



A PSYCHO-SOCIOLINGUISTIC-BASED PROJECT-BASED LEARNING MODEL FOR ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY AT MTs AL-MA'ARIF RAKIT BANJARNEGARA

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Abstract

The low level of students' communicative competence remains a major challenge in Arabic language learning across various educational levels in Indonesia. Learning practices that primarily emphasize memorization of grammar and vocabulary have not sufficiently addressed learners' psychological and social dimensions. This study aims to develop and empirically validate a psycho-sociolinguistic-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model for Arabic language learning. Employing a descriptive-analytical design, the study involved both conceptual analysis and empirical validation. The empirical phase utilized a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design conducted at MTs Al-Ma'arif Rakit Banjarnegara, involving 32 eighth-grade students. Research instruments included a communicative competence test, a psycho-sociolinguistic questionnaire, and classroom observation sheets. The findings reveal significant improvements in students' communicative competence, particularly in sociolinguistic and strategic aspects, along with increased learning motivation, self-confidence, and quality of social interaction. The integration of psycho-sociolinguistic principles into the stages of PjBL effectively fosters contextual, meaningful, and humanistic Arabic language learning. Therefore, the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model is empirically proven to be effective in real classroom contexts and holds strong potential for broader implementation in madrasah-based Arabic language education. The developed model contributes theoretically by integrating affective and sociolinguistic perspectives into project-based pedagogy, and practically by offering an adaptable framework for improving communicative competence in madrasah-based Arabic education.

Keywords: Arabic Language Learning, Communicative Competence, Project-Based Learning; Psycho-Sociolinguistics, Madrasah Education.

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INTRODUCTION | مقدمة

One persistent issue in Arabic language learning in Indonesia is the low level of students' communicative competence across educational levels. Despite years of instruction, many learners still experience difficulties in communicating actively, both orally and in writing, indicating that the objectives of Arabic language education have not yet been optimally achieved (Novita Maula, 2022). This condition reflects a gap between classroom instruction and functional language use, as learning outcomes remain largely confined to theoretical mastery rather than meaningful communication.

This gap is closely related to the continued dominance of conventional teaching approaches that emphasize memorization of grammar and vocabulary while providing limited opportunities for contextual and meaningful language use (El & Waruwu, 2025). Such approaches tend to

neglect learners' psychological and social dimensions, resulting in low motivation, reduced self-confidence, and minimal engagement in authentic communicative situations.

As an alternative solution to the weakness of conventional approaches to language learning, the psychosociolinguistic approach emerged, emphasizing that second language acquisition is not only determined by cognitive factors, but is also significantly influenced by internal psychological conditions, such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence, as well as social interactions that occur during the language learning process. Psycho-sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that examines how language, thought, and society interact and shape the experience of language (Zayuda, D. N. A., Marliana, I., Suryani, M., & Ibrahim, 2024). This perspective views language learning as a dynamic process that develops through interaction, emotion, and social engagement.

The main concept of this approach is how learners use, process, and understand language in the context of everyday life. Psychological elements such as phonological mastery, vocabulary comprehension, and a sense of security in language use are combined with social elements such as dialect variation, interaction norms, and communication culture. Thus, the psychosociolinguistic approach provides a strong foundation for creating natural, contextual, and meaningful Arabic language learning through the integration of social and affective experiences in the learning process (Naria et al., 2024). Such integration is particularly relevant in Arabic learning, where linguistic forms are closely tied to social and cultural contexts.

Therefore, a learning model is needed that is not only capable of improving students' Arabic language skills linguistically, but also psychologically and socially (Ghazali, 2021). One innovative approach that can address these needs is the combination of Project Based Learning (PjBL) with a psycho-sociolinguistic approach. The PjBL model emphasizes the active involvement of students in contextual projects that stimulate real-life language exploration and production. Therefore, if this PjBL model can be integrated with the psycho-sociolinguistic approach, this model becomes even stronger because it takes into account the psychological factors of students such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence, as well as socio-linguistic factors such as interpersonal interactions, language variation (*fusha* and *'amiyah*), and communication norms in the Arabic-speaking community (AR et al., 2021). Through project-based activities, students are encouraged to use Arabic as a tool for communication rather than merely as an object of study.

