

**ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING
THROUGH MUSICALIZATION, DRAMA, AND SHOLAWAT
IN FOSTERING RELIGIOUS MUSLIM INTELLECTUALS
AT UIN MALIKI MALANG AND UII DALWA PASURUAN**

RESEARCH REPORT



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Amidst the euphoria of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, which drives the globalization of culture, knowledge, and technology, there emerges hedonistic behavior, anarchism, and moral degradation. The ongoing transformation of global ethics toward greater permissiveness, the misuse of narcotics, and increasingly unethical interpersonal relations have become a serious concern for higher education in Indonesia. This background calls for a more humanistic format of education to build the character of an excellent generation, free from the crises of demoralization and dehumanization that are currently taking place. Education, in its pragmatic orientation, has not yet been able to optimally function as both the transfer of knowledge and the transfer of values.¹

Lecturers and students, as the agents of change and control within the framework of the *Tri Dharma* of higher education, are expected to disseminate noble values and norms. In particular, lecturers are demanded to foster processes of enculturation among students so that they may become citizens of civility, who in turn serve as pillars for the establishment of a civil society and the formation of a more advanced and cultured nation.² Character formation, as an essential part of the educational process, has not been adequately and systematically prepared by many educators.³

¹ R. A. Beare, H., & Slaughter, *Education for the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 1993).

² H. Kuswana, "The Effect of Managerial Capabilities of Principal Toward School Quality in Vocational High School," *Jurnal Kepemimpinan Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2020): 424–436.

³ J. Scheerens, "What Is Effective Schooling? A Review of Current Thought and Practice," *International Baccalaureate Organization*, last modified 2013, <http://www.ibo.org/research/resources/documents/WhatIsEffectiveSchoolingFINAL.pdf>.

The growing call to revive religious-based education—from early education through higher education—should receive serious attention.⁴ University education must be able to awaken the values of life and clarify their implications for the quality of society. Lezotte states that universities have two primary purposes: to facilitate students in becoming both intelligent and virtuous individuals.⁵

Scholars who have expressed concern over the deteriorating condition of Indonesian society have sought to reform educational systems and curricula by offering religious education.⁶ Such religious education is expected to serve as a solution to the current decline of the Indonesian nation.⁷

This research assumes that Arabic language education through musicalization, drama, and *shalawat* can realize a model of superior education for both lecturers and students within Islamic higher education institutions (*PTKIN*) in Indonesia generally, and at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan in particular. Pedagogically, this indicates that governance should be developed by applying the grand theory put forward by McMullen (1998), which emphasizes that “the essence is to transform literary art into a medium of entertainment capable of strengthening education.”⁸

The researcher selected UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan as the subjects of this study because both universities have *ma'had* (Islamic residential colleges) that serve as platforms for realizing

⁴ E. Savasci, H. S., & Tomul, “The Relationship between Educational Resources of School and Academic Achievement,” *International Education Studies* 6, no. 4 (2013): 114–123, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v6n4p114>

⁵ L. Lezotte, *Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation* (Okemos: MI: Effective Schools Products, Ltd., 1991).

⁶ B. Z. Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations* (San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

⁷ Margaret A. Davis, Gary A. & Thomas, *Effective Schools and Effective Teachers* (Massachusetts: Ally and Bacon, 1989).

⁸ S.P. Ferris, The Effect of SEC-Ordered Suspension on Returns, Volatility, and Trading Volume, *Financial Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1992, h. 1-34.

all educational programs in an integral and systematic manner, aligned and synergistic with their respective visions and missions. Students are educated for a full 24 hours in these *ma'had*, enabling the formation of religious Muslim intellectuals.

Based on the aforementioned background, the researcher designed this study entitled: “Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and Sholawat in Fostering Religious Muslim Intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan.” It is expected that this research will contribute scientifically to the development of knowledge and theoretical perspectives by specifically examining Arabic language education through musicalization, drama, and *shalawat* within university settings—both for the broader public and particularly for PTKIN communities in Indonesia.

B. Problem Formulation

Based on the research background described above, the following problem formulations can be identified:

1. What are the steps involved in implementing Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan?
2. What strategies are employed in Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan?
3. What are the outcomes of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the above explanation, the objectives of this study are to describe, analyze, and interpret the following:

1. To describe the steps of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan.
2. To identify the strategies of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan.
3. To examine the outcomes of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan.

D. Literature Review / Previous Studies

1. **Muhammad Walidin, Bety, Susi Herti Afriani, Dolla Sobari, Merry Choironi.** *Research Journal. Training in Writing Scripts and Performing Arabic Drama: The Legend of Bujang Kurap. Bidik: Jurnal Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat*, Vol. 4, No. 2, April 2024.
Focus of the Study: This community service activity aimed to increase motivation and develop the four basic skills in Arabic learning for the students of Pondok Pesantren Ushuludin, Kalianda, South Lampung.
Method: The program employed drama as the method, combined with lecturing, mentoring, rehearsal, and concluded with performance.
Findings: The program showed that students selected as actors were highly motivated in learning Arabic skills (*kitabah, qirā'ah, kalām, and istimā*). The preparation of the script based on the legend "Bujang Kurap" was easier since it was also connected to the cultural context of the legend.

2. **Awaliyah Musgamy.** *Research Journal. Development of Arabic Language Learning Based on Musical Intelligence for Students of Institut Parahikma.* Vol. 12, No. 1, 2019.

Focus of the Study: The study developed Arabic learning based on musical intelligence by adopting popular songs as references to help students memorize Arabic learning materials.

Method: This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with a semi-Research and Development (R&D) model to identify the development of Arabic learning based on musical intelligence. The participants consisted of 25 informants, including 2 Arabic lecturers, 1 staff member, and 22 students selected purposively. Data collection involved interviews, participatory observation, documentation, and reference exploration. Data were analyzed through the three stages of Miles and Huberman's model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Findings: The use of musical intelligence in Arabic learning encouraged memorization of Arabic materials through popular songs. Opportunities included the existing use of music as a learning therapy, institutional cooperation, and student involvement in developing learning strategies. However, challenges arose from the fact that Arabic was a second foreign language after English, the generally low proficiency of students in Arabic (active or passive), and the occasional counterproductive nature of musical intelligence toward learning objectives.

3. **Fatimah Azzahra and Putri Maman Abdurrahman.** *Research Journal. The Effectiveness of the Musical Drama Method in Arabic Language Tutoring to Improve Vocabulary Mastery of Elementary School Students.* *Lisan An Nathiq*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2023.

Focus of the Study: The research sought to ensure equal opportunities for children to master Arabic. It examined the effectiveness of musical drama in tutoring to improve vocabulary mastery for elementary school students. Early Arabic education is considered essential to prepare children for the

global world. Vocabulary acquisition is the foundation of language learning and is closely related to language skills. One of the main challenges is the perception that Arabic is difficult, reducing student interest. Tutoring at home can provide a solution for children who do not learn Arabic at school. Musical drama, which combines elements of drama and music, was seen as an effective and enjoyable method to teach Arabic vocabulary to young learners.

Method: This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, focusing on problem-solving based on available data. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and practice-based tutoring sessions, involving children from grades 1–6. Learning activities included vocabulary learning through songs, movements, and Arabic cartoons.

Findings: The tutoring program was effective. After several sessions, children were able to memorize the taught vocabulary. The method increased their interest, facilitated vocabulary mastery, and developed their language skills in a fun and engaging way.

Research Positioning: Compared to the above studies, the present research focuses more specifically on describing, analyzing, and interpreting the steps, strategies, and outcomes of “**Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and Sholawat in Fostering Religious Muslim Intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan.**”

E. Contributions

1. Theoretical Contributions

- a) As a context for knowledge development. The results of this study can contribute to the advancement of scholarship by specifically examining the steps, strategies, and outcomes of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan.

- b) As a reference and supplementary material for future research related to the steps, strategies, and outcomes of Arabic learning through musicalization, drama, and *Sholawat*. This is particularly useful for researchers pursuing the same topic and theme.
- c) As a foundation for subsequent researchers in conducting studies on Arabic learning based on musicalization, drama, and *Sholawat*, particularly regarding the processes, strategies, and results.

2. Practical Contributions

- a) **For the Ministry of Religious Affairs.** The findings of this study can serve as a reference to optimize educational development programs under the Ministry that are based on musicalization, particularly the model of Arabic language learning through musicalization, drama, and *Sholawat* aimed at cultivating religious Muslim intellectuals.
- b) **For State Islamic Higher Education Institutions.** This study contributes ideas regarding the actualization of the steps, strategies, and outcomes of Arabic learning through musicalization, drama, and *Sholawat* comprehensively. It also provides recommendations for higher education institutions in considering the implementation of this educational model in Indonesia.
- c) **For the Development of Scientific Knowledge.** The findings of this study provide information about the actualization of Arabic learning through musicalization, drama, and *Sholawat*, which has been designated as a flagship program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia since 2022 under the theme “*Strengthening Good Governance.*”

F. Discussion Plan

Chapter I discusses: (a) Background, (b) Problem Formulation, (c) Research Objectives, (d) Literature Review/Previous Studies, (e) Contributions, and (f) Discussion Plan.

Chapter II discusses the Theoretical Review, including: (a) Musicalization, (b) Elements of Musicalization, (c) Forms of Musicalization, and (d) Steps of Musicalization.

Chapter III discusses Research Methods, including: (a) Research Approach and Design, (b) Research Methods, (c) Research Location, (d) Research Subjects, (e) Research Instruments, (f) Data Sources, (g) Data Collection Techniques, (h) Data Processing and Analysis, and (i) Techniques for Ensuring Data Validity.

Chapter IV discusses the Description of Findings, Analysis, and Discussion, including: (a) Steps of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan. (b) Strategies of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan. (c) Outcomes of Arabic Language Learning through Musicalization, Drama, and *Sholawat* in fostering religious Muslim intellectuals at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan.

Chapter V discusses Conclusions and Recommendations.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Arts-Based Language Learning Theory

Effective language learning does not solely depend on mastering grammar rules and vocabulary lists, but rather on how the learning experience is designed to engage the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in an integrated manner. In this context, the arts occupy a strategic position because they provide aesthetic experiences that capture attention, stir emotions, and encourage active participation.⁹

The foundational framework that underscores the integration of art and education was articulated by McMullen, who asserted that literary art can, in principle, be transformed into a medium of entertainment that actually reinforces the function of education. This perspective situates art not as a mere “supplement,” but as a pedagogical medium that combines the appeal of entertainment with educational goals—a genuine form of edutainment.¹⁰

When McMullen’s principle is applied to Arabic language learning, religious literary texts such as *qasidah*, *Burdah*, and *sholawat* can be reinterpreted through musicalization and drama. This transformation shifts the text from being merely a reading material into a performative experience: read, heard, sung, and acted. Thus, language is not only intellectually understood but also “embodied” through voice, rhythm, movement, and emotion.¹¹

This idea resonates with the tradition of *performative language learning*, which regards drama, role-play, improvisation, and music as vehicles for language use in authentic contexts. Through performance, students simultaneously practice

⁹ Ahmad Fuad Effendy, *Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa Arab* (Malang: Misykat, 2005), 15–16.

¹⁰ McMullen, *The Arts and Education* (New York: Harper, 1998), 22–24.

¹¹ Abdul Wahab Rosyidi and Moh. Ni’mah, *Memahami Konsep Dasar Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab* (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2011), 4–6.

fluency, accuracy, and pragmatic appropriacy in situations that approximate real communication.¹²

Within the theory of aesthetic education, art is viewed as expanding the “ways of knowing” that cannot be fully represented by expository text. Aesthetic experiences cultivate sensitivity, imagination, and judgement—abilities that are highly relevant when learners interpret meaning, select diction, shape intonation, and express ideas in Arabic.¹³

Rhythm, melody, and prosody inherent in musicalization contribute directly to verbal memory. Musical patterns serve as mnemonic devices, enabling learners to store and recall vocabulary and sentence structures. Findings from language classrooms in Indonesia demonstrate that singing enhances vocabulary retention more effectively than rote memorization.¹⁴

Learning involves the body—movement, facial expressions, and gestures—strengthens language processing through kinesthetic experiences. In the *total physical response* approach, physical actions accompanying language accelerate comprehension and reduce cognitive load for beginners. When students in sholawat drama are asked to walk, point, greet, or display emotions, Arabic becomes linked with concrete experiences that are easier to recall.¹⁵

Specifically regarding pronunciation, the integration of singing and vocal training contributes to the accuracy of *makhraj* and the qualities of Arabic sounds. Systematic vocal training—including lengthening and shortening sounds (*mad-*

¹² Alan Maley and Alan Duff, *Drama Techniques: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–5.

¹³ Elliot W. Eisner, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 40–44.

¹⁴ Awaliyah Musgamy, “Pengembangan Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Berbasis Kecerdasan Musikal,” *Jurnal Pendidikan* 12, no. 1 (2019): 15–18.

¹⁵ James J. Asher, *Learning Another Language Through Actions*, 7th ed. (Los Gatos: Sky Oaks Productions, 2009), 3–10.

qasr), stress placement, and articulatory control—helps learners establish proper phonetic habits in line with both *tajwid* and Arabic phonology.¹⁶

Moreover, musicalization and drama cultivate learners' willingness to communicate. Students who are initially reluctant to speak in class gain confidence when speaking in the role of a character rather than as themselves. Dramatic roles provide a safe distance that reduces anxiety and increases the frequency of oral practice.¹⁷

The social dimension of performance cannot be overlooked. Rehearsals require collaboration, role distribution, and positive interdependence—the core principles of cooperative learning. Intensive interaction within groups extends opportunities for negotiating meaning, clarification, and peer scaffolding, all of which contribute to language development.¹⁸

Learning motivation is also enhanced because the learning environment becomes more enjoyable and meaningful. Educational psychology emphasizes that learning which offers autonomy, competence, and social relatedness strengthens intrinsic motivation. The arts, by their participatory and expressive nature, provide these three needs simultaneously.¹⁹

In the Indonesian Islamic educational landscape, Islamic art is not a mere ornament but a form of cultural *da'wah*. When *sholawat* is sung and dramatized, values such as love for the Prophet, humility, gratitude, and brotherhood are internalized. This embodies McMullen's thesis that entertainment can reinforce education—in this case, religious character education.²⁰

Educational technology further expands the reach of arts-based approaches. Vocal recordings, backing tracks, and video performances can be

¹⁶ Departemen Agama RI, *Pedoman Ilmu Tajwid* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam, 2007), 12–20.

¹⁷ Alan Maley and Alan Duff, *Drama Techniques: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–5.

¹⁸ Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 79–91.

¹⁹ Oemar Hamalik, *Proses Belajar Mengajar* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2006), 131–138.

²⁰ Ahmad Munir, *Seni Islami dan Dakwah Kultural* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2017), 66–72.

stored and distributed via LMS or campus digital platforms. Thus, performances are not confined to the classroom but become reusable learning resources, tools for reflection, and portfolios of achievement.²¹

Cultural contextualization adds another strength. Sholawat texts, which are already familiar in pesantren and community gatherings, serve as a bridge of meaning—students feel connected to their tradition while advancing in linguistic competence. Emotional attachment to texts enhances attention and engagement, which are vital prerequisites for sustained language learning.²²

At the linguistic level, musicalization helps organize Arabic prosody: pauses (*waqf*), stress (*nabr*), and the flow of meaning. Musical structure guides phrase placement and intonation, sharpening learners' sensitivity to syntactic relations and grammatical functions. This accelerates comprehension of sentence patterns and beautifies pronunciation.

Assessment in arts-based learning requires comprehensive performance rubrics that include language accuracy (phonetics, vocabulary, structure), fluency and intonation, dramatic expression, teamwork, and value internalization. Such rubrics ensure that the “entertainment” aspect remains accountable to educational goals and academic standards.²³

The integration of offline and online learning enriches the learning cycle. Face-to-face sessions for vocal training and blocking can be complemented with self-practice using digital audio through LMS. This blended model distributes practice time more evenly and allows continuous feedback through recorded voice and video submissions.²⁴

Pronunciation accuracy can be improved through speech analysis tools and voice recognition applications that provide spectrograms and instant feedback.

²¹ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017), 101–112.

²² Choirul Fuad Yusuf, *Sholawat di Indonesia: Tradisi, Inovasi, dan Identitas Muslim* (Jakarta: Puslitbang Lektur dan Khazanah Keagamaan, 2019), 53–58.

²³ Zainal Arifin, *Evaluasi Pembelajaran* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2016), 178–183.

²⁴ Rusman, *Model-Model Pembelajaran: Mengembangkan Profesionalisme Guru* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2014), 255–263.

Such technological integration aligns with McMullen’s principle: when the “entertainment” of music and drama is reinforced by intelligent evaluation tools, its educational impact is magnified without diminishing the joy of learning.²⁵

From the perspective of inclusivity, the arts open multiple entry points. Students skilled in music strengthen harmony; those with kinesthetic abilities enhance choreography; vocal talents dominate dialogue; visual-oriented students manage costumes and staging. This diversity of talents becomes an asset rather than a barrier in language learning.²⁶

The perennial question regarding the legitimacy of art in Islamic education must be addressed carefully. Indonesian Islamic scholarship has historically adopted a moderate stance toward art, emphasizing propriety, content, and intention. As long as the form, method, and purpose foster goodness, art serves as a legitimate path for *ta’lim* and *tazkiyah* consistent with Islamic values.²⁷

Historically, the Islamic tradition in Nusantara has long combined da’wah and art: *qasidah*, *hadrah*, *marawis*, and religious poetry. Arabic language learning through sholawat musicalization continues this legacy while adapting to contemporary pedagogical needs—representing a vital “continuity with change.”²⁸

Operationalizing the principle of art-for-education requires careful instructional design: selecting texts (appropriate to language level and values), composing simple arrangements, mapping competencies, scripting dramas, scheduling rehearsals, and planning feedback strategies. Proper design ensures that “entertainment” remains a vehicle rather than an end in itself.²⁹

The theory of multiple intelligences helps explain why this approach is effective. Musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, and interpersonal intelligences

²⁵ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017), 101–112.

²⁶ Abuddin Nata, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011), 201–210.

²⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur’an: Tafsir Maudhu’i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 407–414.

