*kibar\* (advanced level) and \*shighar\* (beginner level). The study focused on how the competition functioned as a medium for Arabic curriculum development through communicative activities, public speaking practices, and institutional language culture. The participants of this study consisted of language supervisors, Arabic teachers, speech coaches, committee members, and santriwati participating in the competition from various grade levels of Kulliyatul Mu'allimat al-Islamiyyah (KMI).

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation was conducted intensively during speech preparation sessions, rehearsals, mentoring activities, language discipline practices, and the final competition performances. Ethnographic observation allows researchers to capture naturally occurring interactions, symbolic practices, and educational meanings within the pesantren environment (Ravindran et al., 2020). In-depth interviews were carried out semi-structurally to explore participants' perspectives regarding the educational values, communicative experiences, and curriculum functions of the Arabic speech program. Meanwhile, document analysis included institutional regulations, competition guidelines, language program archives, students' speech manuscripts, and curriculum-related documents.

**Table 1. Research Participants and Their Roles**

NO.	PARTICIPANTS	ROLES IN THE PROGRAM	DATA CONTRIBUTION
1	Language Supervisors	Coordinating institutional Arabic language programs and supervising language discipline	Information on curriculum implementation, language environment, and institutional objectives
2	Arabic Teachers	Guiding Arabic learning and evaluating students' communicative performance	Information on speaking competence development and pedagogical strategies
3	Speech Mentors	Coaching students in speech preparation, pronunciation, rhetoric, and stage performance	Information on performative learning processes and speech training practices
4	Committee Members	Organizing and managing the Arabic Grand Speech Competition activities	Information on program management, competition procedures, and institutional support
5	Kibar Participants (Intensive Grade 3 and Grade 4 KMI Students)	Performing advanced Arabic speeches in the final competition	Information on communicative competence, confidence, and public speaking experiences
6	Shighar Participants (Grade 1–3 KMI Students)	Performing beginner-level Arabic speeches in the competition	Information on early-stage language acquisition and speaking practice experiences
7	Dormitory Supervisors	Monitoring students' daily language use and discipline outside classrooms	Information on hidden curriculum and Arabic language habituation
8	Student Audience and Peers	Participating as audience members and peer supporters during the event	Information on social interaction, motivation, and communicative atmosphere
9	Institutional Documents	Competition guidelines, assessment rubrics, speech manuscripts, and language regulations	Supporting data regarding curriculum objectives, evaluation indicators, and institutional culture

**\*Source:** Research data processed by the author (2024).

The researcher acted as the primary research instrument by directly engaging in the educational setting to understand the social and cultural dimensions of the Arabic language environment. In educational ethnography, prolonged engagement and contextual immersion are essential to gain holistic understanding of educational practices and institutional culture (Walford, 2020). Therefore, the researcher continuously interacted with participants and observed repetitive language activities to identify patterns of communicative learning and hidden curriculum implementation.

Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with the fieldwork process using thematic ethnographic analysis. The analysis involved data reduction, coding, categorization, interpretation, and cultural meaning construction. The researcher identified recurring themes related to communicative competence, language habituation, performative learning, disciplinary culture, and curriculum development practices. The analytical process also emphasized interpretive understanding of how Arabic speech competitions contribute to the formation of students' linguistic identity and da'wah-oriented leadership.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied triangulation of techniques and sources through cross-checking observation findings, interview data, and institutional documents. Member checking was also conducted by confirming several findings with participants to maintain credibility and contextual accuracy. Additionally, prolonged observation and reflective field notes were employed to strengthen the authenticity of ethnographic interpretation. This study adheres to ethical research principles by obtaining institutional permission, maintaining participant confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation throughout the research process.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Arabic Grand Speech Competition as a Living Curriculum Practice

The findings revealed that the Arabic Grand Speech Competition at Gontor for Girls Campus 1 functioned not merely as an extracurricular contest but as a living curriculum embedded within the institutional culture of the pesantren. The competition systematically integrated Arabic language learning into students' daily educational experiences through intensive speech preparation, language mentoring, rehearsal sessions, and public performance activities.

Based on participant observation, the preparation process involved continuous Arabic language exposure through vocabulary enrichment, pronunciation correction, rhetorical training, and memorization practices. Students participating in both *\*kibar\** and *\*shighar\** categories were consistently required to communicate in Arabic during training sessions. The researcher observed that language supervisors and mentors frequently corrected grammatical structures, intonation, articulation, and emotional delivery during rehearsals (Observation, April 2024).