The results of Shodiqoh and Mansyur (2022) research show that the PjBL model can improve Arabic communication skills by strengthening intrinsic motivation and collaboration among students in project assignments. In addition, Naria (2024) research results confirm that a psycho-sociolinguistic approach can help teachers design learning that is more adaptive to the psychological and social needs of students, both in formal and informal contexts. In other words, psycholinguistics can help teachers understand how students process, store, and use Arabic in accordance with their cognitive development, and tailor learning materials to the psychological needs of students. Meanwhile, sociolinguistics helps teachers understand how Arabic is used in various social contexts, such as differences in dialect, culture, and formal and informal communication situations. However, these studies have generally discussed PjBL and psycho-sociolinguistic perspectives separately, without integrating them into a single instructional model.

Building upon these theoretical foundations, the present study develops a conceptual model of Arabic learning that integrates PjBL and psycho-sociolinguistic principles and empirically validates it through classroom implementation at MTs Al-Ma'arif Rakit Banjarnegara, involving

32 eighth-grade students. The empirical validation aims to examine the model's effectiveness in enhancing communicative competence, motivation, and social interaction during Arabic learning. The madrasah context is particularly suitable for this study because Arabic instruction at this level often prioritizes grammatical memorization and exam-oriented learning, leaving limited space for communicative practice. Moreover, students at the MTs level are in a critical developmental stage where affective and social factors strongly influence language acquisition. Testing the model in this setting allows the evaluation of its relevance and adaptability to real conditions of Arabic learning in Indonesian madrasahs.

Based on this background, this study aims to develop an Arabic language learning model based on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) integrated with a psycho-sociolinguistic approach. This model is theoretically grounded in Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, and Michael Halliday's Functional Linguistics. This integration represents a novelty in Arabic pedagogy, as no prior research has empirically tested the combined psycho-sociolinguistic and PjBL framework in the context of madrasah education in Indonesia. Through this model, it is expected that a communicative and collaborative learning environment can be created to support the holistic development of students' emotional, social, and linguistic competence. Accordingly, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to advancing Arabic language pedagogy in madrasah contexts.

METHOD

منهج

Research Design

This study employed a two-phase research design combining a descriptive–analytical approach and a quasi-experimental approach. The first phase involved theoretical and conceptual analysis to develop an integrative psycho-sociolinguistic-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model grounded in Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, and Halliday's Functional Linguistics (Hasibuan et al., 2022). This phase focused on synthesizing psychological, social, and functional perspectives of language learning to formulate a coherent instructional model.

The second phase consisted of empirical validation through classroom implementation using a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design to examine the effectiveness of the developed model in an authentic instructional setting (Waruwu, 2024). This design was selected to allow preliminary empirical testing of the model under real classroom conditions. However, the absence of a control group limits the strength of causal inference, and therefore the findings should be interpreted as indicative of model effectiveness rather than definitive evidence of comparative superiority.

Participants

The participants of this study were thirty-two eighth-grade students (Class VIII-F) enrolled at MTs Al-Ma'arif Rakit, Banjarnegara, Indonesia. The class was selected purposively based on accessibility and its representativeness of typical Arabic language learning conditions in Indonesian madrasah contexts. All students participated in the intervention, and no exclusion criteria were applied, as the study aimed to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the developed learning model within a natural classroom environment.

Instruments

Data were collected using multiple instruments to capture both learning outcomes and learning processes. The instruments included:

1. a communicative competence test administered as a pretest and posttest,
2. a psycho-sociolinguistic questionnaire measuring students' motivation, self-confidence, and social interaction, and
3. classroom observation sheets documenting student engagement, interaction patterns, and language use during project-based activities.