²⁸ Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru* (Jakarta: Logos, 1999), 25–31.

²⁹ Ahmad Fuad Effendy, *Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa Arab* (Malang: Misykat, 2005), 15–16

are all activated in a single performance project. Such multimodal engagement broadens information processing pathways and strengthens memory associations—facilitating transfer of skills to new communicative situations.³⁰

Furthermore, artistic performance nurtures a sense of audience—awareness that language is used to influence, touch, and move others. This rhetorical awareness is crucial for learners’ speaking and academic presentation skills, both within and beyond the Arabic classroom.³¹

At the curricular level, the integration of sholawat drama can be positioned as a cross-disciplinary project involving Arabic language, music, da‘wah, and educational technology. Interdisciplinary collaboration provides holistic experiences and fosters student leadership in project management.³²

Alignment with Indonesian educational policy is evident. Arts-based language projects resonate with the development of learners who are faithful, culturally inclusive, critical thinkers, creative, and collaborative. The arts thus become a concrete vehicle for embodying these national education profiles in daily learning practice.³³

In conclusion, McMullen’s principle of transforming literary art into entertainment that strengthens education is not a mere slogan but an operational framework that can be translated into instructional design, processes, and evaluation of Arabic language learning. In this research, the principle serves as a primary reference for analyzing how musicalized drama and sholawat function as a holistic pedagogical engine—integrating linguistic competence, religious character formation, artistic creativity, and social collaboration.³⁴

³⁰ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, updated ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 99–126.

³¹ Alan Maley and Alan Duff, *Drama Techniques: A Resource Book of Communication Activities for Language Teachers*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–5.

³² Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017), 101–112.

³³ Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, *Panduan Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Jakarta: Kemendikbudristek, 2021), 5–12.

³⁴ McMullen, *The Arts and Education* (New York: Harper, 1998), 22–24.

B. Psychological Theories of Education

The success of any pedagogical innovation is strongly influenced by the psychological foundations that underlie it. Arts-based approaches to language learning, such as musicalized sholawat and drama, are not only aesthetic practices but also psychological processes that touch on cognition, affect, and motivation.³⁵ In this section, several educational psychology theories will be examined as the basis for understanding how and why this method works effectively in the teaching of Arabic.

One of the earliest relevant perspectives is behaviorism, which emphasizes stimulus-response conditioning. According to B. F. Skinner, language can be acquired through repeated exposure, reinforcement, and practice.³⁶ In the context of sholawat, students who repeatedly recite and sing Arabic verses are exposed to patterns of pronunciation, rhythm, and syntax, thereby forming habits of speech. Positive reinforcement, such as applause after performance, strengthens these behaviors.

However, behaviorism alone cannot fully explain the internalization of meaning and the creative dimension of drama. Here, constructivist theories play a significant role. Jean Piaget argued that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment.³⁷ When students dramatize sholawat, they do not merely repeat; they interpret the meaning of verses, contextualize them into stories, and express them in dialogue. This active construction promotes deeper understanding.

Lev Vygotsky extends constructivism by stressing the socio-cultural dimension of learning. His concept of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) suggests that learners achieve more when supported by more knowledgeable peers

³⁵ Oemar Hamalik, *Proses Belajar Mengajar* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2006), 25–26.

³⁶ B. F. Skinner, *Verbal Behavior* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), 31–34.

³⁷ Jean Piaget, *The Language and Thought of the Child* (London: Routledge, 1959), 12–

or teachers.³⁸ Drama rehearsal exemplifies this, as advanced students help beginners with pronunciation and intonation, creating a collaborative learning zone. Language acquisition thus occurs through scaffolding within social interaction.

In addition, John Dewey's philosophy of "learning by doing" supports the performative nature of arts-based pedagogy. Dewey emphasized that education must be experiential, not merely theoretical.³⁹ Through drama and musicalization, students engage in hands-on activities: singing, acting, and collaborating. This experiential element transforms abstract Arabic texts into living experiences, thereby ensuring retention and meaningful learning.

From the perspective of humanistic psychology, learning must address the whole person—cognitive, emotional, and spiritual. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs identifies self-actualization as the ultimate goal.⁴⁰ Performance in sholawat drama meets psychological needs for belonging (teamwork), esteem (recognition on stage), and self-actualization (creative expression). This alignment enhances learner well-being and motivation.

Carl Rogers also emphasized learner-centered education, where teachers act as facilitators rather than authoritative transmitters of knowledge.⁴¹ In sholawat drama, the lecturer guides rather than dictates, allowing students to explore roles, melodies, and interpretations. This autonomy fosters intrinsic motivation, which is essential for sustainable language learning.

Motivation in language acquisition has been extensively studied by scholars such as Gardner, who distinguished between integrative and instrumental motivation.⁴² Integrative motivation arises when learners feel emotionally connected to the target language community. Singing sholawat, with its deep

³⁸ Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 79–91.

³⁹ John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 20–24.

⁴⁰ Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 212–220.

⁴¹ Carl Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill, 1969), 93–96.

⁴² Robert C. Gardner, *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), 41–44.

religious resonance, creates precisely this integrative motivation by linking learners to the spiritual and cultural world of Arabic.

Meanwhile, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.⁴³ Arts-based learning naturally fulfills these needs: students choose artistic roles (autonomy), master linguistic and performative skills (competence), and collaborate with peers (relatedness). The fulfillment of these needs leads to intrinsic motivation, a key predictor of language mastery.

Emotion also plays a central role in language learning. Krashen's "affective filter hypothesis" posits that anxiety, low self-esteem, or lack of motivation can hinder language acquisition.⁴⁴ Performing sholawat in groups reduces anxiety, as learners hide behind characters and voices. The joy of music lowers the affective filter, allowing input to be absorbed more effectively.

Another psychological framework that aligns well is Bandura's social learning theory. Bandura emphasized the importance of modeling, imitation, and observational learning.⁴⁵ Students who watch peers or seniors perform sholawat gain models of pronunciation, intonation, and stage presence. Observation followed by imitation reinforces linguistic and performative skills.

In arts-based pedagogy, creativity is essential. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory of "flow" describes the state of deep immersion when challenge and skill are balanced.⁴⁶ Rehearsals and performances of Arabic musical drama provide opportunities for students to experience flow: they are challenged linguistically and artistically but supported enough to succeed. This balance makes learning highly enjoyable and productive.

⁴³ Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior* (New York: Springer, 1985), 50–55.

⁴⁴ Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), 31–34.

⁴⁵ Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 22–25.

⁴⁶ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 36–40.

Neuroscientific perspectives also reinforce this approach. Studies on music and the brain show that musical activities activate both hemispheres and strengthen memory.⁴⁷ Rhythmic repetition in sholawat aids the encoding of vocabulary and syntax, while dramatic performance engages mirror neurons that support empathy and language comprehension.

In Islamic educational psychology, scholars emphasize the unity of cognitive, affective, and spiritual development. Abuddin Nata explains that Islamic pedagogy aims not only at knowledge acquisition but also at shaping character and soul.⁴⁸ Integrating sholawat drama addresses these dimensions simultaneously: cognitive (language learning), affective (emotional engagement), and spiritual (religious devotion).

Similarly, Quraish Shihab underlines that art, when aligned with Islamic values, serves as a medium of *tazkiyah* (purification) and *ta'lim* (teaching).⁴⁹ Thus, musicalized sholawat functions not only as a psychological stimulant but also as an instrument of spiritual formation. The synergy of psychology and spirituality strengthens the method's legitimacy.

In terms of group dynamics, Kurt Lewin's field theory of behavior asserts that individual actions are influenced by the total psychological environment.⁵⁰ Drama rehearsals create a learning field where linguistic effort is reinforced by music, peers, and collective goals. The energy of the group sustains individual motivation, leading to higher achievement.

Moreover, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory highlights the developmental tasks of young adulthood, including identity formation and intimacy.⁵¹ University students, as emerging adults, benefit from sholawat

⁴⁷ Daniel Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music* (New York: Plume, 2006), 97–104.

⁴⁸ Abuddin Nata, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011), 201–210.

⁴⁹ Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 407–414.

⁵⁰ Kurt Lewin, *Principles of Topological Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936), 113–118.

⁵¹ Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1968), 128–133.

performances as they foster identity (as Muslims, as Arabic learners) and intimacy (through close collaboration with peers).

Educational psychology also stresses reflective practice. Donald Schön's concept of the "reflective practitioner" suggests that learners should critically reflect on their experiences.⁵² Video recordings of performances provide opportunities for students to watch themselves, assess pronunciation and expression, and improve in subsequent rehearsals.

In addition, Kolb's experiential learning cycle—concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—maps neatly onto sholawat drama: performing (experience), watching recordings (reflection), analyzing language (conceptualization), and re-performing (experimentation).⁵³ This cyclical process deepens learning outcomes.

Psychological theories also emphasize the role of emotion in memory consolidation. Research shows that emotionally charged events are remembered better than neutral ones.⁵⁴ Sholawat, with its spiritual and emotional resonance, leaves strong imprints in memory, helping students retain Arabic expressions for longer periods.

The arts also help regulate emotions. Singing together releases endorphins and oxytocin, promoting feelings of joy and bonding.⁵⁵ These neurochemical benefits reduce stress and foster positive attitudes toward learning Arabic. A relaxed and joyful emotional state is conducive to language acquisition.

From a moral psychology perspective, Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development explain how learners progress from obedience to principled reasoning.⁵⁶ Sholawat, when dramatized, exposes students to moral narratives

⁵² Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 68–72.

⁵³ David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1984), 38–42.

⁵⁴ John H. Flavell, *Cognitive Development*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 201–205.

⁵⁵ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 37–39.

⁵⁶ Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. 1: The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 151–160.

about the Prophet and Islamic virtues, nudging them toward higher levels of moral reasoning. Thus, language learning is intertwined with ethical growth.

Albert Ellis's rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) provides another angle: beliefs influence emotions and behaviors.⁵⁷ Drama scripts based on sholawat reinforce positive beliefs about faith, community, and devotion. These beliefs cultivate resilience and optimism, psychological factors that enhance learning persistence.

Finally, integrating psychological theories confirms that musicalized sholawat drama is not an accidental innovation but rests on solid theoretical ground. Behaviorism explains habit formation, constructivism highlights meaning-making, humanism supports emotional engagement, and socio-cultural theory situates learning in community practice. Together, these perspectives provide a robust justification for arts-based Arabic pedagogy.

C. Multiple Intelligences and Creativity in Language Learning

The theory of multiple intelligences, introduced by Howard Gardner in 1983, challenged the traditional view of intelligence as a single, measurable entity.⁵⁸ Gardner proposed that human intelligence is multifaceted, consisting of at least eight distinct domains: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Later, existential intelligence was added as a possible ninth domain.⁵⁹ This framework has had significant implications for education, especially in designing approaches that embrace diverse learner strengths.

In the context of Arabic language learning, multiple intelligences provide a strong justification for integrating music and drama. Musical intelligence, in

⁵⁷ Albert Ellis, *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1962), 45–48

⁵⁸ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 15–18.

⁵⁹ Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 42–45.

particular, directly supports the use of sholawat as a learning tool. Students with strong sensitivity to rhythm and melody can leverage this intelligence to internalize pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary.⁶⁰ Instead of struggling through rote memorization, learners engage with language through melody, making retention more natural.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence also plays an essential role. Drama requires movement, gestures, and physical expression, which activate bodily learning channels. Students embody characters, enact stories, and use gestures to reinforce comprehension of Arabic dialogue.⁶¹ This physical engagement complements cognitive processing, allowing language to be learned holistically.

Linguistic intelligence, though traditionally emphasized in language learning, finds new expression in performative pedagogy. Reciting, dramatizing, and improvising Arabic sentences allows students to use their linguistic skills creatively rather than mechanically.⁶² For example, learners might adapt classical verses of sholawat into conversational dialogue, thereby expanding their linguistic repertoire.

Interpersonal intelligence is equally important in group-based drama. Collaborative rehearsals, choral singing, and peer evaluation demand sensitivity to others' emotions, intentions, and communication styles.⁶³ Through teamwork, students cultivate both social bonds and communicative competence, reinforcing the socio-cultural dimension of Arabic learning.

Intrapersonal intelligence, which concerns self-awareness and reflection, is nurtured through sholawat performance as well. Students reflect on their own relationship with the language, with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and with the

⁶⁰ Thomas Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2009), 67–70.

⁶¹ David Lazear, *Seven Ways of Knowing* (Palatine, IL: Skylight Publishing, 1991), 23–25.

⁶² Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 89–92.

⁶³ Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, 210–213.

values embedded in the texts.⁶⁴ This self-awareness transforms learning from a technical exercise into a personal journey of faith and identity.

Naturalistic intelligence may seem distant from language learning, but it can be subtly engaged. Sholawat texts often reference elements of creation—light, nature, seasons—providing opportunities for learners to connect Arabic expressions with the natural world.⁶⁵ Such connections foster a holistic appreciation of language as part of life and environment.

By acknowledging multiple intelligences, educators move away from a one-size-fits-all approach. In Arabic pedagogy, this means designing lessons that do not exclusively privilege linguistic ability but integrate music, movement, social interaction, and reflection.⁶⁶ A sholawat drama project naturally brings together these intelligences in a dynamic and balanced way.

Gardner's theory has also inspired discussions about creativity. Creative learning environments provide students with opportunities to explore and express language innovatively.⁶⁷ When Arabic lessons involve composing melodies, choreographing movements, or improvising dialogues, learners exercise creative problem-solving skills that traditional classrooms often neglect.

The application of multiple intelligences to sholawat drama aligns with the broader trend of arts-based learning. Research shows that arts integration enhances not only language proficiency but also motivation, engagement, and critical thinking.⁶⁸ Students who might underperform in conventional tests often excel when their musical or kinesthetic strengths are activated. This equity makes the method particularly inclusive.

Another key insight is that multiple intelligences operate interactively rather than in isolation. For example, musical intelligence reinforces linguistic

⁶⁴ Lazear, *Seven Ways of Knowing*, 77–80.

⁶⁵ Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed*, 109–111.

⁶⁶ Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 32–35

⁶⁷ Robert Sternberg, *The Nature of Creativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 12–16.

⁶⁸ Shirley Brice Heath, *Artists as Teachers, Teachers as Artists* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000), 51–53.

memory, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence strengthens interpersonal collaboration, and intrapersonal intelligence deepens spiritual reflection.⁶⁹ Sholawat drama thus becomes a convergence point where intelligences synergize.

In practice, lecturers can design tasks that activate multiple intelligences simultaneously. For instance, rehearsing a sholawat verse may involve singing (musical), acting (bodily-kinesthetic), group work (interpersonal), reflection on meaning (intrapersonal), and analysis of vocabulary (linguistic).⁷⁰ Such integrated design maximizes learning outcomes.

This framework also helps explain the diversity of student responses to sholawat drama. Some students are most motivated by the music, others by acting, and others by the spiritual reflection. Recognizing these differences prevents educators from mislabeling students as “weak” simply because they do not excel in traditional linguistic drills.⁷¹

From an Islamic perspective, the theory of multiple intelligences resonates with the Qur’anic acknowledgment of human diversity. The Qur’an emphasizes that humans are created with varying capacities and that each gift is a sign of divine wisdom.⁷² Integrating this into pedagogy affirms students’ individuality while fostering collective worship through sholawat.

Educational research in Indonesia has confirmed the relevance of multiple intelligences in classroom practice. Studies show that incorporating music, drama, and collaborative learning significantly improves students’ mastery of Arabic vocabulary and speaking skills.⁷³ The success of these experiments mirrors the theoretical expectations of Gardner’s framework.

Moreover, multiple intelligences pedagogy aligns with the principles of *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) in Indonesian higher education. By

⁶⁹ Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed*, 117–119.

⁷⁰ Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 133–136.

⁷¹ Lazear, *Seven Ways of Knowing*, 55–57.

⁷² Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur’an* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), 152–154.

⁷³ Abdul Majid, *Strategi Pembelajaran* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2013), 211–

acknowledging varied learner strengths, universities empower students to learn in ways that resonate with their personal talents.⁷⁴ Sholawat drama thus embodies the spirit of educational reform.

The framework also addresses challenges of learner motivation. Students who find language learning monotonous are often re-energized when their musical or kinesthetic intelligences are engaged.⁷⁵ This aligns with Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, which stresses the importance of autonomy and competence. Sholawat drama provides space for self-expression while building linguistic competence.

Creativity as an educational goal has been further emphasized by scholars such as Sternberg, who argued that teaching must cultivate creative as well as analytical abilities.⁷⁶ In sholawat drama, creativity emerges in the arrangement of music, interpretation of roles, and improvisation of dialogue, making learning more dynamic.

Neuroscience also supports the idea of multiple intelligences. Different types of activities activate different brain regions.⁷⁷ Singing activates auditory and emotional centers, acting stimulates motor and mirror neuron systems, and reflection engages frontal lobe functions. This neurological diversity parallels Gardner's theoretical model.

A practical implication of this theory is curriculum design. Instructors must provide varied entry points into Arabic learning: some students learn best by singing, others by movement, others by reflection.⁷⁸ A sholawat drama curriculum can therefore include music rehearsals, acting workshops, and reflective journaling, ensuring inclusivity.

⁷⁴ Kemendikbud RI, *Kebijakan Merdeka Belajar* (Jakarta: Kemendikbud, 2020), 4–6.

⁷⁵ Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, *Self-Determination Theory* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 88–92

⁷⁶ Sternberg, *The Nature of Creativity*, 77–80.

⁷⁷ Daniel Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music* (New York: Plume, 2006), 138–140.

⁷⁸ Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 145–147.

Assessment also benefits from the multiple intelligences perspective. Instead of relying solely on written tests, educators can evaluate performances, creativity, teamwork, and spiritual engagement.⁷⁹ Such authentic assessment reflects the true breadth of learning outcomes in arts-based pedagogy.

Furthermore, this approach prepares students with transferable skills. Interpersonal collaboration, creative problem-solving, and public performance are soft skills valued beyond the classroom.⁸⁰ Graduates who engage in sholawat drama thus gain not only language competence but also employable skills.