The ethnographic findings demonstrated that Arabic speech activities became part of the pesantren's communicative culture. The competition environment encouraged students to internalize Arabic expressions not only as academic material but also as performative language practices. During the observation process, students were found repeatedly practicing speeches in dormitories, classrooms, mosque courtyards, and language discipline areas, indicating that Arabic learning extended beyond formal classroom boundaries. An Arabic language supervisor explained:

*"The Grand Speech is not just a competition, but part of the formation of a language environment. Female students learn to speak, think, and convey Islamic values through Arabic."* (Interview with Language Supervisor, April 2024)

This finding indicates that the competition contributed to curriculum development by creating an immersive language environment that strengthened students' communicative competence through authentic practice.

**Table 2. Stages of Arabic Grand Speech Competition Activities**

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No.	Stages of Activities	Main Activities	Educational Objectives	Curriculum Contributions
1	Participant Selection	Screening and selecting students from <i>kibar</i> and <i>shighar</i> categories based on language performance and speaking potential	Identifying students' communicative abilities and public speaking readiness	Mapping students' speaking competence levels
2	Theme and Script Preparation	Preparing Arabic speech texts related to Islamic values, morality, leadership, and da'wah	Developing Arabic vocabulary, grammar, and rhetorical understanding	Integrating Islamic content into Arabic learning
3	Speech Coaching and Mentoring	Intensive guidance by speech mentors focusing on pronunciation, articulation, intonation, rhetoric, and expression	Improving <i>maharah kalam</i> and performative communication skills	Strengthening communicative and performative pedagogy
4	Language Discipline Practice	Daily Arabic communication during rehearsals and institutional language activities	Creating an immersive Arabic-speaking environment	Supporting language habituation and hidden curriculum
5	Rehearsal Sessions	Individual and group rehearsals before the final performance	Building fluency, confidence, stage mastery, and emotional expression	Developing authentic communicative competence
6	Final Competition Performance	Public Arabic speech performances before judges and audience in the auditorium	Training public speaking, leadership, and persuasive communication	Applying performative Arabic learning in real contexts
7	Assessment and Evaluation	Evaluation based on fluency, pronunciation, rhetoric, expression, and content delivery	Measuring students' communicative achievements	Providing competency-based language assessment
8	Integration with Haflah Tilawah Al-Qur'an	Qur'anic recitation performances accompanying the speech competition	Strengthening spiritual values and Qur'anic atmosphere	Integrating language learning with Islamic character education
9	Reflection and Motivation	Feedback and encouragement from teachers, mentors, and institutional leaders	Encouraging self-development and future da'wah orientation	Reinforcing leadership and lifelong communicative learning

\*Source: Observation, interviews, and institutional documentation (2024).

### Development of Arabic Communicative Competence through Performative Learning

The study found that the Arabic Grand Speech Competition significantly contributed to the development of students' communicative competence, particularly in *\*maharah kalam\** (speaking skills). The competition emphasized performative learning in which students developed linguistic proficiency through repeated oral performance, public speaking exposure, and audience interaction.



Observation data showed that students in the \*kibar\* category demonstrated more complex rhetorical structures, persuasive language patterns, and expressive delivery compared to the \*shighar\* participants, whose speeches focused more on basic fluency, memorization, and pronunciation accuracy. This tiered structure allowed the curriculum implementation to adapt progressively according to students' linguistic capacities. Several students reported that participation in the competition improved their confidence in using Arabic publicly. One participant stated:

*"Previously I was afraid of speaking Arabic in public, but practicing speaking made me more confident and more used to using Arabic every day.."*(Interview with Kibar Participant, April 2024)

Another participant from the \*shighar\* category explained:

*"We not only memorize the text, but also learn how to convey the content of the speech with expression and appreciation."*(Interview with Shighar Participant, April 2024)

These findings suggest that communicative competence was developed not solely through linguistic knowledge but through embodied language performance involving gesture, intonation, emotional engagement, and audience interaction. Documentation analysis further revealed that assessment indicators in the competition included pronunciation accuracy, fluency, rhetorical delivery, emotional expression, and mastery of Islamic themes (Competition Guideline Document, 2024).

