

Exploring Teachers' Didactic Multilingual Competence In Arabic Language Teaching As Foreign Language

Yayan Nurbayan*¹, Anwar Sanusi², Zawawi bin Ismail³, Nalahuddin Saleh⁴

^{1,4}Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

²Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang & Universitas Jambi
Indonesia, ³Universiti Malaya, Malaysia

yayannurbayan@upi.edu*¹, anwarsanusi@unja.ac.id², zawawiismail@um.edu.my³,
nalahuddinsaleh@upi.edu

Abstract

Teachers' didactic multilingual competence in Arabic teaching can also help students develop their speaking skills. They can get used to correct pronunciation and intonation through this multilingual approach, which can be applied in everyday communication. This study aimed to explore teachers' didactic multilingual competence in teaching Arabic in the classroom. The approach in this study uses a mixed method. The design used in this research is the exploratory sequential design. The number of participants in the study was 30 Arabic teachers who taught at Madrasah Aliyah in the Greater Bandung area. The results of this study indicate that out of 30 Arabic teachers, (1) the teacher always identifies students' difficulties in speaking Arabic and other foreign languages by 50%, (2) The teacher never opens and presents learning material using Arabic and other foreign languages is still in the category low as much as 50%, (3) the teacher never explains the differences and similarities of Arabic with other foreign languages in conveying material (contrastive) as much as 37%, and (4) the teacher always corrects students' grammatical and phonological errors in expressing Arabic or foreign language sentences as much as 60%. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for stakeholders in the school environment in improving the didactic multilingual competence of Arabic teachers.

Keywords: 21st Century; Communication; Didactic Multilingual Competence; Professional Teacher; Teaching Arabic

INTRODUCTION

Entering 21st-century education, teachers must make innovative changes in teaching to prepare students who have four core skills: critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity (4C) and possess information, communication, and technology (ICT) skills (Haryana et al., 2021; Stanley, 2021; Susetyarini et al., 2022). Regarding the skills that must be possessed in the 21st century, communication skills must be mastered when someone wants to compete with the global community. Changes globally require humans to master verbal linguistics, especially the ability to speak and communicate in foreign languages (Hermawan et al., 2022).

Skills in a foreign language are critical because they are one of the competencies that students must possess today (Aziza & Muliansyah, 2020; Sudarmo, 2021). In realizing students with foreign language skills, the teacher should first master didactic multilingual competence. Didactic multilingualism is a relatively new concept in language teaching (Makhkamova & Amirkulof, 2020; Tarusha & Haxhiymeri, 2014). Didactic multilingual competence relates to teacher competence in using two or more

languages to deliver teaching material (Idris et al., 2020; Madiba, 2013; Repplinger & Budke, 2022; Silva, 2020; Weber, 2012). Didactic multilingual competence illustrates teacher professional competence (Sanusi et al., 2020). Thus, the success of achieving learning objectives, especially in student communication skills, is highly dependent on the teacher's didactic multilingual competence.

Bredthauer Engfer (2016) argues that multilingual teaching in schools, especially in European countries, is starting to develop, including in Germany and Austria. This aims to develop students' communication skills and improve cognitive, personal, and socio-cultural abilities (Crespo et al., 2021; Kim, 2020).

In didactic multilingualism, languages are not taught separately but are taught and learned interdependently on the same occasion to generate relationships between languages (Davila, 2020; Gorter, 2015). Therefore, teachers must get used to using Arabic or other foreign languages in introductory learning, delivering material, and communicating at school. Therefore, teaching multilingualism in schools is urgently needed to improve students' cognitive abilities and enhance their personal and socio-cultural abilities.

However, the results of research conducted by Bin Tahir (2020) show that the problem in teaching Arabic today is that teachers only focus on using one target language (Arabic) and do not actively develop links between the target language and other foreign languages. In line with the results of Sanusi's research (2022), there are still Arabic teachers who have not mastered the material to be taught, so in their teaching process, they tend to rely on Indonesian in teaching it, including in informal interactions in class.

The minimal use of Arabic causes this problem, limited understanding of Arabic variations and low proficiency in foreign languages (Rachman, 2021). As a result, students express the target language with limited expression because they do not have knowledge and experience in expressing the diversity of foreign languages. Therefore, teaching multilingualism in schools is urgently needed to improve students' cognitive abilities and enhance their personal and socio-cultural abilities.