The communicative competence test was developed by the researchers based on functional and communicative indicators of Arabic language use aligned with the instructional objectives. The psycho-sociolinguistic questionnaire consisted of 25 items measured on a five-point Likert scale and was adapted from previous studies on affective and sociolinguistic dimensions of language learning (Bado, 2021; Naria et al., 2024).

Content validity of the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in Arabic language education and educational psychology. The reliability analysis indicated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.87, suggesting that the instrument was reliable for measuring psycho-sociolinguistic constructs. The observation sheet was designed to record qualitative indicators of student participation, collaboration, emotional engagement, and communicative behavior during the learning process.

Procedures

The empirical phase was conducted through the implementation of the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model in regular Arabic language classes. The intervention was carried out over three instructional meetings, each lasting 90 minutes (2 × 45 minutes), resulting in a total of 270 minutes of instructional time.

At the beginning of the intervention, students completed a communicative competence pretest. Subsequently, students engaged in a sequence of project-based learning activities structured according to the stages of PjBL, including project orientation, planning, implementation, presentation, and reflection. These activities were designed to promote authentic communication, collaboration, and contextual use of Arabic while addressing psychological factors such as motivation, anxiety reduction, and self-confidence. At the end of the intervention, a posttest and the psycho-sociolinguistic questionnaire were administered to measure changes in communicative competence and affective-social dimensions of learning (Hasibuan et al., 2022).

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, thematic analysis, and conclusion drawing. Qualitative data obtained from classroom observations were analyzed thematically to identify patterns of psychological engagement, social interaction, and communicative behavior. Quantitative data from pretest and posttest scores were analyzed descriptively to examine changes in students' communicative competence. Methodological triangulation was applied by comparing findings from tests, questionnaires, and observations to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the results (Fadli, 2021).

Research Validity

Research validity was ensured through both conceptual and methodological triangulation. In the conceptual phase, cross-analysis of multiple theoretical perspectives strengthened the coherence of the proposed model. In the empirical phase, the use of multiple data sources and instruments allowed verification of consistency across findings. Accordingly, this study is positioned as a model development study with empirical classroom validation rather than a full-scale experimental investigation, emphasizing feasibility, contextual relevance, and preliminary effectiveness (Bado, 2021).

RESULT | نتائج

Development of a Psycho-Sociolinguistic-Based Project-Based Learning Model in Arabic Language Learning The results of this study indicate that the development of a psycho-sociolinguistic-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model provides a systematic framework for integrating linguistic, psychological, and social dimensions in Arabic language learning. The developed model consists of six instructional stages: determining the driving question, project planning, schedule creation, project exploration and production, project presentation, and language and emotional reflection. In the context of Arabic language learning, the model enables students to engage in authentic communicative activities that integrate the four language skills, listening (*istimā'*), speaking (*kalām*), reading (*qirā'ah*), and writing (*kitābah*), within meaningful project-based tasks. The model places emphasis not only on linguistic performance but also on students' emotional engagement, confidence, and social interaction throughout the learning process. The design of the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model includes clear objectives, theoretical grounding, structured learning stages, defined teacher roles, authentic assessment strategies, and expected impacts on students' communicative competence. The main components of the model are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Design of a Psycho-Sociolinguistic-Based PjBL Model in Arabic Language Learning