**Table 3. Findings on Arabic Communicative Competence Development**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Competence Aspects</b>	<b>Observation Findings</b>	<b>Interview Findings</b>	<b>Documentation Findings</b>	<b>Educational Implications</b>
1	Fluency in Speaking ( <i>Fasahah al-Kalam</i> )	Students practiced speeches repeatedly during rehearsals and daily language activities	Participants reported increased confidence and spontaneity in speaking Arabic	Assessment rubrics emphasized fluency and continuity of speech delivery	Strengthens communicative confidence and oral proficiency
2	Pronunciation Accuracy ( <i>Makharij al-Huruf</i> )	Mentors consistently corrected articulation, intonation, and pronunciation during coaching sessions	Students acknowledged improvements in pronunciation through intensive drilling	Coaching guidelines included pronunciation and tajwid-related indicators	Develops accurate Arabic phonological competence
3	Vocabulary Enrichment ( <i>Mufradat</i> )	Students used varied Arabic vocabulary related to Islamic themes and public speaking	Participants stated that speech preparation expanded their Arabic vocabulary	Speech manuscripts contained thematic and persuasive vocabulary expressions	Supports contextual and thematic language acquisition
4	Rhetorical and Persuasive Skills	Students demonstrated expressive delivery, emotional emphasis, and audience engagement	Mentors emphasized persuasive speaking and rhetorical performance	Competition criteria assessed rhetoric and speech effectiveness	Enhances public communication and da'wah competence
5	Confidence in Public Speaking	Students performed speeches before large audiences and judges in the auditorium	Participants expressed reduced anxiety and stronger self-confidence	Evaluation sheets included stage mastery and audience interaction indicators	Builds leadership and communicative courage
6	Communicative Interaction	Arabic was actively used during mentoring, rehearsals, and peer discussions	Students felt more accustomed to interacting in Arabic outside classrooms	Institutional language regulations supported daily Arabic communication	Creates an immersive Arabic-speaking environment
7	Emotional and Performative Expression	Students combined gestures, voice modulation, and emotional delivery during speeches	Mentors encouraged expressive and meaningful speech performances	Performance assessment included expression and delivery quality	Supports performative and embodied language learning
8	Islamic Message Delivery ( <i>Da'wah Orientation</i> )	Speech topics emphasized Islamic morality, leadership, and	Participants viewed speeches as preparation for becoming	Speech themes reflected institutional Islamic educational	Integrates communicative competence with Islamic character formation

9	Language Discipline and Habituation	Qur'anic values Students consistently practiced Arabic within institutional language regulations	future <i>da'iyah</i> Supervisors emphasized continuous Arabic use in daily activities	objectives Language discipline archives reinforced Arabic immersion programs	Strengthens hidden curriculum and language culture formation
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\*Source: Observation, interviews, and institutional documentation (2024).

### Hidden Curriculum and Islamic Character Formation

The findings also revealed that the Arabic Grand Speech Competition functioned as a hidden curriculum that shaped students' discipline, leadership, confidence, and Islamic identity. Beyond language mastery, the activity cultivated educational values deeply embedded within the pesantren culture.

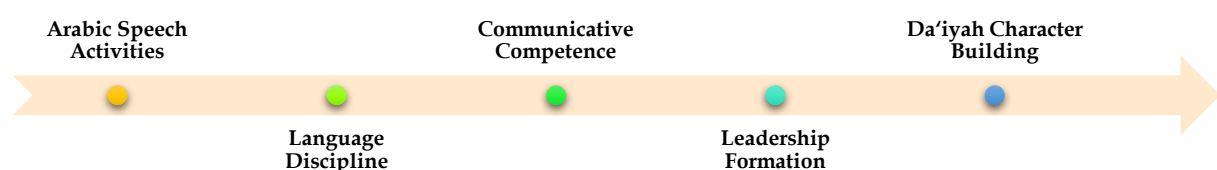
Participant observation showed that students were trained to maintain discipline during preparation sessions, follow language regulations, manage time effectively, and support peers collaboratively. The competition process encouraged students to develop responsibility and emotional resilience, particularly during intensive rehearsals and final stage performances. A speech mentor explained:

*"What is formed is not only the ability to speak, but also the mentality of preaching, the courage to appear, and the readiness to become a community guide."* (Interview with Speech Mentor, April 2024)

This finding indicates that the competition operated as a medium of character education integrated into Arabic language activities. The integration of \*Haflah Tilawah Al-Qur'an\* alongside the speech competition further strengthened the spiritual atmosphere of the event. Observation findings showed that Qur'anic recitation performances created a religious and emotional setting that reinforced the pesantren's educational orientation toward Qur'anic and da'wah-based character formation.