Teaching Arabic as a foreign language currently demands the professional competence of teachers to deliver teaching materials using Arabic and other foreign languages exclusively. This requires a teacher's professional competence in teaching. Izzan (2011) emphasized that professional teachers must be able to master teaching material and present it appropriately, as well as communication skills so that students can easily understand educational material. Thus, as a professional Arabic teacher, he should be able to master foreign language skills in teaching to achieve the predetermined goals of learning Arabic.

Research related to didactic multilingual competence in teaching Arabic as a foreign language in schools has yet to be found. Given the importance of teacher-didactic multilingual competence as part of the professional competence that Arabic teachers must possess, this research focuses on exploring teacher-didactic multilingual competence in teaching Arabic as a foreign language in schools.

METHOD

The approach used in this study is a mixed method. The design used in this research is the exploratory sequential design. The following is the exploratory sequential design.



Figure 1. Exploratory sequential design adapted from Creswell & Plano (2011)

In this study, qualitative data was used to answer the formulation of the problem, namely how the didactic multilingual competence of teachers in teaching Arabic in class. The quantitative data in this study is to answer the formulation of the problem: What is the percentage of teacher didactic multilingual competence in teaching Arabic in class?

The data collection instrument for this study was didactic multilingual competence, which was adapted from the theory put forward by Koonj et al. (2020) and Margana & Sukarno (2011). The didactic multilingual indicators among them are listed in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Didactic multilingual indicators

Item	Multilingual Didactic Competence
1	The teacher identifies the difficulties experienced by students in expressing something using a foreign language
2	The teacher speaks exclusively Arabic or other foreign languages when opening lessons and presenting teaching materials
3	The teacher explains the differences and similarities between Arabic and other languages in delivering material
4	The teacher corrects grammatical and phonological errors made by students in expressing sentences in Arabic or other foreign languages

The study's participants were 30 Arabic teachers who taught at Madrasah Aliyah in the Greater Bandung area. Researchers chose Madrasah Aliyah in Bandung using purposive sampling, namely determining the research sample depending on specific considerations and criteria by the research objectives. The reason for choosing a school in the Greater Bandung area is that Arabic teachers have academic qualifications in their subjects. (See Education National Standard No. 19 of 2005).

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through structured and unstructured interviews, observation, and questionnaires. Structured and unstructured interviews were used to obtain detailed information about how the teacher teaches multilingualism. Observations are used with careful and accurate observations about the Arabic teacher's didactic multilingual competence in teaching Arabic. Regarding the questionnaire, the researcher distributed it to the Arabic teacher. In addition, questionnaires were also distributed to two school principals in addition to the head's supervision of Arabic teachers. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers related to indicators of didactic multilingual competence. The questionnaire distributed to them had four scale levels in their assessment. Scale 1 = Strongly Not Suitable (SNS), scale 2 = Not Suitable (NS), scale 3 = Suitable (S), and scale 4 = Strongly Suitable (SS).

Researchers analyzed the quantitative data obtained by using a descriptive questionnaire. The Miles & Huberman (2005) model analyzed the qualitative data. First, researchers collect data based on the distribution of respondents. Second, researchers classify data based on predetermined research problems. In the third stage, the researcher

presents the data according to the research problem that has been determined and then draws the findings. Based on these findings, the research analysis focused on didactic multilingual competence indicators for Arabic teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Didactic Multilingual Competence Of Arabic Teachers

In exploring the didactic multilingual competence of Arabic teachers, the researcher adapted several indicators of didactic multilingual competence from several previous researchers consisting of 1) the teacher identified students' difficulties in speaking Arabic and other foreign languages, 2) The teacher spoke Arabic and other foreign languages intensively when opening the lesson and presenting teaching materials, 3) The teacher explains the differences and similarities between Arabic and other languages in conveying material (contrastive), 4) The teacher corrects students' grammatical and phonological errors in expressing sentences in Arabic or other foreign languages. Based on the questionnaire data distributed to 30 Arabic teachers regarding didactic multilingual competency indicators, it was found that the percentages are cascaded in table 3 as follows.