Component	Description
Model Objectives	To improve Arabic language skills through projects that stimulate social interaction and positive psychological and emotional conditions among students.
Theoretical Basis	Integration of psychosocial linguistics theory (Krashen, Vygotsky, Halliday) with the PjBL stages of theory from The George Lucas Educational Foundation and Doppelt.
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Determine the Driving Question: A contextual, meaningful question that challenges students' thinking. (2) Formulate the Project Problem: Students formulate the problem/project to be solved based on the driving question. (3) Collaborative Planning: Develop a project schedule, division of roles, and time allocation. (4) Project Exploration and Production: Students explore the material and produce authentic projects (e.g., videos, texts, interviews, vlogs, etc.). (5) Project Presentation: Students present their project results in front of the class or a relevant audience. (6) Language and Emotion Reflection: Individual and group reflection on language experience (linguistics), psychological and social conditions during the project.
Language Activities/Student Activities	Students engage in various activities such as conversation simulations, vlog video production, interviews with Arab figures, and Arab cultural projects that integrate four language skills, namely listening skills (<i>maharah istima'</i>), speaking skills (<i>maharah kalam</i>), reading skills (<i>maharah qira'ah</i>), and writing skills (<i>maharah kitabah</i>).
Teacher Role	Psychosocial facilitator, student project mentor and monitor, provider of reflective feedback.
Assessment	Authentic project-based assessment, including group participation, self-reflection, and performative assessment with rubrics. Aspects assessed include cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and linguistic dimensions.
Expected Impact	The development of students' communicative competence through a more contextual and meaningful learning process.

The developed model positions teachers as facilitators and project mentors, while students are engaged as active participants in collaborative learning activities. Assessment is conducted through project performance, participation, self-reflection, and communicative competence evaluation.

Implementation Results of the Psycho-Sociolinguistic-Based PjBL Model The empirical implementation of the model was conducted through the “Shopping Vlog in Arabic” project involving 32 eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Ma'arif Rakit Banjarnegara. The implementation was carried out over three instructional meetings using a one-group pretest–posttest design. Classroom observation results indicate a consistent increase in students’ participation in discussions, use of Arabic during interaction, peer cooperation, and expression of positive emotions across the three meetings. These findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Social Interaction Observation During Learning

Observed Aspects	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Trend
Participation in Discussion	68%	84%	91%	Increasing
Use of Arabic Language	54%	71%	86%	Increasing
Peer Cooperation	62%	79%	88%	Increasing
Expression of Positive Emotions	59%	83%	90%	Increasing

The data indicate that students’ participation, language use, peer cooperation, and positive emotional expressions showed a steady upward trend from the first to the third meeting, suggesting improved engagement and interaction during the learning process.

The results of the communicative competence assessment demonstrate notable improvements across all evaluated components. As presented in Table 3, students’ scores increased in grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence following the implementation of the learning model.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Communicative Competence (N = 32)

Indicator	Pretest	Posttest	Δ	Interpretation
Grammatical Competence	67.8	82.1	+14.3	More accurate sentence structure
Sociolinguistic Competence	64.5	84.0	+19.5	More appropriate to social context
Discourse Competence	66.3	83.7	+17.4	More cohesive utterances
Strategic Competence	69.0	86.5	+17.5	Increased confidence and repair ability
Overall Mean	66.9	84.1	+17.2	Substantial improvement

Overall, the mean score of students’ communicative competence increased by 25.7%, with the largest gains observed in sociolinguistic and strategic competence components. These findings indicate meaningful practical improvement in students’ communicative performance following the implementation of the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model.

In addition to linguistic outcomes, changes in students’ affective and social conditions were examined using a psycho-sociolinguistic questionnaire. As shown in Table 4, learning motivation, self-confidence, and social interaction scores increased, while language anxiety scores decreased following the learning activities.

Table 4. Results of the Psycho-Sociolinguistic Questionnaire

Variables	Pretest	Posttest	Δ	Description
Learning Motivation	3.41	4.36	+0.95	Marked increase
Self-Confidence	3.02	4.18	+1.16	Greater willingness to speak
Social Interaction	3.24	4.28	+1.04	Improved collaboration

Language Anxiety	3.21	2.14	-1.07	Noticeable reduction
Overall Mean	3.22	3.99	+0.77	Positive affective development

These descriptive results suggest that the implementation of the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model was associated with positive changes in students' affective and social dimensions of Arabic language learning.