Documentation data also demonstrated that the institutional objectives of the competition emphasized the preparation of future female Muslim preachers (*da'iyah*) capable of conveying Islamic messages effectively in Arabic (Institutional Language Program Archive, 2024). Thus, the Arabic Grand Speech Competition functioned simultaneously as linguistic training, character education, and leadership regeneration within the pesantren curriculum system.

Figure 2. Integration of Arabic Learning and Hidden Curriculum



## Institutional Culture and Curriculum Development

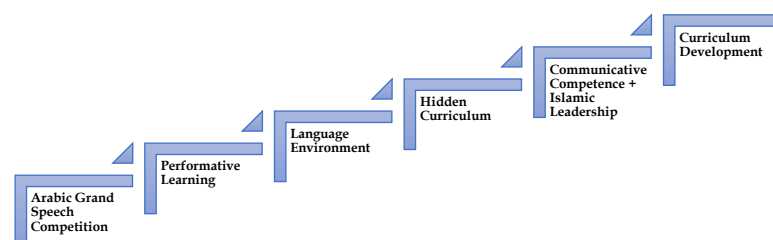
The ethnographic findings revealed that curriculum development at Gontor for Girls Campus 1 was not limited to formal curriculum documents but was continuously constructed through institutional culture and language traditions. The Arabic Grand Speech Competition represented a form of culture-based curriculum implementation in which educational values, communicative practices, and Islamic leadership were integrated into a holistic learning experience.

Observation findings showed that the competition involved multiple institutional elements, including language departments, student organizations, teachers, dormitory supervisors, and senior students. This collaborative structure created a sustainable educational ecosystem supporting Arabic language acquisition.

The researcher found that the competition contributed to three major dimensions of curriculum development: (1.) strengthening Arabic communicative competence; (2.) constructing an Arabic-speaking environment; (3.) internalizing Islamic leadership and da'wah values. These findings demonstrate that Arabic curriculum development in pesantren contexts operates dynamically through educational traditions, communal interaction, and performative language culture rather than relying solely on classroom instruction.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Arabic Grand Speech Competition at Gontor for Girls Campus 1 functions as a dynamic medium for curriculum development within the cultural ecosystem of Islamic boarding school education. The competition does not merely serve as an extracurricular activity but operates as a living curriculum that integrates communicative language learning, Islamic character formation, and leadership training into students' daily educational experiences. This finding supports the argument that curriculum development in pesantren contexts extends beyond formal instructional documents and is continuously reproduced through institutional culture, language discipline, and performative educational practices (Hasan, 2020; Kholis & Mustofa, 2024).

**Figure 3. Arabic Grand Speech Competition as Living Curriculum**

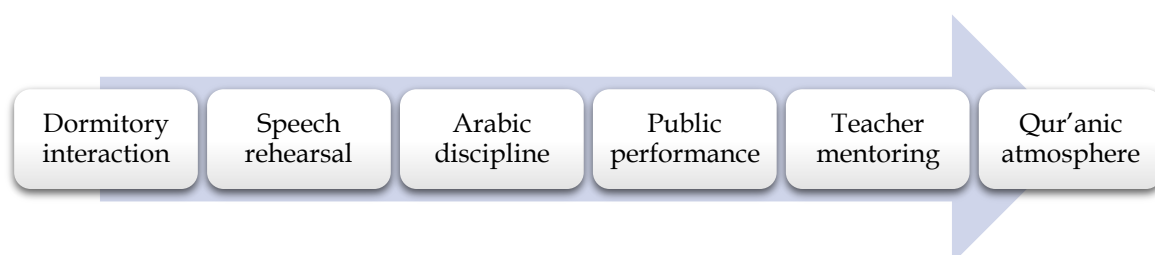


The ethnographic findings revealed that Arabic language acquisition among santriwati was strongly shaped by immersive linguistic exposure and repeated communicative performance. The intensive rehearsal sessions, speech mentoring, public speaking exercises, and institutional language regulations collectively constructed what can be categorized as a communicative Arabic environment. This finding aligns with communicative language learning theory emphasizing that language competence develops effectively through authentic interaction and meaningful communication practices rather than through grammatical instruction alone (Richards, 2022). The present study further confirms that performative activities such as speech competitions facilitate contextualized language use that strengthens students' fluency, rhetorical competence, and self-confidence.