Table 3. Percentage Of Didactic Multilingual Competence Indicators For Arabic Teachers

Item	Multilingual Didactic Competence Indicators	Percentage			
		SNS	NS	S	SS
1	The teacher identifies the difficulties experienced by students in speaking Arabic and other foreign languages	4	15	11	13%
2	The teacher speaks intensively in Arabic and other foreign languages when opening and presenting learning material	15	11	4	50%
3	The teacher explains the differences and similarities between Arabic and other foreign languages in delivering material (contrastive)	11	10	9	37%
4	The teacher corrects students' grammatical and phonological errors in expressing sentences in Arabic or other foreign languages	19	11	63%	37%

The first indicator of teacher didactic multilingual competence, as illustrated in Table 3, has the highest category, namely 15 suitable people, with a percentage of 50%. In comparison, the lowest category is unsuitable, with four people with a percentage of 13%. This shows that many Arabic teachers have the awareness and ability to identify students' difficulties in expressing something using Arabic and other foreign languages. Moreover, learning Arabic and other foreign languages has been taught formally from elementary school to university (Mustofa et al., 2021; Salam et al., 2022). This provides opportunities for students to develop foreign language skills, especially speaking skills in Arabic.

However, teaching Arabic still needs to be solved in the process, especially those related to students' difficulties in speaking Arabic or other foreign languages. Therefore, the teacher's role in identifying students' ability to speak Arabic or other foreign languages is vital to creating effective learning and improving teaching quality in line with the results of interviews with Arabic teachers at Madrasah Aliyah regarding how they identify students' difficulties in speaking Arabic or other foreign languages.

Teacher 3

One way I identify these difficulties is to do an initial evaluation at the beginning of the semester. I give diagnostic tests or conduct short conversations using Arabic and English with students to see the extent of their understanding and ability to use these languages. However, students' difficulties in speaking Arabic are generally influenced by complex grammatical structures in Arabic. Grammar and sentence structure differences between Arabic and their mother tongues are often a significant initial barrier.

Teacher 7

I always pay close attention to how students speak, write, and understand teaching materials in Arabic. I also encourage students to participate in class discussions and practice Arabic speaking. I can detect what is confusing or difficult for them through these interactions. Many students still need to improve in mastering Arabic vocabulary. This is because Arabic has many words with the same root but have a variety of meanings based on changes in endings or prefixes. This can confuse students as they try to understand the meaning of the words.

Teacher 13

I always give assignments to students, such as making conversations using Arabic and English about daily activities to be practiced in class. Through the tasks they create, I see patterns of common mistakes that might occur. In addition, I often use listening and reading comprehension exercises of varying degrees of difficulty. The exercise results provide an overview of the student's vocabulary and language structure mastery. However, they often feel uncomfortable or need more confidence in conversing in Arabic or English. This can be caused by limitations in practicing speaking and hearing the language outside the classroom environment. Based on the results of the interviews, the researchers found that the way teachers identified students' abilities in using Arabic or other foreign languages varied widely. In practice, they identify the difficulties experienced by students in speaking Arabic or other foreign languages by conducting an initial evaluation at the beginning of the semester through a diagnostic test or conducting short conversations using Arabic and English with students. The results of research by Sanusi et al. (2022) regarding the praxeological approach in teaching Arabic emphasized that the teacher's role in teaching must begin with diagnosing the difficulties experienced by students so that the teacher can determine the appropriate action in solving these learning problems.

The teacher also encourages students to actively participate in class discussions and practice speaking Arabic or other foreign languages. They often give assignments to students to make conversations using Arabic and English about daily activities to be practiced in class. It aims to see the patterns of common mistakes that may occur in simple communication using Arabic or English. The results of Hidayat's research (2021) show that phonological and grammatical errors are common mistakes students often experience in communicating in foreign languages.

Furthermore, the difficulties experienced by students in speaking Arabic and other foreign languages are caused by 1) differences in grammar and sentence structure between Arabic, especially with their mother tongue, 2) lack of mastery of Arabic vocabulary, and 3) students often feel awkward or lack confidence in using Arabic or English, because of their limitations in practicing speaking and hearing these languages

outside the classroom environment. In line with the research results of Pauseh et al. (2020) and Abadi & Tika (2021) that the difficulties experienced by students in speaking Arabic are caused by internal and external factors. Internal factors that cause difficulties in speaking Arabic and English are 1) the previous educational background of the students did not come from madrasas or Islamic boarding schools, 2) difficulties in reading Arabic sentences, 3) lack of vocabulary mastery, and 4) lack of student interest. While the external factors that cause students' difficulties in speaking Arabic cannot be separated from factors in the family environment, school environment, and community environment.

Thus, indicators of didactic multilingual competence, namely the teacher's ability to identify students' difficulties in speaking Arabic and other foreign languages, are useful in knowing and understanding students' language abilities. Even through this competence, the teacher can categorize in detail the mistakes that students often experience in using Arabic and other foreign languages.