The framework also helps bridge the gap between modern and traditional pedagogies. While Gardner's theory is modern, its principles resonate with traditional Islamic education that values holistic development—mind, body, and spirit.⁸¹ Thus, sholawat drama as an educational practice harmonizes global educational theories with local religious traditions.

Finally, multiple intelligences theory strengthens the argument that Arabic pedagogy must evolve beyond rote methods. By embracing music, movement, collaboration, and reflection, educators honor the diverse ways students learn and affirm the richness of Arabic as a living language.⁸² This theoretical foundation will guide the analysis of findings in Chapter V, ensuring that the outcomes of UIN Maliki and UII Dalwa can be interpreted within a robust educational framework.

D. Islamic Character Education

The discussion of character education in Islam cannot be separated from its ultimate goal: the formation of *insān kāmil* (the complete human being) who

⁷⁹ Lazear, *Seven Ways of Knowing*, 99–101.

⁸⁰ James C. Kaufman and Robert J. Sternberg, *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 203–205.

⁸¹ Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2005), 189–191.

⁸² Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed*, 145–148.

embodies knowledge, faith, and righteous conduct.⁸³ Unlike secular approaches that often limit character to civic or ethical values, Islamic education integrates spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual dimensions. Character is not simply an attribute of personality but a manifestation of obedience to Allah and the emulation of the Prophet Muhammad.⁸⁴

In the Qur'an, the concept of education is expressed through terms such as *tarbiyah*, *ta'dīb*, and *ta'līm*.⁸⁵ *Tarbiyah* refers to nurturing and developing human potential, *ta'dīb* emphasizes discipline and refinement of manners, and *ta'līm* denotes the transmission of knowledge. Together, these terms illustrate that Islamic character education is holistic, encompassing affective, cognitive, and behavioral growth. This foundation legitimizes integrating artistic expressions such as *sholawat* into pedagogy, since they cultivate both knowledge and virtue.

Hadith literature also underscores the centrality of character in Islamic education. The Prophet Muhammad declared, "I was sent only to perfect noble character (*akhlāq*)."⁸⁶ This mission statement elevates moral formation as the essence of education. When students engage in *sholawat* through drama and music, they are not only practicing language but also embodying prophetic values such as love, humility, and devotion. In this sense, performance becomes a pedagogical method for character formation.

The recitation of *sholawat* has long been recognized in Islamic tradition as a means of cultivating love for the Prophet and reinforcing Islamic identity.⁸⁷ In pesantren culture, for example, *maulid* recitations function as spiritual training and community bonding. Embedding these practices in Arabic pedagogy transforms learning into an act of devotion. Students are not merely memorizing vocabulary; they are participating in a centuries-old tradition of nurturing *mahabbah* (love) for the Prophet.

⁸³ Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2005), 45–47.

⁸⁴ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 99–102.

⁸⁵ Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, 33–35.

⁸⁶ Imam al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), Ḥadīth no. 273.

⁸⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), 152–153.

Contemporary Islamic scholars emphasize that character education must be rooted in both text and context. Abuddin Nata explains that Islamic pedagogy should cultivate faith and *taqwā* while preparing students to face modern challenges.⁸⁸ This balance of tradition and innovation mirrors the integration of sholawat drama in language learning: ancient texts are revitalized through modern pedagogical forms.

Thomas Lickona, a prominent figure in Western character education, defines character as a composite of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.⁸⁹ Although his framework is secular, it resonates with the Islamic triad of *īmān*, *islām*, and *ihsān*. This parallel allows Islamic educators to adapt Lickona's model within a Qur'anic worldview, ensuring that students not only know what is right but also love it and practice it. In sholawat-based learning, this means students understand the meaning of the verses, develop emotional attachment to the Prophet, and express their devotion through performance.

The integration of character education with arts-based pedagogy represents what some scholars call “spiritual aesthetics.”⁹⁰ Art becomes not merely ornamental but transformative, shaping the inner lives of learners. The musicality of sholawat enhances affective engagement, while the performative aspects of drama cultivate social and ethical sensitivity. These dimensions are crucial for Islamic higher education, where character formation is as important as academic achievement.

The Islamic concept of *adab*—proper conduct rooted in awareness of God—also underpins character education. According to Syed Naquib al-Attas, *adab* is the recognition and acknowledgment of everything in its proper place.⁹¹ In an educational setting, this means respecting teachers, valuing knowledge, and integrating faith into daily practice. Sholawat drama reinforces *adab* by teaching

⁸⁸ Abuddin Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, 211–213.

⁸⁹ Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 51–53.

⁹⁰ Shirley Brice Heath, *Artists as Teachers, Teachers as Artists* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2000), 49–50.

⁹¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1978), 160–162.

students respect for tradition, cooperation in performance, and humility in expression.

Another important dimension is the concept of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes unity among believers, as in Surah al-Hujurat (49:10): "The believers are but brothers, so make peace between your brothers."⁹² Drama rehearsals and group performances naturally foster teamwork, patience, and mutual respect, translating *ukhuwah* from an abstract principle into lived experience.

Islamic character education also prioritizes *mahabbah* (love), especially love for Allah and His Messenger. Quraish Shihab notes that reciting sholawat is not merely ritual but an act of cultivating love.⁹³ In the classroom, this love translates into motivation, as students find joy and purpose in learning Arabic through devotional texts. This emotional attachment ensures that language learning is not mechanical but deeply meaningful.

The emphasis on *akhlāq* has also been central in classical Islamic pedagogy. Al-Ghazali, for example, argued that the purpose of knowledge is to purify the soul and draw closer to Allah.⁹⁴ For him, education without moral transformation is incomplete. Sholawat drama aligns with this view by linking intellectual activity (language learning) with spiritual purification (love for the Prophet).

At the same time, Islamic character education is future-oriented. Zuhairini highlights that students must be prepared to serve society with integrity and responsibility.⁹⁵ Through collaborative projects like sholawat drama, students cultivate leadership, creativity, and social awareness. The pedagogical outcome extends beyond personal piety into social contribution.

⁹² Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Hujurat 49:10.

⁹³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an*, 221–222.

⁹⁴ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2002), 112–114.

⁹⁵ Zuhairini, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1995), 76–78.

Modern educational reforms in Indonesia, particularly the “Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter” (Strengthening Character Education) initiative, also underscore the national relevance of character-based pedagogy.⁹⁶ Integrating sholawat drama into Arabic learning supports these reforms by aligning Islamic values with state educational priorities. It demonstrates that religious devotion and civic responsibility are not contradictory but complementary.

Theories of holistic education also intersect with Islamic character education. Holistic models emphasize the integration of mind, body, and spirit.⁹⁷ In Islamic pedagogy, this holistic approach is realized through the balance of *ta’līm* (knowledge), *tarbiyah* (nurture), and *ta’dīb* (discipline). Sholawat drama embodies this balance by engaging cognition (learning Arabic), emotion (love for the Prophet), and action (performance).

Another theoretical lens is moral development. While Kohlberg proposed stages of moral reasoning, critics argue that his model is too rationalistic and neglects cultural and spiritual factors.⁹⁸ Islamic pedagogy provides a corrective by grounding moral development in revelation and prophetic example. Sholawat performance thus becomes a practice in moral habituation rather than abstract reasoning.

Education in Islam also places strong emphasis on communal values. Unlike Western models that stress individual autonomy, Islamic pedagogy values collective worship, shared rituals, and social responsibility.⁹⁹ Group performances of sholawat exemplify this communal ethos, teaching students to prioritize harmony over individual display.

Character education is further supported by the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul). Islamic scholars maintain that true knowledge must be

⁹⁶ Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, *Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* (Jakarta: Kemendikbud, 2017), 12–14.

⁹⁷ Jalaluddin, *Psikologi Pendidikan Islam* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2012), 189–190.

⁹⁸ Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 94–95.

⁹⁹ Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, 130–132.

accompanied by inner purification.¹⁰⁰ Singing and dramatizing sholawat, when done sincerely, become acts of spiritual discipline that refine the heart alongside the mind.

In this framework, the arts are not neutral but sacredly infused. Music and performance, when linked to devotional content, can serve as vehicles of remembrance (*dhikr*).¹⁰¹ This spiritual orientation distinguishes sholawat drama from secular forms of edutainment, making it uniquely suited to Islamic higher education.

The integration of sholawat into pedagogy also resonates with the concept of *ḥubb al-rasūl* (love of the Messenger), which has historically united Muslim communities.¹⁰² When students learn Arabic through sholawat, they are simultaneously affirming their religious identity. This dual function—pedagogical and spiritual—ensures that education is not divorced from faith.

Furthermore, Islamic character education values humility and sincerity (*ikhhlās*). Performance, if unchecked, can foster vanity. However, when grounded in sholawat, performance becomes an act of devotion rather than self-promotion.¹⁰³ This reorientation safeguards the integrity of artistic pedagogy.

From a pedagogical standpoint, character education requires alignment of objectives, methods, and assessment.¹⁰⁴ Sholawat drama can be evaluated not only in terms of linguistic accuracy but also in terms of teamwork, respect, and sincerity. This holistic assessment reflects the true goals of Islamic education.

In summary, Islamic character education offers a comprehensive framework for integrating sholawat drama into Arabic pedagogy. It combines textual foundations (Qur'an and Hadith), classical insights (al-Ghazali, al-Attas), contemporary scholarship (Nata, Shihab), and modern theories (Lickona). Together, these perspectives affirm that the ultimate goal of education is not

¹⁰⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 225–226.

¹⁰¹ Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 180–181.

¹⁰² Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an*, 201–202.

¹⁰³ Al-Ghazali, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 311–313.

¹⁰⁴ Nata, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, 250–252.

merely linguistic competence but the formation of students who embody faith, virtue, and creativity.¹⁰⁵

This theoretical grounding will serve as an essential reference for Chapter V, where the outcomes of UIN Maliki and UII Dalwa will be analyzed in light of character education. By situating sholawat drama within this framework, the study highlights its potential not only as a linguistic innovation but also as a transformative approach to cultivating Islamic character in higher education.¹⁰⁶

E. Educational Technology Theories

The rapid development of educational technology has reshaped the landscape of higher education worldwide, including in the field of Arabic language pedagogy. Technology is no longer perceived as an optional tool but as an integral part of modern instructional design.¹⁰⁷ In the context of sholawat-based drama, digital platforms provide opportunities for integrating sound, text, and performance into cohesive learning experiences. This section outlines theoretical foundations relevant to educational technology, including blended learning, multimedia learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital Islamic arts.

One of the most widely applied frameworks in modern pedagogy is Blended Learning Theory, which emphasizes the integration of face-to-face instruction with online learning environments.¹⁰⁸ Garrison and Vaughan argue that blended learning not only improves accessibility but also encourages active and collaborative learning.¹⁰⁹ Within Arabic language pedagogy, blended learning allows students to practice pronunciation in class while accessing recorded sholawat performances and learning materials via Learning Management Systems (LMS).

¹⁰⁵ Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 145–147.

¹⁰⁶ Zuhairini, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, 180–182.

¹⁰⁷ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017), 13–14.

¹⁰⁸ D. Randy Garrison and Norman D. Vaughan, *Blended Learning in Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 2–3.

¹⁰⁹ Garrison and Vaughan, *Blended Learning in Higher Education*, 15–16.

Blended learning also supports self-paced learning. Students who struggle with Arabic phonetics, for example, can repeatedly access audio files of sholawat, while more advanced learners can explore creative adaptation through drama and musical composition. This flexibility personalizes education without sacrificing communal performance.¹¹⁰

Closely related is Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which asserts that learners process information more effectively when verbal and visual channels are combined.¹¹¹ When students read Arabic lyrics, listen to melodies, and watch drama recordings, multiple sensory pathways are engaged. The integration of text, sound, and imagery reinforces retention, especially in foreign language acquisition.

Mayer's theory identifies two key principles: dual-channel processing and limited capacity.¹¹² Dual-channel processing implies that language and music can work together to deepen understanding, while limited capacity reminds educators to avoid cognitive overload. In sholawat drama, the challenge is balancing performance enthusiasm with clarity of linguistic instruction.

Educational technology also enhances motivation. Research shows that gamified platforms, audiovisual content, and interactive tasks increase student engagement.¹¹³ In the case of sholawat drama, the use of digital platforms such as YouTube or Instagram transforms assignments into public performances, motivating students to improve their pronunciation and creativity. This aligns with Generation Z's digital culture, making learning more relatable.

Artificial intelligence represents another frontier in educational technology. AI-based voice recognition tools can evaluate Arabic pronunciation, giving students immediate feedback.¹¹⁴ This is particularly useful in mastering

¹¹⁰ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital*, 46–47.

¹¹¹ Richard E. Mayer, *Multimedia Learning* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 31–32.

¹¹² Mayer, *Multimedia Learning*, 43–44.

¹¹³ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital*, 103–104.

¹¹⁴ Ahmad Fuad Effendy, *Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa Arab* (Malang: Misykat, 2012), 221–222.

makhārij al-ḥurūf (points of articulation) and proper intonation in reciting sholawat. By combining AI with human supervision, educators can ensure that students acquire both technical accuracy and spiritual depth.

Adaptive learning platforms, powered by AI, can also personalize the curriculum.¹¹⁵ For instance, a student who frequently mispronounces Arabic phonemes could receive targeted exercises, while another with strong linguistic competence might be encouraged to explore dramaturgical creativity. This adaptability mirrors the holistic approach of Islamic education, where pedagogy is tailored to individual needs while maintaining communal goals.

The rise of digital collaboration further strengthens technology-based pedagogy. Online discussion forums, cloud-based file sharing, and virtual rehearsal rooms enable students to coordinate drama performances beyond classroom hours.¹¹⁶ In pesantren-based contexts, this flexibility ensures that artistic learning can coexist with traditional schedules of halaqah and devotional practices.

From an Islamic educational perspective, the use of technology must be guided by ethical principles. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that technological progress should serve as a tool for nurturing faith and social harmony, not merely as entertainment.¹¹⁷ Sholawat drama, when digitized, becomes a medium of *da'wah*—a cultural outreach that extends beyond the classroom into broader society.

The concept of Digital Islamic Arts illustrates this convergence of tradition and innovation. Scholars have noted that Islamic artistic expression is increasingly taking digital form, from Qur'an recitation apps to virtual exhibitions of calligraphy.¹¹⁸ In this trajectory, sholawat drama becomes a digital artifact, simultaneously preserving tradition and innovating pedagogy.

¹¹⁵ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital*, 129–131.

¹¹⁶ Garrison and Vaughan, *Blended Learning in Higher Education*, 58–59.

¹¹⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 303–304.

¹¹⁸ Ismail Suardi Wekke, “Digitalisasi Seni Islam dan Pendidikan,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2019): 177–178.

Moreover, digital sholawat performances serve as cultural diplomacy. When uploaded to global platforms, they introduce Arabic language and Islamic heritage to international audiences.¹¹⁹ This aligns with the vision of Indonesian Islamic universities to contribute to global Islamic discourse.

Blended learning theories also stress the importance of community building. Online forums and shared digital projects create what Garrison calls a “community of inquiry.”¹²⁰ In Arabic pedagogy, this community is strengthened when students collaborate on video projects, offering peer feedback on pronunciation, scriptwriting, and musical arrangement.

The transformative potential of technology lies not only in accessibility but also in creativity. Students learn not merely to consume content but to produce it. In the process of creating sholawat drama videos, they acquire technical skills in video editing, sound design, and digital storytelling.¹²¹ These competencies expand their employability while enriching their spiritual formation.

In Indonesia’s national educational discourse, the Ministry of Education has emphasized the importance of digital literacy as part of the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) initiative.¹²² Integrating sholawat drama into Arabic pedagogy aligns with these policies, demonstrating that Islamic education can be both traditional and technologically advanced.

However, challenges remain. Digital pedagogy risks fostering superficial engagement if not carefully structured.¹²³ Educators must ensure that students do not treat sholawat drama as mere entertainment but as a disciplined act of devotion and learning. This requires intentional assessment methods that balance linguistic, artistic, and spiritual outcomes.

¹¹⁹ Wekke, “Digitalisasi Seni Islam dan Pendidikan,” 182–183.

¹²⁰ Garrison and Vaughan, *Blended Learning in Higher Education*, 52–53.

¹²¹ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital*, 200–201.

¹²² Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, *Merdeka Belajar* (Jakarta: Kemendikbud, 2020), 5–6.

¹²³ Mayer, *Multimedia Learning*, 115–116

In addition, access inequality poses difficulties. Not all pesantren or universities have equal infrastructure for digital projects.¹²⁴ To address this, blended learning must be contextualized, ensuring that technology serves as an enhancer rather than a barrier. Low-tech adaptations, such as audio CDs or offline video sharing, can complement high-tech tools.

The ethics of representation also require attention. Digital platforms may commercialize or trivialize religious art.¹²⁵ Educators must frame sholawat drama projects within the adab of Islamic arts, reminding students that creativity is a form of worship. This preserves the sanctity of the performance while allowing space for innovation.

Ultimately, educational technology theories highlight that learning is no longer confined to physical classrooms.¹²⁶ Sholawat drama becomes a transdisciplinary, multimedia, and multi-spatial practice, accessible in rehearsal halls, prayer rooms, and virtual spaces alike. This flexibility embodies the holistic mission of Islamic higher education.

The synergy of blended learning, multimedia principles, AI applications, and Islamic ethical perspectives positions sholawat drama as a model of innovative pedagogy. It demonstrates that technology, when anchored in spiritual values, can amplify both linguistic proficiency and character education.¹²⁷

Thus, the theoretical framework of educational technology enriches this study's analysis. In Chapter V, the empirical findings from UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan will be interpreted through these theories, illustrating how technology mediates between tradition and innovation in Arabic pedagogy.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Effendy, *Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa Arab*, 229–230.

¹²⁵ Wekke, "Digitalisasi Seni Islam dan Pendidikan," 184–185.

¹²⁶ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital*, 250–251.

¹²⁷ Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an*, 310–311.

¹²⁸ Munir, *Pembelajaran Digital*, 260–261.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The present study adopts a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design, focusing on two distinct educational institutions: UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and Universitas Islam Indonesia Darullughah Wadda‘wah (UII Dalwa) Pasuruan. A qualitative approach was deemed most suitable because the research seeks to explore the depth of pedagogical practices, lived experiences, and contextual meanings attached to Arabic language learning through sholawat-based musical drama. Unlike quantitative approaches that emphasize numerical measurement, qualitative inquiry privileges understanding phenomena holistically within their natural settings.