The implementation of *kibar* and *shighar* categories also indicates differentiated curriculum practices adapted to students' linguistic capacities and educational levels. Students in the *shighar* category focused primarily on pronunciation accuracy, memorization, and basic fluency, whereas *kibar* participants demonstrated more advanced persuasive rhetoric, emotional expression, and critical language delivery. This finding reflects differentiated communicative pedagogy in which learning activities are structured progressively according to learners' competence development (Tomlinson, 2021). The competition therefore represents not only a performance event but also a staged communicative curriculum embedded within pesantren educational structures.

Another important finding concerns the role of hidden curriculum in shaping students' linguistic identity and Islamic character. The ethnographic observations demonstrated that the competition cultivated discipline, responsibility, confidence, emotional resilience, leadership, and da'wah orientation through repetitive educational practices. Students were not only trained to deliver speeches linguistically but also to embody Islamic values and moral authority while speaking publicly. This supports previous studies arguing that hidden curriculum in Islamic educational institutions significantly contributes to students' character formation through institutional culture, social interaction, and symbolic educational practices (Alsubaie, 2020; Hidayati et al., 2023).

**Figure 4. Ethnographic Representation of Arabic Language Culture in Pesantren**



The integration of *Haflah Tilawah Al-Qur'an* alongside the Arabic Grand Speech Competition further illustrates the interconnectedness between linguistic competence and spiritual formation within pesantren education. The findings indicate that Arabic learning was not separated from Qur'anic values and da'wah orientation. Instead, language mastery was positioned as a medium for transmitting Islamic teachings and preparing future female Muslim preachers (*da'iyah*). This finding strengthens the argument that Arabic curriculum development in Islamic boarding schools is deeply rooted in religious identity construction and moral education (Mufidah & Rohmah, 2022).

From an ethnographic perspective, the competition can also be understood as a form of performative pedagogy in which learning occurs through embodied performance, emotional engagement, and public interaction. Students learned Arabic not solely through cognitive processes but through bodily expression, voice control, stage confidence, gesture, and audience engagement. Such findings correspond with educational ethnography studies emphasizing that learning is socially and culturally enacted through repeated practices and symbolic participation within educational communities (Green et al., 2020; Beach & Vigo-Arrazola, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings reveal that curriculum development at Gontor for Girls Campus 1 is collectively sustained through institutional collaboration involving teachers, language supervisors, student organizations, and dormitory systems. This collaborative educational structure creates a sustainable Arabic-speaking ecosystem supporting students' communicative development both formally and informally. The study therefore supports the concept of curriculum as cultural practice, where educational objectives are realized through communal interaction, institutional tradition, and everyday educational activities rather than through classroom instruction alone (Priestley et al., 2021).

This study also contributes theoretically to the discourse of Arabic language curriculum development in Islamic educational institutions. Previous research has predominantly focused on textbook development, instructional strategies, and classroom-based language learning (Mahsunah et al., 2023; Najwa et al., 2023). In contrast, the present study demonstrates that extracurricular language performances and institutional culture significantly influence communicative competence development. Thus, curriculum innovation in Arabic education should consider performative, cultural, and ethnographic dimensions as integral elements of language learning.