The Teacher Speaks Intensively In Arabic And Other Foreign Languages When Opening And Presenting Learning Material

The second indicator of teacher didactic multilingual competence, as shown in Table 3, shows that the highest category is not suitable for as many as 15 people, with a percentage of 50%. In comparison, the lowest category is suitable for as many as four people, with a percentage of 13%. The data states that only a few Arabic teachers have the awareness and ability to open and present learning materials using Arabic and other foreign languages. Even today, in teaching Arabic, teachers' ability to speak Arabic and other foreign languages is necessary.

Mastery of international language skills, especially Arabic and English, is essential for teachers in 21st-century teaching. Skilled in foreign languages can be called global communication skills (global communication skills). Sauri et al. (2021) suggest that one of the competencies that must be achieved through education is having competence in global communication, being able to use language that the world community can understand, both verbal and written communication, both in the aspects of reading and writing, so that it can be an essential part in an industrial, service or other company.

The teacher's ability to speak foreign languages shows his professionalism as an educator (Mufidah & Humam, 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2023). In addition, teachers who master foreign languages demonstrate the ability to overcome obstacles and face challenges in teaching. It also describes their professional maturity. The teacher's ability to speak Arabic or other foreign languages in starting teaching and presenting material can provide more authentic teaching.

However, based on the observations, the researchers found that many Arabic teachers used Indonesian as the primary language in initiating and presenting learning materials and needed to improve in using Arabic, let alone English. The results of interviews with Arabic teachers confirm this.

Teacher 1

I often use Indonesian in teaching Arabic because I am not confident enough in my Arabic or English skills to teach them effectively. Using such language may result in errors or confusion, affecting students' understanding.

Teacher 6

I am more comfortable using Indonesian in delivering material. However, I sometimes start teaching by using Arabic, asking students how they are doing and assignments. Then, it is better to use Indonesian to deliver material, especially nahwu, because many students have not gained a background or have studied Arabic before.

Teacher 22

Sometimes, time pressure in teaching makes me rely on Indonesian, which is more quickly understood by students and can save time. Learning materials or references in Arabic or English were inadequate, so I chose materials and references that used Indonesian. The interviews with the teachers showed that the minimal use of Arabic and other foreign languages in initiating and presenting material was partly due to an attitude of not being confident enough in their Arabic or English skills. Instead of saving time in teaching, the teacher added that many students had no background in studying Arabic before. Indirectly, using Arabic and other foreign languages in initiating and presenting material will allow students to learn from accents, intonations, various expressions in foreign languages, and the use of the language actually used by native speakers. In line with the results of Rachman et al. (2020) in teaching foreign languages, getting used to using Arabic is very important because it is an effort to create an Arabic environment. Rahmawati et al. (2022) emphasized that the environment in Arabic or other foreign languages, such as English, can foster creativity and student activities that integrate theory and practice in a relaxed and fun informal atmosphere. Thus, the teacher's ability to use Arabic and other foreign languages in teaching Arabic provides a balance in achieving effective Arabic learning outcomes.

The Teacher Explains The Differences And Similarities Between Arabic And Other Foreign Languages In Delivering Material (Contrastive)

Based on the questionnaire results in Table 3, the highest category in the third indicator of didactic multilingual competence is 11 unsuitable people, with a percentage of 37%. In comparison, the lowest category is suitable for as many as nine people, with a percentage of 30%. This data shows that only a few teachers always explain the differences and similarities between Arabic and other foreign languages in conveying material (contrastive).

Based on the observations, the researcher found that in practice, one of the teachers explained the differences between Arabic and English in material related to Arabic grammar, such as in sentences (students go to the park). In Arabic, the sentence can be translated as "يذهب التلميذ إلى الحديقة" or "التلميذ يذهب إلى الحديقة" by prioritizing the fi'il (verb) at the beginning of the sentence and placing it after the fā'il (subject). In English, the sentence is translated into "students go to the park" by prioritizing the subject at the beginning. Thus, in Arabic, the verb can be placed in front of or behind the subject, whereas in English, the verb is always placed behind the subject.

Furthermore, the teacher also explains the similarities between Arabic and English in conversation material, such as explaining the idiom phrase "أبو" "الضيف" with the type of word order of nouns, which has the meaning of the idiom benefactor. In English idioms, the word philanthropist can be translated as Good Samaritan. The similarities between these two idioms end in a noun, from the Arabic idiom called isim (أبو). In

contrast, in English, it is included in the type of idiom that ends with a noun, namely Samaritan, which both have generous meanings. However, the teacher also explains the differences in these idioms; in Arabic, the idiom phrase begins with a noun (أبو), but in English idioms, it begins with an adjective, namely sound, and the type of idiom is a combination of adjectives and nouns.