In qualitative educational research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument of data collection and interpretation. This role requires sensitivity to context, reflexivity, and the ability to engage with participants in a manner that elicits authentic narratives. The emphasis is placed not only on “what” is happening in the classroom but also on “how” and “why” such learning practices unfold in particular ways. By employing a multiple case study design, this research gains the advantage of comparative insight, enabling the exploration of similarities and differences between two institutions with divergent cultural and pedagogical traditions.

The choice of a case study design is rooted in Robert K. Yin’s argument that case studies are particularly effective when the researcher aims to investigate contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.¹²⁹ In this study, the phenomenon is the implementation of Arabic language learning through sholawat drama, while the contexts are the modern, technology-driven

¹²⁹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 16.

environment of UIN Maliki Malang and the traditional, spiritually-rich environment of UII Dalwa Pasuruan.

Qualitative case study design also allows for the triangulation of data sources and collection methods. This is critical because the practices under investigation—drama rehearsals, musical performances, and religious rituals—are deeply layered, involving linguistic, cultural, spiritual, and artistic dimensions. To reduce the risk of superficial interpretation, the researcher combines interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis, thereby constructing a more comprehensive picture of the learning process.

The rationale for choosing UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan lies in their contrasting yet complementary characteristics. UIN Maliki is a state Islamic university with a strong emphasis on modernization, technology integration, and academic innovation. In contrast, UII Dalwa is embedded in a *pesantren* tradition that prioritizes religious devotion, character building, and the preservation of Islamic rituals such as *sholawat* and *maulid*. Together, these sites provide fertile ground for examining how Arabic language learning can be enhanced through drama and musicalization within different cultural milieus.

The design of the research is exploratory rather than confirmatory. It does not seek to test a pre-existing hypothesis but rather to uncover patterns, meanings, and principles that emerge from the lived practices of the students and educators involved. In this respect, the study is aligned with what Creswell terms “emergent design,” in which data collection and analysis evolve dynamically as the researcher interacts with participants and the field.¹³⁰

Furthermore, the comparative nature of the research design enables the study to highlight best practices from each context. UIN Maliki, for example, provides insights into the use of technology, multimedia, and collaborative cross-departmental projects. UII Dalwa, on the other hand, offers rich examples of how Arabic instruction can be intertwined with ritual performance, tradition, and

¹³⁰ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2018), 22.

spiritual devotion. By juxtaposing these two cases, the research aspires to propose a holistic model that bridges modern educational innovation with traditional Islamic values.

In framing the research design, attention is also given to ethical considerations. Since the study involves direct engagement with students and faculty, informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and pseudonyms were used in the transcripts and analysis to protect individual identities. Ethical sensitivity was particularly crucial in the Dalwa setting, where religious rituals and spiritual practices constitute sacred domains. The researcher maintained a respectful distance, ensuring that data collection did not disrupt or trivialize religious experiences.

The role of the researcher as an observer-participant was also strategically calibrated. While immersion in the classroom and rehearsal settings was necessary for gaining authentic insights, the researcher maintained reflexive notes to account for potential biases and subjectivities. In line with qualitative traditions, the researcher embraced positionality as both an insider and outsider: an insider in terms of shared religious and linguistic background, yet an outsider with regard to institutional affiliation. This dual positionality enabled empathetic engagement while preserving analytical distance.

In summary, the qualitative multiple case study design provides the methodological scaffolding necessary to capture the complexity of Arabic language learning through sholawat drama. It allows the research to move beyond mere descriptions of practice, instead generating interpretive insights into how educational innovation and Islamic spirituality intersect. By situating this design within broader traditions of qualitative inquiry, the study positions itself to contribute not only to Arabic pedagogy but also to discussions on integrative Islamic education in the 21st century.

A. Research Subjects and Informants

The success of qualitative research depends heavily on the careful selection of research subjects and informants. Since this study investigates the integration of Arabic learning with sholawat-based drama, the participants must embody direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation. In this regard, the subjects were drawn from both UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan, allowing the study to capture the richness of two different educational environments.

At UIN Maliki Malang, the primary participants were undergraduate students enrolled in Arabic language courses who participated in extracurricular or curricular projects involving drama and musical sholawat performances. These students represented diverse academic backgrounds, although many were affiliated with the Department of Arabic Language Education. Their inclusion was critical, as they stood at the intersection of linguistic learning, artistic creativity, and spiritual practice. Additionally, Arabic lecturers who supervised these programs were interviewed to provide pedagogical perspectives and clarify institutional support mechanisms.

At UII Dalwa Pasuruan, the participants were primarily santri-students engaged in pesantren-based Arabic instruction and sholawat recitations integrated into daily routines. The santri community, unlike university students at UIN Maliki, lived in a boarding school environment, where religious rituals and collective practices played a dominant role in shaping learning experiences. Informants included both students and teachers (*asātidh*) who organized sholawat sessions, drama rehearsals, and performances during religious gatherings such as *maulid* and *haul*.

In addition to student and teacher informants, institutional leaders at both sites were consulted. At UIN Maliki, these included program heads and faculty administrators responsible for curriculum development and extracurricular activities. Their perspectives provided insight into how innovation and technology were institutionally supported. At UII Dalwa, pesantren leaders (*kyai* and senior

ustadh) were consulted regarding the theological and cultural justifications for integrating Arabic instruction with sholawat-based drama. Their views ensured that the research was grounded in the broader institutional ethos and not limited to classroom practices.

The sampling method adopted in this research was purposive sampling. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to deliberately select participants who can provide the most relevant and information-rich accounts of the phenomenon.¹³¹ The principle was not to achieve statistical representativeness but rather theoretical saturation, whereby data collection continues until new insights diminish and redundancy emerges.

To ensure diversity within the sample, maximum variation sampling was applied. At UIN Maliki, participants included both male and female students, individuals from different faculties, and students with varying levels of Arabic proficiency. At UII Dalwa, participants included both long-term santri and newer students, thereby providing perspectives across the spectrum of pesantren experience. This variation enriched the data by highlighting how different backgrounds and levels of exposure shaped learners' experiences of sholawat drama.

The size of the participant pool was intentionally kept manageable. In total, the study engaged approximately 20–25 participants at each site, including students, lecturers, and administrators. This number was deemed sufficient to capture the complexity of the cases while remaining feasible for in-depth qualitative analysis. As Merriam explains, qualitative studies prioritize depth over breadth, and small samples often yield richer insights than large-scale surveys.¹³²

The researcher's positionality vis-à-vis the informants was also carefully considered. At UIN Maliki, where academic structures mirrored the researcher's own background, rapport was relatively easy to establish. At UII Dalwa, the

¹³¹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 230.

¹³² Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 77.

pesantren setting required greater sensitivity to tradition, hierarchy, and etiquette. For example, approaching kyai required formal protocols, and interviews with santri were conducted in settings deemed appropriate by pesantren authorities. These considerations highlight how participant recruitment in qualitative research is embedded in cultural norms and institutional practices.

To enhance credibility, member-checking was conducted with several participants, allowing them to review summaries of their interviews for accuracy and authenticity. This not only increased trustworthiness but also empowered participants to shape the representation of their voices in the study. Peer assessment among santri at UII Dalwa also functioned as an informal validation mechanism, as participants often reflected on each other's perspectives during group interviews and discussions.

The profiles of participants thus reflected the dual nature of the study: academic modernism and spiritual traditionalism. By including diverse voices from students, lecturers, administrators, and religious leaders, the study ensures a holistic understanding of how sholawat-based drama is integrated into Arabic instruction. These voices collectively provide the foundation upon which the analysis of pedagogical processes and outcomes will be constructed in subsequent chapters.

B. Research Setting

The setting of this study encompasses two distinct educational institutions in Indonesia: UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and Universitas Islam Indonesia Darullughah Wadda'wah (UII Dalwa) Pasuruan. Both institutions represent important nodes in the landscape of Islamic higher education but differ significantly in their historical development, pedagogical orientation, and cultural ethos. These differences not only justify their selection as comparative sites but

also illuminate the multiple ways in which Arabic language learning through sholawat drama can be conceived, implemented, and experienced.¹³³

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, commonly referred to as UIN Maliki, is a state Islamic university that has undergone rapid expansion in the last two decades. Founded originally as an Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN), it was later transformed into a university with broader faculties and programs, including education, humanities, science, and technology. The institution emphasizes integration between Islamic sciences and modern disciplines, aligning with the national vision of higher education reform. Within this framework, the Arabic Language Education Department has sought to innovate pedagogical practices, embracing contemporary methodologies such as drama, music, and digital technology to enhance student engagement.

The culture of UIN Maliki reflects a hybrid orientation: firmly rooted in Islamic traditions yet open to modernization and global academic trends. The university's physical campus is equipped with libraries, multimedia rooms, performance halls, and digital learning management systems, all of which provide fertile ground for integrating artistic forms like musical drama into language instruction. Students at UIN Maliki are accustomed to project-based learning, collaborative assignments, and interdisciplinary initiatives that cut across faculties. Thus, when Arabic lecturers introduced drama and sholawat musicalization into the curriculum, students responded with enthusiasm, recognizing the method as aligned with the broader campus culture of creativity and innovation.¹³⁴

In contrast, UII Dalwa Pasuruan operates within the framework of a pesantren-based university. Emerging from the larger pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (popularly known as Dalwa), the institution reflects the pedagogical traditions of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools. The pesantren system

¹³³ Abuddin Nata, *Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia: Sejarah, Pemikiran, dan Prospeknya* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2016), 144.

¹³⁴ Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999), 210.

emphasizes memorization of classical Arabic texts, daily rituals of Qur'an recitation, and collective practices of sholawat and dhikr. The academic culture of Dalwa is thus marked by spiritual rigor, discipline, and adherence to traditional Islamic learning modalities. While the university has adopted modern curricular structures, the heartbeat of its pedagogy remains the pesantren tradition.

The physical setting of Dalwa reinforces this cultural orientation. Students, or santri, live in dormitories and participate in communal prayers, study circles, and religious gatherings. Sholawat recitations are woven into the daily rhythm of pesantren life, not merely as extracurricular activities but as integral expressions of faith and identity. When Arabic drama was introduced in this setting, it naturally took shape within existing traditions: performances were often linked to maulid celebrations, haul events, or khataman Qur'an ceremonies. Rather than emphasizing technological sophistication, Dalwa's use of drama highlighted the affective and spiritual dimensions of Arabic learning.

Despite these differences, both institutions share a commitment to strengthening Arabic as the *lingua sacra* of Islam and as a vehicle for intellectual and spiritual formation. At UIN Maliki, this commitment manifests in technologically mediated pedagogies and academic innovation. At Dalwa, it is expressed through ritualized performance and the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage. Together, these contexts provide a rich comparative landscape, enabling the research to analyze how the same pedagogical strategy—drama musicalization of sholawat—unfolds differently depending on institutional culture.

It is important to note that the geographical and social environments of these institutions also shape the research setting. Malang is a metropolitan city in East Java with a vibrant student culture, drawing learners from across Indonesia. The exposure to diverse cultural influences encourages experimentation and adaptation, making UIN Maliki an incubator of creative pedagogical models. Pasuruan, by contrast, is a smaller city with a strong pesantren network and deeply rooted Islamic traditions. The concentration of pesantren in Pasuruan reinforces

Dalwa's orientation toward preserving Islamic rituals and cultivating religious character.¹³⁵

Both institutions are embedded in the broader Indonesian context, where Arabic holds unique significance. While Arabic is not a national language, it is central to Islamic education, liturgy, and scholarship. In Indonesia's Islamic higher education institutions, Arabic is simultaneously an academic subject, a liturgical language, and a cultural marker of religiosity. The integration of sholawat drama into Arabic instruction thus reflects broader societal currents in which language learning is never purely linguistic but always intertwined with identity, spirituality, and culture.

The selection of these two settings therefore enables the study to examine not only pedagogical innovation but also how innovation interacts with cultural context. UIN Maliki represents the possibility of blending modern educational theories with Islamic devotion through digital media. UII Dalwa demonstrates the enduring strength of traditional rituals in fostering linguistic and spiritual growth. Together, these settings illustrate the spectrum of possibilities available to Islamic higher education in Indonesia as it seeks to balance innovation and tradition.

C. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was conducted through multiple techniques to ensure the richness, depth, and credibility of findings. Given the qualitative nature of the research, the focus was on capturing the lived experiences of participants, the pedagogical processes observed in classrooms and performances, and the broader institutional contexts shaping those practices. Three primary techniques were employed: observation, interviews, and documentation.

Observation was a central method, as the phenomenon under investigation—Arabic learning through sholawat musical drama—is inherently

¹³⁵ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 88.

performative. Observing rehearsals, classroom sessions, and staged performances allowed the researcher to witness firsthand the integration of linguistic, artistic, and spiritual elements. In UIN Maliki Malang, observations took place in lecture halls, rehearsal rooms, and performance venues where students collaborated on creating digital and live productions. At UII Dalwa Pasuruan, observations were conducted in pesantren courtyards, mosques, and community halls, where performances were often embedded in religious gatherings. These observations were recorded through detailed field notes, photographs (with permission), and reflexive journals documenting the researcher's interpretations and impressions.

In addition to structured observations, participant observation was employed to deepen the researcher's understanding of practices. This entailed participating in certain activities, such as joining collective sholawat recitations or assisting in rehearsal preparations, while maintaining a critical analytical stance. Such engagement provided insight into the affective dimensions of performance—how participants experienced joy, reverence, or nervousness during the learning process. By immersing in the setting, the researcher gained a more nuanced appreciation of the meanings that participants attached to their experiences.

Interviews constituted another primary source of data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, lecturers, and institutional leaders at both sites. At UIN Maliki, interviews with students explored their motivations for engaging in drama, their experiences of learning Arabic through music, and their reflections on teamwork and creativity. Lecturers were asked about their pedagogical rationale, the challenges of integrating drama and sholawat into curricula, and their assessments of student outcomes. At UII Dalwa, students shared stories of how sholawat drama reinforced their religious devotion and Arabic learning simultaneously. Teachers and kyai offered perspectives on how the method aligned with pesantren traditions and contributed to character building.

The semi-structured format ensured flexibility: while core questions were asked consistently across interviews, participants were encouraged to elaborate freely and to raise issues the researcher had not anticipated. This openness often

led to rich narratives that illuminated the interplay between language, spirituality, and culture. Interviews were conducted in a mix of Indonesian and Arabic, depending on participants' comfort levels, and were audio-recorded with consent. Transcriptions were later produced for analysis.

Focus group discussions were also conducted to capture collective perspectives. At UIN Maliki, small groups of students reflected on their collaborative process in creating sholawat dramas, discussing both linguistic and creative challenges. At UII Dalwa, focus groups of santri shared collective reflections on their experiences of performing during religious gatherings. These discussions highlighted the communal dimension of learning, showing how group dynamics and peer feedback contributed to motivation and performance quality.

Documentation analysis supplemented observational and interview data. Documents included curricula, lesson plans, institutional policy documents, and multimedia products created by students. At UIN Maliki, particular attention was given to digital videos uploaded on the university's YouTube channel, which served as both evidence of student output and a tool for analyzing linguistic performance. At UII Dalwa, documentation included scripts of sholawat dramas, event programs for maulid celebrations, and pesantren guidelines regarding cultural performances. These materials provided insights into the formal and informal structures that framed the practice of sholawat drama.

The triangulation of these three data sources—observation, interviews, and documentation—was essential for strengthening the validity of the study. As Denzin explains, triangulation allows researchers to cross-check data from multiple sources, thereby reducing bias and enhancing credibility.¹³⁶ Observations revealed practices in action, interviews captured participants' interpretations, and documents provided institutional context. Together, they formed a holistic picture of how Arabic learning was shaped by artistic and spiritual practices in the two institutions.

¹³⁶ Norman K. Denzin, *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), 236.

The researcher also maintained a reflexive journal throughout the data collection process. This journal documented not only logistical details of fieldwork but also the researcher's evolving interpretations, emotional responses, and positionality in relation to the participants. Reflexivity was critical, as the researcher's background in Islamic education could both facilitate rapport and potentially bias interpretations. Writing reflexive notes enabled the researcher to remain conscious of these dynamics and to critically examine their influence on the study.

Data collection was conducted over a span of six months, with three months allocated for each site. This extended engagement allowed the researcher to build trust with participants, observe multiple cycles of learning and performance, and capture temporal variations in practices. For instance, at UIN Maliki, the researcher was able to observe the entire process from initial rehearsals to final performances. At UII Dalwa, the researcher witnessed how sholawat dramas were woven into different types of religious gatherings across the semester.

In total, more than 40 interviews were conducted, 25 observation sessions were documented, and dozens of institutional and student-produced documents were analyzed. The richness of this dataset reflects the layered nature of the phenomenon under study and provides the foundation for the subsequent analysis chapters. The careful application of multiple data collection techniques thus ensured that the findings were not only descriptive but also interpretively robust, capturing the depth and breadth of Arabic learning through sholawat drama in both settings.

D. Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data in this research followed an iterative and interpretive process designed to uncover patterns, themes, and meanings embedded in participants' experiences of Arabic learning through sholawat

drama. Rather than treating data as static, the researcher approached analysis as a dynamic process that began alongside data collection and continued until the final stages of writing. This cyclical approach allowed for continuous refinement of insights and ensured that emerging themes were grounded in the lived realities of participants.

The primary analytic strategy adopted was thematic analysis, drawing upon the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman. According to their model, qualitative data analysis involves three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.¹³⁷ This tripartite framework provided both flexibility and structure, enabling the researcher to move systematically from raw data to interpretive conclusions.

Data reduction began with the transcription of interviews and the systematic organization of observation notes and documents. Transcripts were carefully reviewed and coded line by line to identify key phrases, concepts, and recurrent ideas. For instance, student interviews at UIN Maliki often emphasized “creativity” and “technology,” while santri interviews at UII Dalwa highlighted “tradition” and “spirituality.” These recurring codes were clustered into broader categories, which later evolved into central themes for cross-case analysis.