**Table 4. Contributions of the Competition to Curriculum Development**

No.	Curriculum Dimensions	Contributions of the Arabic Grand Speech Competition	Empirical Findings	Educational Significance
1	Communicative Competence Development	Enhancing students' Arabic speaking fluency, pronunciation, and rhetorical abilities through intensive speech practice	Students demonstrated improved confidence, fluency, and expressive communication during performances	Strengthens <i>maharah kalam</i> through authentic communicative learning
2	Language Environment Formation	Creating an immersive Arabic-speaking atmosphere within the pesantren environment	Arabic was actively practiced during mentoring, rehearsals, dormitory interaction, and competition activities	Supports sustainable Arabic language habituation
3	Hidden Curriculum Implementation	Cultivating discipline, responsibility, confidence, and leadership through institutional language culture	Students followed language discipline, rehearsal schedules, and collaborative learning practices	Integrates character education into language learning
4	Performative Arabic Learning	Integrating public speaking, emotional expression, and audience engagement into Arabic learning activities	Students practiced gesture, voice control, rhetoric, and persuasive delivery	Develops performative and embodied communicative competence
5	Islamic Character Education	Internalizing Islamic values, da'wah orientation, and moral messages through speech themes	Speech materials emphasized Qur'anic values, leadership, and Islamic ethics	Combines language education with spiritual formation
6	Leadership and Da'iyah Preparation	Training students to become future Muslim female leaders and public communicators	Participants developed stage confidence and persuasive communication abilities	Supports regeneration of <i>da'iyah</i> and leadership cadres
7	Curriculum Integration Beyond Classroom	Extending Arabic learning into extracurricular and communal educational practices	Language learning occurred through institutional traditions and social interaction	Demonstrates curriculum as lived educational culture
8	Collaborative Educational Ecosystem	Involving teachers, mentors, student organizations, and dormitory supervisors in curriculum implementation	Multiple institutional elements collaboratively supported the competition process	Strengthens holistic and community-based curriculum development
9	Competency-Based Evaluation	Applying performance assessment based on fluency, pronunciation, rhetoric, and delivery	Evaluation rubrics reflected communicative and performative language competencies	Encourages authentic assessment in Arabic education
10	Integration of Spiritual and Linguistic Learning	Combining Arabic speech competition with <i>Haflah Tilawah Al-Qur'an</i> activities	Qur'anic recitation created a religious and emotional learning atmosphere	Reinforces holistic pesantren educational philosophy

**\*Source:** Observation, interviews, and institutional documentation (2024).

Despite these contributions, this study is limited to one institutional context within a modern pesantren environment. Therefore, future research may comparatively examine Arabic speech programs across different Islamic boarding schools or investigate the long-term impact of performative Arabic learning on students' communicative competence and leadership development.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Arabic Grand Speech Competition at Gontor for Girls Campus 1 functions as a significant medium for curriculum development within the educational culture of Islamic boarding schools. The competition operates not merely as an extracurricular activity but as a living curriculum that integrates communicative Arabic learning, Islamic character education, leadership training, and performative pedagogy into students' daily educational experiences. Through the *\*kibar\** and *\*shighar\** categories, the institution systematically develops students' Arabic communicative competence according to their linguistic levels while simultaneously constructing an immersive Arabic-speaking environment. The findings further demonstrate that curriculum development in pesantren education is culturally sustained through institutional traditions, language discipline, communal interaction, and hidden curriculum practices rather than relying solely on formal classroom instruction.

The ethnographic findings also reveal that Arabic language learning in pesantren contexts is deeply interconnected with spiritual formation and *da'wah* orientation. The integration of the Arabic Grand Speech Competition with *\*Haflah Tilawah Al-Qur'an\** reflects the holistic educational philosophy of pesantren in which language mastery is positioned as a medium for transmitting Islamic values and preparing future female Muslim preachers (*\*da'iyah\**). This study therefore contributes theoretically to the discourse of Arabic curriculum development by emphasizing the importance of performative learning, institutional culture, and educational ethnography in strengthening communicative competence. Practically, the findings suggest that Arabic curriculum innovation should incorporate culture-based communicative activities capable of creating authentic linguistic engagement beyond formal instructional settings.

Despite its contributions, this study is limited to a single institutional context within a modern Islamic boarding school environment. Future studies are therefore recommended to conduct comparative ethnographic research across various pesantren traditions, investigate the long-term impact of Arabic performative learning on students' communicative development, or explore the integration of digital media and multilingual practices within pesantren-based Arabic curriculum development.

## Implications

This study implies that curriculum development in Arabic language education should not be restricted to textbook-centered instruction or classroom-based pedagogy. Instead, educational institutions—particularly Islamic boarding schools—need to strengthen communicative and culture-based learning models through language performances, public speaking activities, and immersive Arabic environments. The findings indicate that extracurricular linguistic practices can function as strategic curriculum instruments in developing students' communicative competence, confidence, leadership, and Islamic identity simultaneously. Therefore, Arabic speech competitions may serve as an effective model for integrating language learning, character education, and da'wah-oriented pedagogy within contemporary Islamic education.

**Acknowledgement:** The authors would like to express sincere gratitude to the leadership, language supervisors, teachers, and students of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri Campus 1 for their support, participation, and cooperation throughout the research process. Appreciation is also extended to all parties who contributed to the implementation of this study and supported the completion of this research article.

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