DISCUSSION | مناقشة

The findings of this study indicate that the psycho-sociolinguistic-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model contributes meaningfully to the development of students' communicative competence in Arabic language learning (Fahrezi & Yusuf, 2023). The observed improvements across grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic components suggest that communicative competence develops more effectively when language instruction integrates form, meaning, and use in authentic contexts rather than emphasizing isolated grammatical mastery (Muhammad, M., & Nurdyansyah, 2015).

The improvement in grammatical and discourse competence reflects the effectiveness of project-based tasks in encouraging learners to organize ideas, construct cohesive utterances, and apply language structures meaningfully (Novita Maula, 2022). Through project activities, students were required to plan, revise, and present language output, which supports the view that sustained engagement in meaningful tasks facilitates deeper linguistic processing and functional language development (Ali Mufti, 2022).

The most prominent gains observed in sociolinguistic and strategic competence highlight the importance of contextualized and interaction-based learning. When students participated in simulated real-life communication, they became more sensitive to language appropriateness, interaction norms, and communication strategies (Rini & Fauziati, 2021). This finding aligns with Halliday's perspective that language functions as a social semiotic system, where meaning is constructed through social interaction and functional use rather than through formal rules alone (Laely, N. H., & Kusnawati, 2023; Maruanaya, 2023). Similar sociolinguistic challenges and pedagogical opportunities have also been identified in Arabic language classrooms, where learners' communicative competence is shaped by their ability to adapt language use to social and cultural contexts (Harahap et al., 2025).

From a psychological perspective, the increase in students' motivation and self-confidence, alongside the reduction of language anxiety, indicates that the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model successfully created a supportive learning environment. Such conditions are consistent with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which emphasizes that low anxiety and high motivation enable learners to process language input more effectively and participate more actively in communication (Warseto et al., 2019). This finding is in line with studies in madrasah-based Arabic learning that emphasize the role of emotional readiness and affective engagement in improving students' learning outcomes (Alkamala et al., 2025).

Social interaction played a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences during the project implementation (Indrawati et al., 2024). Collaborative work encouraged peer negotiation, mutual scaffolding, and shared responsibility, allowing students to learn within their Zone of Proximal Development. This finding reinforces Vygotsky's social constructivist view that learning, including language acquisition, is fundamentally a socially mediated process facilitated through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Comparable interaction-based practices in Arabic language instruction have been shown to enhance students' speaking competence

through sustained communicative engagement and collaborative learning activities (Oktari et al., 2025).

The integration of linguistic, affective, and social dimensions within the learning model helps explain why improvements were observed not only in language accuracy but also in communicative confidence and interaction quality. By addressing students' emotional readiness and social engagement alongside linguistic practice, the model supports a more holistic form of communicative competence development, as emphasized in psycho-sociolinguistic approaches to language learning (Nasution et al., 2024). This holistic orientation reflects a growing trend in Arabic language pedagogy that prioritizes humanistic and learner-centered approaches within madrasah contexts (Alkamala et al., 2025).

Beyond the Indonesian context, the findings of this study resonate with research on Project-Based Learning in Arabic and foreign language education in other regions, particularly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Studies conducted in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Malaysia report that PjBL-oriented instruction enhances learners' sociopragmatic awareness, interactional competence, and cultural sensitivity by embedding language use within authentic communicative projects (Masitoh & Aziz, 2025). Similar to the present study, these international findings indicate that PjBL is especially effective in developing sociolinguistic and strategic competence, which are often underrepresented in form-focused language instruction (Beckett, & Slater, 2006).