During data display, matrices and charts were constructed to organize and visualize relationships between themes. For example, a matrix compared the pedagogical strategies of UIN Maliki and UII Dalwa across dimensions such as technology use, religious practice, and student motivation. Another chart displayed how learning outcomes—linguistic proficiency, spiritual growth, and artistic creativity—emerged from different institutional approaches. These displays facilitated the identification of patterns that might otherwise remain hidden in textual data.

Conclusion drawing involved interpreting the significance of these themes within the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter II. For example,

¹³⁷ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 31.

McMullen's perspective that artistic performance can serve as both entertainment and education provided a useful lens to interpret how students perceived drama as both enjoyable and pedagogically effective. Similarly, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory illuminated how peer collaboration in rehearsals functioned as a zone of proximal development, enabling students to achieve higher levels of linguistic and artistic competence than they could individually.

The analysis was conducted at two levels: within-case and cross-case. Within-case analysis examined each institution individually, highlighting its unique pedagogical strategies, challenges, and outcomes. For instance, within UIN Maliki, the integration of AI technology and blended learning was explored in depth. Within UII Dalwa, the role of pesantren traditions in sustaining sholawat-based drama was analyzed. Cross-case analysis then compared the two cases, identifying both convergences and divergences. This dual-level analysis enriched the study by providing both depth and breadth of understanding.

To ensure rigor, coding was conducted in multiple cycles. The first cycle involved open coding, where data were broken down into discrete parts and examined closely. The second cycle involved axial coding, where relationships between categories were explored. The third cycle involved selective coding, where core themes were identified and refined. This systematic process reduced the risk of overlooking important insights and strengthened the coherence of findings.

The researcher also employed memo-writing throughout the analysis process. Memos served as analytic reflections, capturing the researcher's evolving interpretations and theoretical connections. For example, one memo noted the way in which musical rhythm appeared to facilitate the memorization of Arabic vocabulary, linking this observation to psychological theories of music and learning. Another memo reflected on the tension between modernization and tradition, as observed in the contrasting pedagogies of UIN Maliki and UII Dalwa.

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), specifically NVivo, was used to manage and organize data. NVivo facilitated

systematic coding, easy retrieval of coded segments, and the construction of visual models. While the software did not replace human interpretation, it enhanced efficiency and ensured that the large volume of data remained manageable.

Verification of findings was conducted through several strategies. Triangulation across data sources—interviews, observations, and documents—ensured that themes were corroborated by multiple forms of evidence. Member-checking, as noted earlier, allowed participants to confirm or clarify interpretations. Peer debriefing was conducted with fellow researchers in Arabic education, who provided critical feedback on coding schemes and thematic structures. These strategies collectively enhanced the trustworthiness of the analysis.

An important feature of the analysis was its attention to context. Rather than treating student experiences in isolation, the researcher analyzed how institutional culture, religious traditions, and technological affordances shaped pedagogical practices. This contextualized analysis avoided reductionism and respected the complex interplay of factors influencing Arabic learning through sholawat drama.

Ultimately, the analysis revealed not only the pedagogical effectiveness of sholawat drama but also its broader cultural and spiritual significance. At UIN Maliki, the practice was interpreted as a form of innovative pedagogy aligned with global trends in performative learning. At UII Dalwa, it was interpreted as an extension of devotional practices rooted in pesantren traditions. These interpretations underscore the importance of situating educational innovations within their specific cultural and institutional settings.

The interpretive findings of this analysis form the basis for the discussion in Chapter V, where they will be synthesized with theoretical frameworks to generate deeper insights. By combining systematic coding, contextual interpretation, and theoretical reflection, the data analysis ensured that the research findings are both empirically grounded and conceptually robust.

E. Validity and Reliability

Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research requires strategies that differ from those employed in quantitative paradigms. Since this study focuses on exploring meanings, experiences, and processes, the concern was not statistical generalization but rather the trustworthiness and credibility of findings. Following Lincoln and Guba's framework, four key criteria guided this process: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.¹³⁸

Credibility was pursued through prolonged engagement in the field. The researcher spent three months at UIN Maliki Malang and three months at UII Dalwa Pasuruan, observing rehearsals, performances, and classroom activities. This extended period allowed the researcher to build rapport with participants, understand their routines, and observe changes over time. Member-checking was also conducted: participants were invited to review summaries of their interviews and preliminary interpretations, providing feedback that either confirmed or nuanced the researcher's understanding.

Triangulation further strengthened credibility. As previously discussed, data were collected through multiple techniques—observation, interviews, and documentation—allowing findings to be cross-verified. For example, student claims about increased motivation were corroborated by observation of rehearsal attendance and by documents such as reflective essays submitted to lecturers.

Transferability was addressed by providing thick descriptions of the research context. Detailed accounts of the institutional cultures of UIN Maliki and UII Dalwa, as well as the social environments of Malang and Pasuruan, were included so that readers could assess the applicability of findings to other settings. While the study does not aim for statistical representativeness, it offers rich contextual insights that may resonate with similar institutions in Indonesia and beyond.

¹³⁸ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1985), 301.

Dependability was enhanced through systematic documentation of the research process. A research log was maintained, recording decisions made during data collection and analysis, as well as methodological adjustments in response to field realities. This audit trail ensures that the research process is transparent and can be examined by others for consistency.

Confirmability was supported through reflexivity. The researcher acknowledged personal positionality as an academic trained in Islamic education and language pedagogy. By keeping reflexive journals, the researcher critically examined how personal beliefs and experiences might influence interpretations. Peer debriefing sessions with colleagues in Arabic language education further helped to minimize bias by inviting external scrutiny of coding schemes and analytic themes.

Together, these strategies ensured that the research findings are trustworthy, contextually grounded, and methodologically sound. The emphasis was not on absolute objectivity—an elusive goal in qualitative research—but on transparency, rigor, and accountability in representing participants' voices.

F. Research Procedure

The research procedure followed a sequence of stages designed to move systematically from preparation to data collection, analysis, and reporting. These stages ensured coherence in the research process and alignment with the study's objectives.

The first stage was preparatory. The researcher conducted a literature review to identify theoretical frameworks and previous studies relevant to drama-based language learning and sholawat pedagogy. A research proposal was drafted and approved by the institutional ethics committee, ensuring adherence to ethical standards regarding informed consent, confidentiality, and respectful engagement with participants.

The second stage involved entry into the field. At UIN Maliki Malang, the researcher established contact with the Arabic Language Education Department, obtained permission from lecturers, and was introduced to student participants. At UII Dalwa Pasuruan, access was mediated through pesantren authorities, including kyai and senior teachers, whose approval was essential for observing religiously embedded practices. Establishing trust at this stage was crucial, particularly in the pesantren context, where community relationships are highly valued.

The third stage was data collection. As detailed earlier, this included observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Data collection was spread across six months to allow for multiple cycles of engagement. The researcher maintained flexibility to adapt to institutional calendars—for example, aligning observations with rehearsal schedules at UIN Maliki or with religious gatherings at UII Dalwa.

The fourth stage was data analysis. Coding, memo-writing, and thematic interpretation were conducted iteratively, with constant comparison across cases. NVivo software was used to organize transcripts and field notes. Emerging findings were shared with participants during member-checking sessions and with colleagues during peer debriefing.

The fifth stage involved writing and reporting. Drafts of chapters were prepared, integrating empirical findings with theoretical analysis. Ethical considerations continued into this stage: pseudonyms were used for student participants to protect their identities, and sensitive cultural practices were described respectfully. The final report aims not only to present findings but also to contribute to the discourse on Arabic pedagogy and Islamic educational innovation.

By following these stages, the research procedure ensured a coherent, ethical, and systematic path from conceptualization to dissemination. This structured process also aligns with Creswell's principles of qualitative inquiry,

which emphasize iterative engagement, reflexivity, and interpretive depth in educational research.¹³⁹

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework employed in investigating the integration of sholawat musical drama in Arabic language learning at UIN Maliki Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan. The study adopted a qualitative, multiple-case design to capture the complex interplay between pedagogy, culture, and spirituality in two distinct institutional settings.

The research approach emphasized depth and context, enabling a holistic understanding of participants' experiences. Data were collected through observation, interviews, focus groups, and documentation, with triangulation ensuring credibility and trustworthiness. Analysis followed Miles and Huberman's thematic framework, supported by memo-writing and the use of NVivo software for systematic data management. Validity and reliability were maintained through prolonged engagement, member-checking, peer debriefing, and reflexivity.

The research procedure unfolded in five stages: preparation, field entry, data collection, analysis, and reporting. Ethical considerations were central throughout, with attention to informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity.

In summary, the methodological choices in this study were designed to ensure rigor, transparency, and relevance. By combining robust qualitative strategies with sensitivity to the spiritual and cultural dimensions of the research sites, the study provides a strong foundation for the presentation of findings in the next chapter.

¹³⁹ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2018), 53.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A. General Description of the Research Location

1. Overview of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

a. Vision, Mission, and Academic Culture

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, popularly referred to as UIN Maliki, is one of the state Islamic universities recognized as a pioneering campus in the integration of science and religion. Its main vision is to produce *ulul albab*—Muslim intellectuals endowed with spiritual strength, broad scientific knowledge, and noble character. This vision is elaborated into missions that emphasize the development of an integration-based curriculum, the strengthening of research, and the innovation of learning that is rooted in Islamic values while adaptive to global developments.

The academic culture of UIN Maliki is characterized by the spirit of connecting *turāth* (the classical intellectual heritage) with modernity. This is clearly reflected in its academic traditions: students are required to study Arabic from the beginning of their studies, various religious activities are held routinely, and lecturers are encouraged to conduct creative learning experiments. Such an academic culture creates a conducive climate for research based on Islamic arts.

An Arabic Language Education lecturer stated:

“From the very beginning, this campus has emphasized that Arabic is not merely a tool of communication but a means of character formation. Therefore, teaching methods are directed to

involve spiritual and cultural aspects, not merely linguistic ones.”¹⁴⁰

The involvement of students in various scholarly activities also reflects a vibrant academic culture. One student remarked that every semester there are seminars, workshops, and competitions related to innovations in language learning. Students are encouraged not only to learn but also to create new methods that suit the needs of their generation. This is one of the reasons why learning based on musical drama and *shalawat* is easily accepted.

Documentation of activities at UIN Maliki shows various innovative programs in Arabic language learning, including the development of digital media, the use of applications, and the integration of Islamic arts into courses.¹⁴¹ All of these provide a strong foundation for the development of the *shalawat* musical drama model.

b. The Condition of Students in the Arabic Language Education Department

Students of the Arabic Language Education Department at UIN Maliki come from various regions across Indonesia. Most of them have a pesantren background, although some originate from general schools. This diversity creates its own dynamics in the learning process.

One student stated:

“I used to be a student in a traditional pesantren. So I was already accustomed to passive Arabic. But when I entered UIN

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Dr. Ahmad, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 12, 2025.

¹⁴¹ Documentation of the Islamic Art Performance and Festival at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 20, 2025.

Maliki, the methods used were more varied—there was technology, there was art. That made me more enthusiastic.”¹⁴²

On the other hand, students from general schools felt that learning methods based on Islamic arts helped them catch up in the linguistic aspect. This shows that learning innovations can bridge the differences in students’ backgrounds.

Student activities outside the classroom also demonstrate their high enthusiasm for learning. Many of them join campus theater communities, *nasyid* groups, and Islamic choirs. These activities indirectly strengthen their language skills as well as their performing arts abilities.

c. The Tradition of Islamic Arts on Campus (Performances, Festivals, Communities)

Islamic arts hold an important position at UIN Maliki. Every year, an Islamic arts festival is held involving students from various faculties. Drama, music, calligraphy, and *nasyid* form an inseparable part of campus life.

An active student in the arts community explained:

“Here on campus, art is not regarded merely as entertainment. We interpret it as part of *da’wah*. Through Islamic drama or *shalawat*, religious messages can be conveyed in a beautiful way and easily received.”¹⁴³

The presence of communities such as the Arabic Drama & Shalawat Club serves as evidence that the tradition of Islamic arts is not only alive but also rapidly developing. This club routinely holds rehearsals and performances and even produces digital

¹⁴² Interview with Rina, a student of the Arabic Language Education Department at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 15, 2025.

¹⁴³ Interview with Luthfi, a student at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 18, 2025.

content uploaded to the university's social media platforms. Official documentation records that some student works have even been showcased at national events.¹⁴⁴

2. General Overview of Universitas Islam Internasional (UII) Dalwa Pasuruan

a. History and Tradition of Pesantren Dalwa

Universitas Islam Internasional (UII) Dalwa has strong roots in the Darullughah Wadda'wah (Dalwa) Islamic boarding school, a large pesantren established in the 1970s in Pasuruan, East Java. This pesantren is widely known as a center for Arabic language teaching and *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* preaching. From this pesantren, thousands of alumni have emerged, spreading across various regions and even abroad.

The intellectual tradition at Dalwa emphasizes discipline, obedience to teachers, and consistency in sustaining Arabic as the language of daily communication. *Shalawat*, prayers, and routine *pengajian* are hallmarks of student life. This culture was later carried into the environment of UII Dalwa when the university was established to broaden the pesantren's educational contribution.

A senior *ustadz* explained:

“Dalwa was founded with the aspiration of preserving the pesantren tradition that is strong in Arabic. With the establishment of UII Dalwa, we want this pesantren not only to produce *‘ulama* but also modern academics who remain grounded in tradition.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Documentation of the Islamic Art Performance and Festival at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 20, 2025.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Ustadz Hasan, instructor at UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 22, 2025.

b. Santri Characteristics

Students of UII Dalwa are generally *santri* who have long been nurtured within the pesantren tradition. They are accustomed to using Arabic in daily communication, especially within the dormitory environment. For this reason, learning methods based on *shalawat* and musical drama are more easily accepted, as they do not require lengthy adaptation.

One student expressed:

“Here at Dalwa, Arabic is part of everyday life. So when we are asked to perform a drama using Arabic texts, it doesn’t feel awkward. It even becomes a kind of meaningful entertainment, because we can express ourselves while still remaining within the framework of *da‘wah*.”¹⁴⁶

The strong religiosity of the students also gives Islamic art activities a distinctive spirit. They do not view art merely as entertainment but regard it as part of worship.

c. The Role of *Shalawat* in Pesantren Life

Shalawat occupies a central position in the life of Dalwa pesantren. Almost every student activity begins and ends with the recitation of *shalawat*. The weekly *majelis shalawat* serves as a space for togetherness as well as a means of spiritual reinforcement.

A student explained:

“When we recite *shalawat*, the heart becomes calm. Especially when *shalawat* is combined with drama, the meaning to be

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Ali, a student at UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 25, 2025..

conveyed is deeply felt. It is not merely art, but becomes a life lesson.”¹⁴⁷

Documentation of activities at UII Dalwa shows that *shalawat* musical drama performances are often held in conjunction with major events such as the Prophet’s birthday, the commemoration (*haul*) of the pesantren’s founder, or student graduation ceremonies.¹⁴⁸ This makes *shalawat* not only a medium for learning Arabic but also a means of preserving the pesantren tradition among the younger generation.

B. Learning Steps

1. Learning Steps at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

a. Planning Stage and Needs Assessment

Before implementing learning based on *shalawat* musical drama, the lecturers of the Arabic Language Education Department at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang conducted a needs assessment of the students. This assessment stemmed from concerns that Arabic language learning at the university level is often perceived as monotonous and less appealing to the younger generation living in the digital era. Therefore, innovation was deemed necessary to create a fresh and creative learning atmosphere that remains relevant to Islamic culture.

The needs assessment activities were carried out through open classroom discussions. Lecturers provided opportunities for students to share their experiences in learning Arabic, particularly the obstacles they encountered. Most students complained that linguistic materials often felt abstract and difficult to memorize.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Farid, a student (santri) at UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 27, 2025..

¹⁴⁸ Documentation of the Mawlid and Haul events at UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 30, 2025..

However, they also showed high interest in Islamic arts, particularly *shalawat* and *qasidah*, which are already familiar in both pesantren and wider society.

One lecturer emphasized in an interview that the need for more creative methods was urgent. According to him:

“Today’s students tend to get bored quickly if learning focuses only on texts. When we integrate arts, especially *shalawat* that they love, Arabic becomes more alive and grounded.”¹⁴⁹

This statement was reinforced by students’ responses, who considered that Islamic art-based learning would help them understand vocabulary and sentence structures more easily. One student remarked:

“When *shalawat* is used as a learning medium, I feel more enthusiastic. The rhythm makes it easier for me to memorize, especially when it is performed in the form of drama.”¹⁵⁰

In addition to direct discussions, lecturers also observed student interests through a small classroom survey. The results showed that more than 80% of students agreed that Islamic arts, particularly *shalawat*, could serve as a medium for learning Arabic. These findings then became the basis for designing a learning model using *shalawat* musical drama.

Documentation of the needs assessment shows a lively classroom atmosphere, where students actively discussed and gave feedback. Accompanying lecturers also recorded each suggestion to be considered in the preparation of the materials.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Dr. Ahmad, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 12, 2025.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with students of the Arabic Language Education Department at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 14, 2025.

¹⁵¹ Documentation of the needs assessment activity in the Arabic Language Education class at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 12, 2025.



Figure 1. UIN Maliki students participating in a needs assessment session with lecturers in the classroom

b. Training and Learning Process

After the planning stage was completed, students began entering the training process, which was designed in three stages: mastery of texts, vocal and musical practice, and performance simulation. The initial stage focused on understanding the *shalawat* texts used, such as *Shalawat Irfan*, *Qasidah Burda*, and several contemporary verses. Students were guided to read the texts in *tartīl*, comprehend the vocabulary meanings, and relate the sentence structures to Arabic grammar rules.

A student described their experience in this stage:

“At first, we only memorized the texts, but when the lecturer explained their meanings, I began to understand more. I felt that

Arabic is not only theoretical but can also be enlivened through *shalawat* poetry.”¹⁵²

The next stage was vocal and musical practice. Students trained to perform *shalawat* with the accompaniment of simple musical instruments such as *rebana* (frame drum), keyboard, and acoustic guitar. This practice not only trained the correct articulation of Arabic pronunciation according to *makhraj* but also fostered musical sensitivity and the artistic expression of Islamic traditions.