The contrastive approach to teaching Arabic, as has been done by several Madrasah Aliyah teachers in the Greater Bandung area, is inseparable from the obstacles they face. Making these two sentences and vice versa will be challenging for students who have not yet mastered Arabic. Therefore, the teacher should always emphasize the differences and similarities between Arabic and other foreign languages in delivering material and train them intensively in every meeting. , according to Kusumastuti (2017), the benefits of contrastive-based language teaching can help overcome students' difficulties in learning foreign languages. Proof of difficulty will be obtained through regular learning activities in class.

Thus, the teacher's ability to do contrastive teaching in Arabic shows that he has good didactic multilingual competence. Before teaching students, they are required to master a foreign language first, which is taught in other foreign languages.

The Teacher Corrects Students' Grammatical And Phonological Errors In Expressing Sentences In Arabic Or Other Foreign Languages

The fourth indicator of teacher didactic multilingual competence, illustrated in Table 3, has the highest category, namely 19 suitable people, with a percentage of 63%. In contrast, the lowest category, namely strongly suitable, is 11 people, with a percentage of 37%. This shows that many Arabic teachers can correct students' grammatical and phonological errors when expressing sentences in Arabic or other languages. In line with that, Saleh (2020) emphasized that grammatical errors are the use of language that does not follow different from standard rules both orally and in writing. Meanwhile, according to Markhamah (2010), phonological errors are errors related to the pronunciation and writing of language sounds.

In this regard, based on the results of observations on teaching Arabic conversation and adding English conversation, the researcher found that in terms of grammatical errors, the teacher always corrected students' mistakes in speaking Arabic or other foreign languages in muhadatsah material, such as errors in the use of the amil nawasikh function. The letter **إِنَّ** in the Arabic sentence **إِنَّ الْمُعَلِّمَ حَاضِرٌ** which means "truly, the teacher is present". Most students pronounce the word **حَاضِرٌ** with the word **حَاضِرًا**, even though the letter **إِنَّ** functions to assign nouns (المعلم) and recite khabar (حاضر). In addition, in simple English conversation material, one of the teachers justified a student's mispronunciation of the sentence "the teacher is not here" in English "teacher is not here." Most students say "teacher not here." The sentence "teacher not here" is incorrect because there is an omission of "is" in the sentence so that the sentence becomes ungrammatical. This type of error is an omission error.

Then, in the phonological aspect, the teacher corrected students' mistakes in pronouncing hijaiyah letters, including the hijaiyah letters **ف /f/** in the word **فائدة**, which means "benefit." Most students, who are mainly from the Sundanese tribe, pronounce the word **ف /F/** with the pronunciation of the letter P in the alphabet. In line with the

research results of Ali et al. (2020) Sundanese speakers have letter attenuation where if they pronounce the letter /f/, it becomes P, and /Z/ becomes J.

In addition, in pronouncing the letter r in the word "car," students pronounce the sound /r/ in the word 'car' vibrantly or trill because in Indonesian, the sound /r/ is pronounced alveolar trill. The cause of the error in learning the conversational material is a factor in intralingual transfer. This factor refers to errors due to the language system being learned. Brown (2000) states that this factor is the main factor of errors made by students. The language teacher in Arabic repeatedly corrects grammatical and phonological errors in student conversations.

Thus, efforts to correct students' grammatical and phonological errors in conversation material conducted by Arabic teachers demonstrate their ability to understand Arabic and English grammar as well as Arabic and English phonology.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the didactic multilingual competence of madrasah aliyah teachers in teaching Arabic in class. Based on the four indicators of teacher didactic multilingual competency, it was found that out of 30 Arabic teachers, several teachers identified students' difficulties in speaking Arabic and other foreign languages and corrected students' grammatical and phonological errors in expressing Arabic or foreign language sentences. However, the matter of opening and presenting learning materials using Arabic and other foreign languages and explaining the differences and similarities between Arabic and other foreign languages in conveying (contrastive) material is still in the low category. Therefore, curative efforts are needed to increase curative efforts to improve the ability of teachers to speak Arabic intensively, including training in speaking Arabic and other foreign languages, seminars, and so on. Then, this study focused on teacher-didactic multilingual competence in teaching Arabic in the classroom, so further research is needed on teacher-didactic multilingual competence in teaching Arabic outside the classroom and concrete efforts to improve teacher-didactic multilingual competence.

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