Furthermore, the emphasis on collaborative projects, real-world communication, and reflective learning aligns with global trends in language education that promote project-based, experiential, and culturally responsive pedagogy. In contemporary language teaching, PjBL is increasingly viewed as a means to foster not only linguistic proficiency but also intercultural competence, empathy, and learner agency competencies that are essential in multilingual and multicultural societies (Stoller, 2006). The psycho-sociolinguistic orientation of the developed model strengthens this global pedagogical direction by explicitly addressing emotional engagement and social interaction as core components of language learning (Luhulima, 2024).

In terms of international standards, the improvements observed in sociolinguistic and strategic competence correspond closely with the communicative descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (Musthofa, 2022). Both frameworks emphasize the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts, manage communication breakdowns, and engage in meaningful interaction as key indicators of communicative proficiency. The findings suggest that the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model supports the development of these competencies, particularly at the basic to intermediate proficiency levels (Rehner & Lasan, 2023).

At the national level, the results of this study are relevant to the implementation of Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka, which prioritizes project-based learning, learner autonomy, collaboration, and the development of 21st-century skills such as communication, creativity, and critical thinking. By integrating language learning with authentic projects and socio-emotional development, the proposed model aligns with national policy directions related to literacy, character education, and competence-based instruction in madrasah settings (Alkeva, 2025).

Compared to conventional implementations of Project-Based Learning that primarily emphasize final products, the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model developed in this study places greater emphasis on the learning process. Learning success is evaluated through students'

participation, communicative behavior, emotional engagement, and collaborative dynamics, which distinguishes this model from output-oriented approaches commonly applied in Arabic language learning (Muhammad, M., & Nurdyansyah, 2015; Nasution et al., 2024)

Overall, the integration of psycho-sociolinguistic principles into Project-Based Learning provides a comprehensive and humanistic framework for Arabic language education. By simultaneously addressing linguistic competence, psychological readiness, and social interaction, the developed model demonstrates strong potential to foster meaningful and contextual Arabic language learning, particularly within madrasah-based educational settings.

CONCLUSSION | خاتمة

This study confirms that the psycho-sociolinguistic-based Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model effectively achieves its primary objective of enhancing Arabic language learning through the integration of linguistic competence, psychological readiness, and social interaction. The findings demonstrate that students' communicative competence develops more optimally when learning is situated in authentic, collaborative projects that encourage meaningful language use while simultaneously fostering motivation, confidence, and emotional engagement. This result reinforces the view that Arabic language learning is not merely a cognitive process but a holistic experience involving affective and social dimensions.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research advances existing Project-Based Learning frameworks by embedding psycho-sociolinguistic principles into each instructional stage. By synthesizing insights from affective language theory, social constructivism, and functional linguistics, the proposed model extends conventional PjBL approaches that tend to emphasize final products. This study represents the first empirically validated instructional model that explicitly integrates psycho-sociolinguistic perspectives into Project-Based Learning for Arabic language education at the madrasah tsanawiyah (MTs) level in Indonesia, thereby offering an original contribution to the field of Arabic language pedagogy.

In practical terms, the psycho-sociolinguistic-based PjBL model offers a feasible and adaptable instructional strategy for Arabic language teaching in madrasah contexts. The implementation of the "Shopping Vlog in Arabic" project illustrates how real-life communicative tasks can be aligned with curricular objectives while promoting active participation, collaborative learning, and authentic assessment. At the policy and institutional level, this model has the potential to be adopted and scaled by educational stakeholders such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) and LP Ma'arif NU as a reference model for communicative Arabic instruction, particularly within programs that emphasize project-based learning, character education, and the development of 21st-century competencies in madrasah.

Nevertheless, this study is limited by its one-group pretest–posttest design and the absence of a control group. Future research is therefore recommended to employ more rigorous experimental designs and to explore the application of this model across different educational levels, learning environments, and project types. Further investigations may also integrate digital or blended learning modalities to expand the model's applicability. Despite these limitations, the findings provide a strong empirical and conceptual foundation for the continued development of contextual, communicative, and humanistic approaches to Arabic language learning, particularly in madrasah-based educational settings.

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