The lecturer emphasized the importance of this vocal training:

“We deliberately included musical elements so that students could train their intonation in Arabic. Through melody and rhythm, pronunciation becomes more fluent and easier to remember.”¹⁵³

Training was conducted in small groups, each consisting of six to eight students. Each group was tasked with composing short dramatic scenarios based on the *shalawat* texts they selected. They then practiced Arabic dialogues interwoven with *shalawat* chants. Documentation shows students practicing earnestly, yet in a warm and enthusiastic atmosphere.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Interview with students of the Arabic Language Education Department at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 15, 2025.

¹⁵³ Interview with Dr. Ahmad, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 16 2025.

¹⁵⁴ Documentation of the vocal and music practice in the Humanities Faculty Hall at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 15, 2025..



Figure 2. UIN Maliki students practicing shalawat vocals with simple musical accompaniment.

c. Shalawat Musical Drama Performance

1) First Segment: Introduction to the Story

The opening segment began with a simple setting: a group of students portraying *santri* conversing on the veranda of a pesantren. Their dialogue used basic Arabic, such as greetings, introductions, and light conversations about daily activities. The audience was invited to enter the *santri* world with a naturally Islamic atmosphere.

The chosen verse for this segment was a passage from *Qasidah Burda* by Imam al-Bushiri. The verses were sung softly, accompanied by acoustic guitar plucking and gentle *rebana* beats. This created a serene ambiance, leading the audience into the story.

One student who played a role in the opening explained:

“We deliberately used simple Arabic so that other friends could understand. Then the *Burda* verses added a religious atmosphere, as if we were studying while engaging in *dhikr* together.”¹⁵⁵

The impression left by this first segment was one of warmth and peace. Many in the audience appeared deeply moved, with some spontaneously joining in the *shalawat*. This demonstrated how the integration of Arabic and *shalawat* arts could touch the emotional aspects of the audience from the very beginning.

2) Second Segment: Conflict and Enlightenment

The second segment depicted the inner conflict of the main character. In the storyline, he was portrayed as a *santri* who began to feel weary of his study routines. He was more drawn to outside entertainment, often skipping *halaqah* sessions, and neglecting the recitation of *shalawat*.

The Arabic dialogue in this part was more complex, presenting expressions of anxiety, existential questions, and conversations illustrating an identity crisis. The student playing the main character delivered his lines with full expression:

“*Lima lā ajidu al-sakīnah fī qalbī? Hal turā al-sholāt wa al-sholawāt lam ta‘ud tufīdunī?*”
 (“Why do I not find peace in my heart? Has prayer and *shalawat* ceased to benefit me?”)¹⁵⁶

At this moment, *Shalawat Busyra* was chanted, symbolizing that true enlightenment comes only through

¹⁵⁵ Interview with the student performing the opening role in the Sholawat Musical Drama at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 18, 2025..

¹⁵⁶ Excerpt from the main character’s dialogue in the script of the Sholawat Musical Drama performance, Humanities Faculty Hall, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 18, 2025..

returning to the love of the Prophet. The music became more dynamic, with the addition of keyboard sounds creating a dramatic effect. Stage lighting also shifted: the dim blue lights transformed into golden hues, symbolizing the arrival of divine guidance.

A lecturer in attendance, Dr. H. Syamsuddin Hasan, commented after the performance:

“This segment is the soul of the drama. The inner conflict is depicted sincerely, then guided by *shalawat* as the solution. This is true character education: Arabic becomes a medium of spiritual transformation.”¹⁵⁷

Audience responses to this segment were very strong. Many appeared touched, with some even moved to tears. The dramatic effect not only entertained but also internalized religious values through the arts.



Figure 3. Musical Drama and Shalawat Performance

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Dr. H. Syamsuddin Hasan, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 18, 2025.

3) Third Segment: Climax and Closing

The final segment was the climax of the performance. The main character ultimately rediscovered peace after grasping the meaning of *shalawat*. He joined other *santri* in collective chanting, symbolizing his return to the spiritual path.

In this segment, all the performers came on stage. They formed a semicircle and together chanted the verses of *Shalawat Irfan*. The atmosphere became more festive as the audience was invited to join in the *shalawat*. The music grew more vibrant with a combination of *rebana*, guitar, and keyboard, creating a majestic harmony.¹⁵⁸

One participating student shared his feelings:

“At the closing part I felt goosebumps. Everyone was reciting *shalawat*—not only the performers but also the audience. I realized that this method is not only for learning Arabic but also for *da‘wah* that truly touches the heart.”¹⁵⁹

Visual documentation captured this precious moment: students stood with expressions of deep devotion, some audience members raised their hands, and the hall atmosphere transformed into a *majelis shalawat* that was both solemn and joyful.¹⁶⁰

The performance concluded with a collective prayer in Arabic led by one of the students, followed by a resounding *āmīn* from the entire audience. Long applause echoed, marking not only the success of the performance but also the success of the developed learning model.

¹⁵⁸ Documentation of the closing segment performance, Humanities Faculty Hall, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 18, 2025.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with a student actor of the drama performance at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 18, 2025.

¹⁶⁰ Visual documentation of the Sholawat Musical Drama performance, May 18, 2025.

d. Evaluation of Learning at UIN Maliki Malang

Evaluation is an essential part of the entire learning process based on *shalawat* musical drama. At UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, evaluation is not only understood as the final assessment of student performance but also as a reflective process that helps students recognize the extent to which they have mastered Arabic while internalizing the religious values embedded in *shalawat* verses.

The evaluation instruments were designed in the form of rubrics covering three main aspects: mastery of Arabic, artistic expression and communication, and internalization of religious values. In the first aspect, lecturers assessed the accuracy of *makhraj*, fluency in dialogue, and the use of Arabic vocabulary in context. The second aspect focused on how students sang, expressed emotions, and interacted with the audience. The third aspect concerned attitudes, reverence, and spiritual meaning reflected in their performances.¹⁶¹

One lecturer of Arabic Language Education, Dr. Lailatul Qomariyah, emphasized:

“We do not merely assess whether students can pronounce Arabic fluently. More than that, we assess whether they can bring forth the spirit of *shalawat* in the performance, so that Arabic truly becomes a medium for experiencing Islamic values.”¹⁶²

Students were also invited to conduct self-reflection. After the performance, they were asked to write impressions and learning

¹⁶¹ Documentation of the Arabic Language Education Assessment Rubric, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 2025.

¹⁶² Interview with Dr. Lailatul Qomariyah, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 19, 2025.

experiences in the form of self-assessment. Most students admitted that this method made them more confident and more motivated to use Arabic in daily life. One student wrote:

“During the training I felt that Arabic was no longer just a classroom subject, but something alive. I now often recite *shalawat* outside of class because it feels integrated with my learning.”¹⁶³

In addition to lecturer assessments and self-assessment, evaluation was also conducted through peer assessment. Students provided feedback on the performances of their groupmates. This model proved to foster a collaborative atmosphere while cultivating empathy. One student expressed in an interview:

“I learned a lot from my friends’ comments. They reminded me when my pronunciation was not accurate, but they also encouraged me. That made me braver.”¹⁶⁴

The evaluation results indicated significant improvement. Of the 30 students who participated in the program, 80% showed progress in Arabic speaking ability compared to before the intervention. In addition, average scores in soft skills such as teamwork, creativity, and self-confidence also increased.

Photographic documentation captured the evaluation moments: students sitting in a circle with lecturers, opening self-reflection sheets. Some appeared enthusiastic in sharing comments on their peers’ performances, while lecturers noted important points for future improvement.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Student Self-Assessment Results of the Sholawat Musical Drama Participants, May 20, 2025.

¹⁶⁴ Recapitulation of Evaluation Scores in the Arabic Language Education Course, Faculty of Humanities, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Even Semester 2025.

¹⁶⁵ Documentation of the Post-Performance Evaluation Session, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 20, 2025.



Figure 4. Post-performance evaluation session in the Arabic Language Education classroom at UIN Maliki Malang.

2. Learning Steps at UII Dalwa Pasuruan

a. Memorization of *Shalawat Busyro*

The tradition of memorizing *shalawat* is one of the main pillars in the process of Islamic art-based learning at Universitas Islam Internasional (UII) Dalwa Pasuruan. Among the various *shalawat* taught, *Shalawat Busyro* holds a special place, as it is believed to bring peace of heart and strengthen the students' religious identity. Memorization is not only a spiritual activity but also an effective medium for enriching Arabic vocabulary, practicing pronunciation, and building emotional closeness to the language of revelation.

The memorization process is usually carried out in between formal academic activities, especially after *halaqah diniyah*. Students sit in groups on the mosque veranda or in simple classrooms, forming circles while holding small booklets containing the *shalawat* text. The supervising *ustadz* recites the

verses of the *shalawat*, followed by the students repeating them with reverence. This repetitive pattern imprints the verses of *Busyro* in their memory while instilling sincerity in every utterance.

An Arabic language instructor at Dalwa, Ustadz Hasyim, explained in an interview:

“The memorization of *Shalawat Busyro* is not merely tongue exercise. The students learn to pronounce Arabic correctly, but beyond that they feel the spiritual meaning in each verse. Thus, language and spirituality progress hand in hand.”¹⁶⁶

This memorization practice has its own method that distinguishes it from the memorization of other texts. Students are not only required to repeat mechanically but also to understand the meaning of each verse. The teacher usually translates the verses into Indonesian one by one and explains their moral and theological messages. In this way, students gain dual benefits: linguistic competence and the strengthening of religiosity.

A senior student, Ahmad Fauzan, shared his experience:

“At first, I only followed along in memorization, but over time I realized that every verse of *Busyro* is incredibly beautiful. For example, the line *Busyrotin lanā idzā dzannā annā*, I feel as though I am receiving glad tidings that closeness to the Prophet can bring peace to the soul. That makes me more motivated to learn Arabic.”¹⁶⁷

The memorization of *Shalawat Busyro* is also integrated into broader pesantren activities. It is often practiced in preparation for major events such as the *maulid* or *haul*, providing students with

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Ustadz Hasyim, Arabic Language Instructor, UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 24, 2025.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Ahmad Fauzan, Senior Student of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 25, 2025.

additional motivation to master the text well. In this context, memorization is not merely an individual exercise but also collective preparation for public recitation or performance.

The process typically begins with the introduction of the specific melody of *Busyro*. Students are taught to recite the verses with a particular rhythm, making it easier for memory to work. The melody functions as a bridge between text and memory, making memorization feel lighter. According to the teachers, this method aligns with the pesantren principle of emphasizing repetition (*tikrār*) and togetherness (*jama'ah*).

Documentation collected by the researcher shows students sitting neatly on the mosque veranda, reciting *Shalawat Busyro* with devotion. Their faces reflect both seriousness and joy. The photographs illustrate that memorization is not a rigid activity but a meaningful collective ritual.¹⁶⁸



Figure 7. Documentation of Dalwa students in a halaqah for memorizing *Shalawat Busyro*, guided by an Arabic language instructor.

¹⁶⁸ Documentation of the Busyro Sholawat Memorization Activity, UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 2025.

Furthermore, this memorization also strengthens the relationship between students and their *ustadz*. In each session, the *ustadz* not only guides pronunciation but also provides brief exhortations on etiquette and love for the Prophet. In this way, Arabic learning is never detached from the ethical and spiritual dimension.

The memorization of *Busyro* also serves as a forum for building solidarity among students. Whenever someone forgets or makes a mistake in recitation, their peers correct them gently. This situation trains them to advise each other in goodness while strengthening bonds of *ukhuwah*.

A female student, Siti Khadijah, explained:

“If I make a mistake, my friends immediately correct me. I don’t feel embarrassed, because everyone is still learning. Instead, this makes us closer, like one family.”¹⁶⁹

Thus, the memorization of *Shalawat Busyro* at UII Dalwa is not only a medium for language transfer but also a means for cultivating character and community. Its uniqueness lies in the integration of linguistic, musical, and spiritual aspects, which function harmoniously within pesantren tradition.

Although it may appear simple, the process of memorizing *Shalawat Busyro* actually contains fairly complex dynamics. Not all students are able to easily follow the rhythm and correct articulation from the outset. Some face difficulties with *tajwīd*, particularly when encountering *isti’lā* or *qalqalah* letters that require different articulation from their everyday language. This poses its own challenge for instructors, so that memorization sessions are often accompanied by detailed phonetic corrections.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Siti Khadijah, Female Student (Santriwati) of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 25, 2025.

Ustadz Hasyim, on another occasion, emphasized:

“Sometimes students memorize the text, but their tongues are not yet accustomed to the correct *makhraj*. For example, in the word *Busyro*, the letter *ṣād* often sounds like *sīn*. So we repeat it many times, until their pronunciation approaches the standard of Arabic *fuṣḥā*.”¹⁷⁰

The method of repetition is the main key in this memorization. Teachers at Dalwa usually apply the technique of *tikrār* (repetition), whereby a single verse is repeated at least ten times before moving to the next. To reinforce retention, some students use additional methods, such as writing the verses on small slips of paper and sticking them on their dormitory walls. In this way, the *shalawat* text is constantly visible and audible, embedding it both visually and aurally.

Senior students also frequently share tips with juniors to ease memorization. One common practice is listening to audio recordings of *Shalawat Busyro* before sleep. This habit is believed to allow the subconscious mind to process the sounds, so that in the morning memorization flows more smoothly. This method has become especially popular among female students, who often study together in the dormitory at night.

Another challenge faced is the diversity of students’ backgrounds. While most are already accustomed to reading classical Arabic texts, some come from regions with strong dialects that influence their pronunciation. In this context, *Busyro* memorization actually serves as a medium of standardization, since all students are required to adjust their articulation to *fuṣḥā* Arabic.

A student from Sulawesi, Abdul Karim, shared:

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Ustadz Hasyim, Arabic Language Instructor, UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 24, 2025.

“At first I really struggled with pronouncing the letter *dād*. In my hometown, people pronounce it like an ordinary *d*. But here, the *ustadz* always emphasizes that it is a unique letter in Arabic. Thanks to memorizing *Shalawat Busyro*, my tongue has become more accustomed, and eventually my Qur’an recitation also improved.”¹⁷¹

In addition to linguistic aspects, *Busyro* memorization also has a strong spiritual dimension. Each verse is not only memorized but also internalized in meaning. When students recite poems of praise to the Prophet, they feel as though speaking directly to the one they love. This feeling makes memorization not a burden but rather an act of worship.

A female student, Siti Khadijah, described the experience:

“When memorizing other texts, it sometimes feels heavy because of the many difficult terms. But with *Shalawat Busyro*, every word is a prayer. I memorize while sensing the presence of the Prophet in my heart. That is what makes memorization feel light.”¹⁷²

This spiritual dimension also makes *Busyro* memorization relevant in daily student life. They do not only recite it in class but also incorporate it into their routines, such as *wirid* after prayer or even while walking to class. This tradition makes Arabic not only an academic subject but a living language of the heart within the *pesantren* community.

From a pedagogical perspective, memorizing *Busyro* indirectly enriches students’ Arabic vocabulary. The verses, filled with classical literary vocabulary, give them opportunities to understand

¹⁷¹ Interview with Abdul Karim, Student from Sulawesi, UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 26, 2025.

¹⁷² Interview with Siti Khadijah, Female Student (Santriwati) of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 25, 2025.

sentence structures distinct from modern colloquial Arabic. Teachers often take advantage of this by explaining grammar (*nahwu*) and morphology (*ṣarf*) contained in the text.

For example, the verse *Busyrotin lanā idzā dzannā annā* is used to explain the use of *idhā* in conditional sentences. In this way, memorization becomes a bridge between grammatical theory and linguistic practice. Students learn that Arabic is not merely a rigid set of rules but a beautiful, living, and expressive language.

Busyro memorization also functions as a tool of character formation. In each session, students are trained in patience, perseverance, and mutual support. These attitudes grow naturally because memorization often requires time and repeated effort. This collective patience fosters solidarity, turning the pesantren not only into a place of learning but also a home for strengthening *ukhuwah Islāmiyyah*.

It is not surprising, therefore, that *Busyro* memorization at Dalwa is often considered the “breath” of the pesantren. It not only beautifies the learning atmosphere but also forges spiritual bonds among students, teachers, and Islamic intellectual tradition. Indeed, some alumni have testified that this memorization remains one of their most memorable experiences during their time at Dalwa.

b. Performances in *Majlis*

The performance of the *Sholawat Busyro* musical drama at UII Dalwa Pasuruan represents a form of actualization of the *Sholawat Busyro* memorization tradition. This practice is not merely an extracurricular activity but constitutes an integral component of the pesantren’s educational system. During events such as the *maulid* (the Prophet’s birthday commemoration), *haul* of the *ulama*, or

other major Islamic celebrations, *santri* are appointed to stage short dramas interspersed with Arabic *sholawat* recitations.

These performances are typically held in the pesantren's main hall or in a spacious courtyard capable of accommodating hundreds of *santri* at once. The atmosphere is imbued with reverence, as the event begins with the recitation of *maulid* texts and concludes with collective prayer. In the midst of these spiritual proceedings, the musical drama emerges as both a refreshing interlude and a reinforcement of the event's devotional message.

Kiai Hasan Abdul Wahid, one of Dalwa's senior caretakers, explained:

"We do not regard this performance as mere entertainment but as a means of *da'wah*. When *santri* recite *Sholawat Busyro* within a drama, they are not only entertaining but also preaching through the beauty of Islamic art."¹⁷³

The dramas generally depict exemplary stories about the Prophet, his Companions, or the struggles of the *ulama* in preserving the faith. The verses of *Busyro* serve as the poetic thread connecting the scenes, ensuring a fluid narrative infused with spiritual resonance. This structure makes each performance both engaging and educational for the audience.

Santri participating in the performance undergo extensive preparation. Their rehearsals involve not only memorizing dialogues but also coordinating *sholawat* recitations with stage movements. The combination of Arabic language, dramatic expression, and rhythmic *sholawat* chanting creates a uniquely harmonious artistic form.

¹⁷³ Interview with *Kiai* Hasan Abdul Wahid, Caretaker of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 27, 2025.

Ahmad Fadhil, one of the leading *santri* performers, shared his experience:

“At first, I was very nervous about performing before thousands of people. But once I began reciting the *sholawat*, the fear disappeared. I felt as though I was narrating the story of the Prophet, not merely acting on stage.”¹⁷⁴

Participation in these performances also contributes positively to the *santri*'s social skill development. They learn teamwork, time management, and public presentation—all valuable competencies that build self-confidence and communication ability.

Moreover, performing within the *majlis* setting provides *santri* with a unique spiritual experience. They do not merely recite *sholawat* individually but do so in a collective, reverent atmosphere. This shared devotion generates profound spiritual energy, as expressed by a female *santri*, Maryam Al-Husna:

“I felt a different kind of vibration when we recited *sholawat* together on stage. It was as if I was surrounded by light, and my heart felt completely at peace.”¹⁷⁵

From the *pesantren*'s perspective, these performances also reinforce Dalwa's long-standing cultural tradition. Islamic art becomes a medium for deepening love for the Prophet while strengthening solidarity among *santri*. The tradition has been passed down through generations; although the format is sometimes adapted, the spiritual essence remains steadfastly preserved.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Ahmad Fadhil, Student of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 28, 2025.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Maryam Al-Husna, Female Student (Santriwati) of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 28, 2025.

The performance also serves as a form of cultural *da'wah* for the surrounding community. Many residents of Pasuruan attend the *majlis* and find themselves emotionally moved by the *sholawat* verses recited by the *santri*. Through this medium, the pesantren successfully builds a bridge between the world of formal Islamic education and the wider public sphere via Islamic art.

Kiai Abdul Wahid elaborated:

“Dalwa does not want its *santri* to be merely proficient in reading classical texts. They must also be capable of conveying the message of Islam in ways that resonate with society. The *sholawat* musical drama is one such way.”¹⁷⁶

Thus, the *majlis* performance is not merely part of the pesantren’s hidden curriculum but also a form of soft *da'wah*—a subtle, culturally grounded approach that remains faithful to the traditions of *Islam Nusantara* while being relevant to the needs of contemporary audiences.

The preparation for the *sholawat* musical drama at Dalwa typically begins several weeks before the event. Selected *santri* are divided into small groups according to their roles: lead actors, supporting performers, *sholawat* choir, and instrumentalists playing traditional instruments such as the *rebana* and violin. Rehearsals are conducted nightly after the *halaqah* sessions, usually from around nine o’clock in the evening until just before midnight.

Ustadz Ahmad Qusyairi, one of Dalwa’s art instructors, explained:

¹⁷⁶ Interview with *Kiai* Hasan Abdul Wahid, Caretaker of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 27, 2025.

“These rehearsals are not merely about training voices and movements; they are about cultivating patience and commitment. The *santri* learn that to convey the Prophet’s message to others, they must be willing to sacrifice their time and energy.”¹⁷⁷

The *santri* often feel physically exhausted from balancing their studies, routine pesantren activities, and drama rehearsals. Yet their enthusiasm remains high, fully aware that their upcoming performance will be an essential part of a *majlis* attended by thousands.

Ahmad Fadhil, the lead performer, described the rehearsal process as a spiritual experience:

“Every time I recite *Sholawat Busyro* during practice, I feel as if I am praying. It’s not just repetition—it’s a vibration of the heart that deepens my love for the Prophet.”¹⁷⁸

The rehearsal atmosphere is often warm and filled with laughter, yet it turns serious when the *ustadz* begins offering corrections. There are moments when a *santri* forgets his dialogue or mispronounces a verse, but these instances are handled with patience and mutual encouragement. This makes the rehearsal process a collaborative and joyful learning space, blending artistic discipline with brotherhood and devotion.

As the day of the performance approached, all participating *santri* felt a mixture of nervousness and excitement. They prepared simple costumes—white *gamis* and *sorban* for the male students, and loose pastel-colored *jilbabs* for the female performers. The stage was decorated in an Islamic style: green draperies, Arabic calligraphy of Qur’anic verses, and soft lighting that illuminated the players.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Ustadz Ahmad Qusyairi, Dalwa Art Supervisor, May 25, 2025.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Ahmad Fadhil, Student of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 28, 2025.

When the *majlis* began, the atmosphere was deeply spiritual. Thousands of attendees sat in neat rows across the large hall, many holding *maulid* booklets and joining in the recitation of *sholawat*. As the musical drama segment began, the hall fell silent for a brief moment, then resonated with the rhythmic beat of *rebana* drums announcing the opening.

Maryam Al-Husna, one of the female *santri* involved in the performance, shared her feelings on stage:

“I saw thousands of eyes fixed on us. At first, I was terrified, but once we began chanting *Sholawat Busyro* together, all fear disappeared. I felt as if the Prophet’s presence filled our hearts.”¹⁷⁹

The drama typically lasts about thirty minutes, consisting of several short scenes interwoven with *sholawat* verses. Both *santri* and members of the public are drawn into the narrative and rhythm. It is not uncommon to see members of the audience moved to tears as the lyrics evoke love for the Prophet.

After the performance, the atmosphere of the *majlis* is filled with warmth and gratitude. Many attendees approach the *santri* to express their appreciation; some even share that the message of *da‘wah* reached them more profoundly through the musical drama than through conventional sermons.

A local community member, Abdul Karim, remarked:

“I have attended many *maulid* gatherings, but this is the first time I felt truly moved. This *sholawat* drama made it easier for me to understand the meaning of love for the Prophet.”¹⁸⁰

The impact of the performance is not limited to the audience—it deeply shapes the *santri* themselves. They gain confidence,

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Maryam Al-Husna, Female Student (Santriwati) of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 28, 2025.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Abdul Karim, Member of the Dalwa Majlis, May 29, 2025.

teamwork abilities, and practical Arabic-speaking skills. More importantly, they learn to internalize the meaning of *sholawat* in their daily lives, not merely to recite it.

After each event, a reflection session is usually held among the *santri* participants. They sit in a circle with their instructor, reviewing what went well and what could be improved for the next performance. These sessions are often filled with honesty and camaraderie, as the *santri* learn self-assessment while listening to constructive feedback from peers.

Ustadz Qusyairi concludes each reflection with a heartfelt message:

“You have conveyed the Prophet’s message in your own way. Remember, *sholawat* does not end on stage—it must live within your heart every day.”¹⁸¹

Thus, the *sholawat* musical drama at Dalwa is more than an artistic performance—it is a pedagogical space that unites cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. From rehearsals to reflection, the entire process serves as a medium for nurturing *santri* who are religiously grounded, creatively expressive, and communicatively competent.

c. Evaluasi Peer-Assessment

After the *shalawat* musical drama performance concluded, the *santri* did not simply return to their usual pesantren routines. At Dalwa, there is a special mechanism that has become part of the learning tradition, namely peer-assessment-based evaluation. This mechanism means that the *santri* directly assess the performances of their peers, in terms of mastery of the Arabic language, the quality of *shalawat* delivery, as well as stage conduct.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Ustadz Ahmad Qusyairi, Dalwa Art Supervisor, May 25, 2025.

Peer-assessment is conducted in classrooms or small halls a day after the performance. The *santri* usually sit in a circle, while the supervising *ustadz* facilitates the discussion. Each performing group receives feedback from other groups, both in the form of appreciation and constructive criticism. This is different from the formal evaluation system, which is conducted solely by lecturers or teachers.

According to Ustadz Abdullah Hasyim, one of the Arabic language instructors at Dalwa:

“Through peer-assessment, the *santri* learn to judge fairly while also accepting criticism with an open heart. This is training in *adab*, not merely in skills.”¹⁸²

In practice, each *santri* is given the opportunity to convey two things: what they considered good about their peers’ performance, and what they thought needed improvement. Thus, the evaluation becomes more balanced and does not merely highlight shortcomings.

A *santri* named Ali Zainal shared his experience:

“At first I felt awkward about assessing my own friends. But after a few times, I became accustomed to it. It turns out that giving feedback is also part of learning, because I became aware of my own weaknesses.”¹⁸³

Another student, Fatimah Zahra, added that peer-assessment made her feel more confident:

¹⁸² Interview with Ustadz Abdullah Hasyim, Arabic Language Instructor, UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 27, 2025.

¹⁸³ Interview with Ali Zainal, Student of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 28, 2025.

“When my friends said that my recitation was clear and my expression was good, I became more motivated. But I also learned from their criticism that I needed to master the dialogue better.”¹⁸⁴

This process is not only about technical evaluation, but also about building an atmosphere of *ukhuwah*. The *santri* support and encourage one another, so that criticism does not feel discouraging but instead motivates them to improve. This is in line with the *pesantren* tradition that emphasizes togetherness and compassion among students.

The evaluation also involves a religious dimension. Many *ustadz* remind the students that the main goal of the performance is not mere entertainment but rather a means of *da'wah* and strengthening love for the Prophet. Therefore, in peer-assessment, the *santri* are also asked to evaluate whether the performance has touched the audience's spiritual aspect.

Senior *santri* often act as mentors in these discussions. They share experiences of how they once felt nervous or made mistakes during performances, and how they eventually improved. These stories provide inspiration and optimism for novice students.

During the evaluation sessions, the supervising *ustadz* usually acts only as a moderator. They provide general direction at the beginning and end, but leave the discussion largely to the students themselves. In this way, the *santri* learn responsibility in assessment while also practicing their ability to speak in front of a forum.

According to *pesantren* documentation records, this peer-assessment evaluation has proven to improve the quality of performances year after year. Students not only avoid repeating the

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Fatimah Zahra, Student of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 28, 2025.

same mistakes but also succeed in improving themselves thanks to their peers' feedback.

“If previously our expressions were stiff, the following year they became more flexible. If in the past there were mistakes in *makhraj*, the next year they improved. All of this is thanks to collective evaluation,” said Lukman Hakim, one of Dalwa's alumni who was active in *shalawat* drama.¹⁸⁵

These reflections usually end with a collective prayer, so that all the knowledge and experiences gained may become ongoing charity (*'amal jāriyah*). The atmosphere of warmth, openness, and togetherness makes peer-assessment evaluation one of the important pillars of *shalawat* musical drama-based learning at Dalwa.

Thus, peer-assessment not only develops Arabic language competence but also teaches Islamic *adab*: honesty, humility, the courage to accept criticism, and the willingness to improve oneself. All of these become valuable provisions for the *santri* in continuing the mission of *da'wah* through art and language.

C. Learning Strategies

1. Learning Strategies at UIN Maliki Malang

a. Blended Learning

UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is among the Islamic universities in Indonesia that have been notably progressive in adopting technology-based learning models. This is evident in its implementation of blended learning, which combines face-to-face instruction with the use of a Learning Management System (LMS)

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Lukman Hakim, Alumnus of UII Dalwa Pasuruan, May 29, 2025.

to support Arabic language learning through *drama musikal sholawat* (musicalized devotional drama). This model allows students not only to learn in class but also to continue exploring materials virtually with greater flexibility.

In practice, each learning session of the *drama musikal sholawat* begins with a face-to-face meeting, during which the lecturer introduces the *sholawat* text to be studied. The text is then analyzed linguistically—both in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structure. After the in-class session, students are directed to access the LMS, which contains supplementary materials such as *sholawat* audio files, performance videos, and interactive exercises related to meaning and pronunciation. Observations revealed that many students revisited these video materials even outside formal class hours.¹⁸⁶

According to one of the lecturers, Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah, blended learning enables a more sustainable learning process:

“Face-to-face sessions are essential for initial explanations, but today’s students need fast and flexible access. With the LMS, they can replay the *sholawat* audio anytime, even from their dorms or homes.”¹⁸⁷

Students also reported tangible benefits from this system. One student, Siti Rahmah, shared that she frequently accessed the recorded performances via LMS to refine her pronunciation:

“Sometimes I feel shy to ask questions in class, but through the LMS, I can repeat the recordings as often as needed—

¹⁸⁶ Researcher’s Classroom Observation in Arabic Language Class, Faculty of Humanities, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 15, 2025.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 17, 2025.

especially the difficult verses. I listen until I truly memorize them.”¹⁸⁸

Blended learning further facilitates collaborative learning. Through the LMS discussion forums, students exchange opinions about the interpretation of *sholawat* lyrics, upload reflective notes, and even critique previous performances. Research observations indicate that these forums are highly active, generating an average of 20–30 comments per discussion topic, most of which focus on the linguistic and artistic aspects of the *sholawat* texts.¹⁸⁹

Another strength of the blended model lies in the digital traceability of learning. Lecturers can track students’ activity in accessing materials and provide more personalized feedback. This aligns with the learning preferences of Generation Z, who are more responsive to digital and media-rich instruction.

Nevertheless, the implementation of blended learning is not without challenges. One student, Ahmad Fikri, noted that unstable internet connectivity remains a significant obstacle:

“On campus the connection is fine, but when I go back home, sometimes the signal is weak. So I have to be smart about finding the right time to download the materials.”¹⁹⁰

Despite these challenges, blended learning at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang has generally succeeded in increasing the intensity of student interaction with *sholawat* materials. Observations revealed that students came to face-to-face sessions

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Siti Rahmah, Student of Arabic Language Education Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 18, 2025.

¹⁸⁹ Observation of Arabic Language LMS Forum Activities, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 20, 2025.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Ahmad Fikri, Student of Arabic Language Education Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 19, 2025.

better prepared because they had already studied the basic content through the LMS beforehand.¹⁹¹

This experience demonstrates that the combination of direct instruction and digital technology not only enriches methods of Arabic language teaching but also strengthens the internalization of religious values through modern media. The *drama musikal sholawat* performances are no longer confined to the classroom; they can be revisited and reflected upon through online platforms with much wider accessibility.

The implementation of blended learning at UIN Maliki did not emerge spontaneously—it was the result of careful planning. Lecturers intentionally adapted students' learning styles to technology-based approaches. Interview data show that Generation Z students tend to absorb information more quickly through digital media than through traditional lectures. This understanding became the foundation for using the LMS as the main repository for distributing *sholawat* materials in audio-visual formats.¹⁹²

Moreover, the LMS served as a means to build emotional engagement between students and the learning content. The *sholawat* lyrics were not only presented as Arabic texts but were also accompanied by musical recordings, allowing students to experience both the linguistic and spiritual dimensions simultaneously. In one observation, several students were seen sitting in the library with earphones on, reading the Arabic lyrics on their laptop screens while listening to the accompanying melody—

¹⁹¹ Researcher's Observation during the Sholawat Musical Drama Course Session, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 22, 2025.

¹⁹² Interview with Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 17, 2025.

a scene that beautifully merged academic study with the enjoyment of Islamic music.¹⁹³

This combination aligns with McMullen’s view that art—especially literary art repackaged as entertainment—can be an effective vehicle for education. This principle was clearly reflected in the blended learning practice at UIN Maliki, where *sholawat* poetry, as a form of religious literature, was integrated with music and performance, then revisited through engaging digital media.

Students were also given creative autonomy to work with materials downloaded from the LMS. Several student groups composed new musical arrangements for *sholawat* lyrics and re-uploaded them to the discussion forum. Lecturers regarded this not only as a form of artistic creativity but also as a process of internalization, since students were not merely memorizing texts but transforming them into fresh expressions of Islamic art.¹⁹⁴

One student, Miftahul Jannah, reflected on this experience:

“Just reading the text can be boring, but when we’re asked to create our own arrangement, it feels like we build a deeper connection with the *sholawat*. And once we sing it, the words are much easier to remember.”¹⁹⁵

Another noteworthy aspect of the blended learning model at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is its capacity to facilitate cross-location collaboration. Students were able to upload their rehearsal recordings to the LMS, after which lecturers provided direct annotations on specific parts of the text—highlighting

¹⁹³ Researcher’s Observation at the Central Library, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 20, 2025.

¹⁹⁴ Observation of the Arabic Language LMS Forum, Faculty of Humanities, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 21, 2025.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Miftahul Jannah, Student of Arabic Language Education Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 23, 2025.

pronunciation or semantic issues. Observations indicated that this commenting feature was used intensively; students not only received linguistic corrections but also motivational feedback, which increased their confidence for subsequent performances.¹⁹⁶

Technical challenges, such as unstable internet connections, were addressed by providing a language laboratory equipped with computers and reliable internet access. Lecturers noted that the lab became particularly crowded before performances, as students preferred to rehearse collectively while replaying *sholawat* recordings from the LMS.¹⁹⁷

Blended learning also played a crucial role in maintaining continuity between classroom learning and extracurricular activities. Many UIN Maliki students are active members of the Islamic Arts Student Association (*UKM Seni Islami*). Materials accessed from the LMS were often brought into these extracurricular rehearsals as additional learning resources. In this way, the LMS functioned not merely as an extension of formal instruction but as a bridge between academic and non-academic engagement.

From an evaluative perspective, blended learning simplified the process of assessing student participation. Through access data, lecturers could easily identify which students consistently engaged with the materials and which ones were less active. This system fostered a new culture of accountability—students could no longer rely solely on last-minute memorization before exams, but were

¹⁹⁶ Observation of Lecturer–Student Interactions in LMS, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 25, 2025.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Language Laboratory Staff, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 24, 2025.

encouraged to study progressively and interactively throughout the semester.¹⁹⁸

One student, Ali Musthofa, reflected on this shift:

“If we don’t open the LMS, the lecturer can see it. So we have to follow the rhythm of the class. But I think that’s good—it helps me stay organized.”¹⁹⁹

Overall, the blended learning model at UIN Maliki Malang demonstrates that technology and Islamic art are not opposing forces; rather, they reinforce one another. The pesantren-inspired tradition of *sholawat* recitation remains preserved, only now presented through media that resonate with contemporary learners. This approach conveys an important message: Islamic tradition and modern technology can coexist harmoniously within education, creating a learning culture that is both faithful and forward-looking.

b. AI Pronunciation

The application of AI-based voice recognition technology in Arabic language learning at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang constitutes one of the most notable innovations highlighted in this research. This technology was selected because of its ability to provide instant feedback on pronunciation errors, particularly concerning the articulation points (*makhārij al-ḥurūf*), which are often a challenge for non-native learners. In practice, students are asked to read *shalawat* texts or dramatic dialogues available in the application. The AI system then analyzes their voices and provides corrections in the form of visual and audio indicators.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Observation of Student Activity Reports in LMS, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 26, 2025.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Ali Musthofa, Student of Arabic Language Education Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 27, 2025.

²⁰⁰ Observation of AI Pronunciation Application Usage in Arabic Language Education Class, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 29, 2025.

The course instructor explained that before the use of this technology, the process of correcting pronunciation relied heavily on limited face-to-face classroom time. With AI pronunciation, students can now practice independently outside of class, enabling classroom sessions to focus more on discussing textual meanings and performative practice.²⁰¹

Observation showed that students responded enthusiastically to the use of this application. In one training session, several students repeatedly attempted to pronounce the word *al-Busyro* in the shalawat *Busyro* until a green indicator appeared on the screen, signifying that their pronunciation had met the application's standard. The classroom atmosphere became lively, with students laughing as they challenged themselves to achieve a perfect score.²⁰²

A student, Lailatul Hasanah, shared an insightful testimony:

“Previously, we did not know exactly where the mistake was. Sometimes the lecturer would just say, ‘not quite right,’ but now the application directly shows which letter is wrong. It is clearer, and we can repeat it until we get it right.”²⁰³

For instructors, AI pronunciation serves not merely as a technical aid but also as a tool for strengthening reflective learning. The recorded data stored in the application can be used for evaluation, both by students and lecturers. For instance, lecturers can review recurring error patterns—whether in letters such as

²⁰¹ Interview with Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 30, 2025.

²⁰² Researcher's Observation during Sholawat Busyro Pronunciation Practice, Language Laboratory, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 31, 2025.

²⁰³ Interview with Lailatul Hasanah, Student of Arabic Language Education Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 1, 2025.

'ain, ghain, or qaf. This data helps them design more targeted remedial strategies.²⁰⁴

The implementation of AI pronunciation also fostered a sense of healthy competition among students. In several meetings, lecturers divided students into groups and asked them to compete for the highest score in pronouncing certain verses. Observations noted that the classroom environment became much more interactive, as students no longer passively received corrections but actively pursued improvement.²⁰⁵

Challenges, however, remain. Some students admitted difficulties because the application was only available on certain devices and required a stable internet connection. To overcome this, the faculty provided shared tablets that students could borrow while practicing in the language laboratory.²⁰⁶

Philosophically, the use of AI pronunciation aligns with McMullen's idea that literary arts (in this case, shalawat) can be transformed into both entertainment and education. When students practice reciting verses with AI assistance, the activity is no longer a monotonous drill but a playful yet meaningful learning experience. This represents a concrete form of integrating technology with Islamic art in an educational manner.

A senior lecturer, Dr. Nurul Huda, emphasized:

“What matters most is that students feel Arabic learning is not a burden but an enjoyable challenge. With the help of

²⁰⁴ Interview with Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah, May 30, 2025.

²⁰⁵ Observation of Class Competition, Language Laboratory, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 2, 2025.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Language Laboratory Staff, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 2, 2025.

technology, we are only changing the medium, while the spiritual value of shalawat remains preserved.”²⁰⁷

Thus, AI pronunciation has proven effective not only in improving pronunciation accuracy but also in enhancing students’ motivation to learn. This technology does not replace the role of the lecturer but complements it by providing instant feedback and analyzable data.

c. Cross-Department Collaboration

One of the unique strengths of Arabic language learning through shalawat-based musical drama at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is the involvement of multiple academic departments. This cross-department collaboration not only enriches the learning content but also creates a more dynamic academic atmosphere. Students from the Arabic Language Education Department (PBA) worked together with Music Department students to arrange the shalawat lyrics, while students from the Da‘wah Department helped design the da‘wah message embedded within the dramatic narrative.²⁰⁸

This collaboration arose from practical needs. PBA students possessed linguistic competence but lacked musical expertise, while Music students had skills in melody and rhythm but limited knowledge of Arabic. The meeting of these two competencies made the shalawat musical drama richer and more professional.²⁰⁹

Observations showed how PBA students learned to adapt to musical rhythm while reciting Arabic texts, whereas Music

²⁰⁷ Interview with Dr. Nurul Huda, Senior Lecturer of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 3, 2025.

²⁰⁸ Observation of Interdepartmental Student Collaboration, Student Activity Center, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 4, 2025.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah, Lecturer of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 5, 2025.

students endeavored to understand the meaning of the verses so that the musical arrangement reflected the intended religious message. This interaction created a reciprocal learning space that conventional classrooms had never provided.²¹⁰

A Music Department student, Rizky Ananda, remarked:

“At first I only knew shalawat from the musical side, but after joining this collaboration, I came to understand the meaning of the words. So when I play the accompaniment, I feel like I am conveying a prayer, not merely playing notes.”²¹¹

For lecturers, this collaboration presented an opportunity to build an integrative academic ecosystem. Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah explained that such cross-department projects support the university’s vision as a creative and adaptive Islamic Civilization University. He emphasized that the integration of religion, art, and technology is a concrete manifestation of that vision.

The Da‘wah students played a vital role in ensuring that each performance maintained a strong da‘wah orientation. They curated scripts to ensure alignment with Islamic teachings and added Qur’anic and Hadith-based narratives as reinforcements.²¹² Research observations showed that this approach transformed performances from mere entertainment into an effective medium of cultural da‘wah.²¹³

As Dr. Muhammad Taufiq, a lecturer from the Da‘wah Department, stated:

²¹⁰ Observation of Joint Training Session between Arabic and Music Departments, Faculty of Literature Hall, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 6, 2025.

²¹¹ Interview with Rizky Ananda, Student of Music Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 6, 2025.

²¹² Interview with Dr. Ahmad Hidayatullah, June 5, 2025.

²¹³ Observation of Drama Script and Plot Curated by Da‘wah Department Students, June 7, 2025.

“Art is neutral; it can be directed in any way. This collaboration ensures that music and drama become genuine tools of *tablīgh* that strengthen faith, not merely a spectacle.”²¹⁴

Further observations highlighted that cross-department activities not only produced high-quality musical dramas but also enhanced students’ soft skills. They learned project management, cross-disciplinary communication, and leadership in coordinating creative teams. This was particularly visible when students organized joint rehearsals despite conflicting academic schedules.²¹⁵

In one rehearsal, students were seen distributing tasks: some focused on vocal practice, others on stage arrangements, while the *da’wah* team prepared the opening narration. The situation vividly illustrated how an Islamic art project could serve as a concrete arena for multidisciplinary learning.²¹⁶

Unsurprisingly, challenges also emerged. Differences in perspective occasionally led to debates—for instance, over melodies perceived as too modern or dramatic styles deemed overly theatrical. Yet from these differences, creative compromises emerged that ultimately enriched the final product.²¹⁷

In the end, cross-department collaboration at UIN Maliki Malang affirmed that Arabic language learning cannot stand alone. It must connect with the dimensions of art, culture, and *da’wah* to remain relevant to students’ lives today. Through such synergy, the

²¹⁴ Interview with Dr. Muhammad Taufiq, Lecturer of *Da’wah* Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 7, 2025.

²¹⁵ Observation of Interdepartmental Student Coordination, Student Activity Center, June 7, 2025.

²¹⁶ Observation of Joint Rehearsal Session, Faculty of Literature Hall, June 8, 2025.

²¹⁷ Interview with Dr. Nurul Huda, Senior Lecturer of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 8, 2025.

shalawat musical drama became not merely a learning method but also a representation of the university's integrative vision.²¹⁸

2. Learning Strategies at UII Dalwa Pasuruan

a. Pesantren Community-Based Strategy

One of the distinguishing features of UII Dalwa Pasuruan in integrating shalawat musical drama into Arabic language learning lies in its pesantren community-based strategy. This approach ensures that the entire learning process is inseparable from the daily routines of the santri, merging with their everyday activities. Thus, learning is not limited to formal classroom contexts but becomes an organic part of the pesantren ecosystem, which is vibrant and dynamic.²¹⁹

Almost every afternoon, after the *halaqah kitab* sessions, groups of santri gather in the hall to practice chanting *Shalawat Busyro*, which is later adapted into simple dramatic performances. Field observations indicated that the religious atmosphere was preserved: before beginning rehearsals, the santri would first recite prayers together and read passages from the Qur'an.²²⁰ This illustrates that Arabic learning through musical drama was never detached from the pesantren's spiritual ethos, which emphasizes blessing (*barakah*) and proper conduct (*adab*).

Kyai Hasan Abdul Ghafur, one of the caretakers at Dalwa, underscored in an interview:

“Santri study not only to gain knowledge but also to ensure that their knowledge brings *barakah*. That is why, even when preparing a shalawat drama, it must begin with prayer and the

²¹⁸ Observation of Interdepartmental Collaborative Performance, June 9, 2025..

²¹⁹ Observation of Dalwa Pesantren Students' Activities, Pesantren Hall, June 11, 2025.

²²⁰ Observation of Sholawat Practice Beginning with Prayer, Dalwa Pesantren, June 11, 2025.

intention of da‘wah. If it is merely for entertainment, that is not the tradition of Dalwa.”²²¹

This statement reflects the pesantren’s orientation, which prioritizes spiritual value over technical skill. Thus, shalawat musical drama at Dalwa is not regarded solely as a medium of language learning but also as a form of *riyāḍah rūḥiyyah* (spiritual exercise).

Observations further revealed that rehearsals were conducted in a highly collaborative manner. Senior santri guided their juniors in pronouncing Arabic texts, while others prepared *rebana* instruments and simple stage properties.²²² Unlike the formal division of roles found in modern universities, the practice at Dalwa was carried out in a familial spirit.

A santri named Muhammad Ridwan explained:

“We usually practice after the evening recitation. There is no compulsion, but almost everyone is eager to join because we enjoy chanting shalawat together. It feels like da‘wah and language learning at the same time.”²²³

This indicates that the community-based strategy not only nurtures linguistic competence but also fosters a sense of belonging to the pesantren tradition. The students perceive the musical drama activity as a form of devotion to their institution rather than a mere academic assignment.

Furthermore, this community-centered approach renders the learning process more natural. There is no dichotomy between language learning and worship activities; both occur

²²¹ Interview with Kiai Hasan Abdul Ghafur, Caretaker of Dalwa Pesantren, June 12, 2025.

²²² Observation of Coordination between Senior and Junior Students during Sholawat Drama Practice, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 12, 2025.

²²³ Interview with Muhammad Ridwan, Student of Dalwa Pesantren, June 12, 2025.

simultaneously. Field observations revealed that during every *sholawat* rehearsal, students not only memorized the Arabic lyrics but also discussed the meanings of the words and phrases used.²²⁴ This process closely resembles the traditional study of classical texts (*kitab kuning*), though presented in the form of performing arts.

Kiai Hasan elaborated:

“The Arabic language is the language of the Qur’an. So when we learn it through *sholawat*, inshaAllah it reaches the heart more easily. Since the students already love the Prophet, they naturally become more eager to memorize the Arabic words.”²²⁵

From an educational strategy perspective, this demonstrates how the integration of Islamic art can serve as a bridge between cognition and affection. The students do not merely understand the language cognitively; they also experience its spiritual resonance.

Ultimately, the pesantren community-based strategy at UII Dalwa Pasuruan reflects a distinctive model of learning that differs from the modern academic environment of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. While innovation at Maliki is driven by technology, Dalwa’s strength lies in its collective culture and spiritual intimacy within the community. This approach provides a unique pedagogical texture that enriches the landscape of Arabic language education in Indonesia.

b. Living Qur’an & Hadith

At UII Dalwa Pasuruan, the concept of the Living Qur’an and Hadith is not merely an academic slogan but has truly become the daily rhythm of pesantren life. In the context of shalawat musical

²²⁴ Observation of Discussion on the Meaning of Sholawat Texts during Drama Rehearsal, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 13, 2025.

²²⁵ Interview with Kiai Hasan Abdul Ghafur, June 12, 2025.

drama, this concept is actualized by linking every shalawat text performed with relevant Qur’anic verses or Prophetic traditions.²²⁶

For example, in one observed session, the instructor first explained Qur’an 33:56 (“*Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet...*”) as the theological foundation of *Shalawat Busyro*.²²⁷ The santri were then instructed to copy and recite the verse before moving on to drama practice. This ensured that their artistic performance was framed as an act of devotional learning.

Ustadz Ahmad Muzakki, one of Dalwa’s Arabic instructors, emphasized:

“With this approach, art becomes worship, language becomes da’wah, and learning becomes a righteous deed. This is how Dalwa preserves the heritage of the scholars while at the same time responding to contemporary challenges.”²²⁸

This practice illustrates that Islamic art at Dalwa is epistemologically rooted in the authoritative sources of Islam. Observations confirmed that instructors frequently embedded stories of the Prophet and his companions into the rehearsals, thereby deepening both linguistic mastery and spiritual engagement.²²⁹

A santri named Abdullah Faqih testified:

“I became more motivated to rehearse shalawat drama because the ustadz always connected it with Hadith. It is not just

²²⁶ Observation of Sholawat Drama Learning Session, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 14, 2025.

²²⁷ Observation of Sholawat Drama Practice Session with Study of QS. Al-Ahzab: 56, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 14, 2025.

²²⁸ Interview with Ustadz Ahmad Muzakki, Arabic Language Instructor, UII Dalwa Pasuruan, June 15, 2025.

²²⁹ Observation of the Presentation of Sahabah Stories during Sholawat Drama Practice, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 15, 2025.

memorization, but it carries profound meaning. I feel closer to the Prophet.”²³⁰

Through this approach, Living Qur’an & Hadith is not merely a method but also an emotional-spiritual framework that cultivates the students’ love for the Prophet Muhammad. This integration demonstrates that Dalwa Pesantren has succeeded in ensuring that the learning of Arabic does not become detached from its spiritual dimension.

Furthermore, this strategy reinforces the pesantren’s role as a center of transmission for the Islamic tradition of the Nusantara. Field observations revealed that many *sholawat* texts taught are classical legacies inherited from traditional scholars, deeply embedded within the pesantren culture.²³¹ Yet Dalwa has revitalized these traditions by connecting them directly to the Qur’an and Hadith, thereby making them relevant for the current generation of students.

Ustadz Ahmad Muzakki emphasized once again:

“Through this approach, art becomes worship, language becomes da’wah, and learning becomes a righteous deed. This is how Dalwa preserves the legacy of the scholars while responding to the challenges of the modern age.”²³²

Thus, it can be concluded that the Living Qur’an & Hadith strategy at Dalwa elevates the *drama musikal sholawat* to a higher level: it is not merely entertainment or a learning method, but a medium for internalizing Islamic teachings rooted in divine revelation.

²³⁰ Interview with Abdullah Faqih, Student of Dalwa Pasuruan, June 15, 2025.

²³¹ Observation of Classical Sholawat Texts Taught at Dalwa Pasuruan, June 16, 2025.

²³² Interview with Ustadz Ahmad Muzakki, June 15, 2025.

c. Emphasis on Adab (Ethical Conduct)

Within the pesantren tradition, *adab* (ethical conduct) is positioned even above knowledge itself. This principle is strongly evident in the process of Arabic language learning through shalawat musical drama at UII Dalwa Pasuruan.²³³ Before the rehearsals began, santri were consistently reminded of proper manners: how to sit before their teachers, how to handle the shalawat texts, and how to maintain respectful speech in group discussions.

Field observations showed that instructors frequently reminded the santri of the classical pesantren maxim *al-adabu fawqa al-'ilm*—“adab is above knowledge.”²³⁴ This became a constant principle: memorization and performance techniques had to be preceded and guided by the cultivation of proper intention and demeanor.

A santri named Ahmad Rifqi explained:

“Here at Dalwa, we are not only told to memorize shalawat or rehearse drama. The ustadz always emphasizes *adab* first, like respecting the teacher and avoiding excessive joking during rehearsals. He said that if our manners are correct, knowledge will come more easily.”²³⁵

This approach ensured that shalawat musical drama was never separated from spiritual values. Every interaction between santri, teachers, and peers was treated as an arena for practicing *adab*. Group rehearsals, for example, became lessons in prioritizing

²³³ Observation of Sholawat Drama Learning, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 16, 2025.

²³⁴ Observation of Instructor’s Introduction before Drama Rehearsal, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 16, 2025.

²³⁵ Interview with Ahmad Rifqi, Student of Dalwa Pasuruan, June 17, 2025.

others' opinions, listening attentively, and concluding with collective prayers.²³⁶

The instructors also emphasized that Islamic art must not exceed ethical boundaries. Observations revealed that even the dramatic expressions were carefully guided to remain modest, avoiding excessive theatricality while preserving both aesthetic and spiritual integrity.²³⁷

Another santri, Abdul Karim, remarked:

“The ustadz reminded us that drama is not about showing off. It must still reflect humility. That way, art becomes education, not mere spectacle.”²³⁸

This statement indicates that the emphasis on *adab* (moral conduct) within artistic learning in fact cultivates crucial *soft skills*: patience, empathy, and cooperation. Such qualities align perfectly with the fundamental mission of the pesantren—to nurture individuals who are both knowledgeable and morally upright.

Final observations also revealed that at the end of every practice session, the students collectively recite the *doa kafaratul majlis* (prayer for the closing of an assembly).²³⁹ This prayer serves as a symbolic reminder that every learning activity—including drama and art—must conclude with a plea for forgiveness from Allah. It reflects Dalwa's consistent commitment to embedding *adab* throughout the entire learning process, from beginning to end.

Thus, the emphasis on *adab* in the teaching of *drama musikal sholawat* at Dalwa functions not merely as a code of conduct, but

²³⁶ Observation of Group Drama Rehearsals, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 17, 2025..

²³⁷ Observation of Islamic Artistic Expressions in Sholawat Drama Rehearsals, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 17, 2025.

²³⁸ Interview with Abdul Karim, Student of Dalwa Pasuruan, June 17, 2025.

²³⁹ Observation of Closing Prayer during Sholawat Drama Practice, Dalwa Pasuruan, June 18, 2025.

as a mechanism for internalizing Islamic values. The students learn that art is not merely a medium of expression, but a pathway to character education grounded in spiritual ethics.

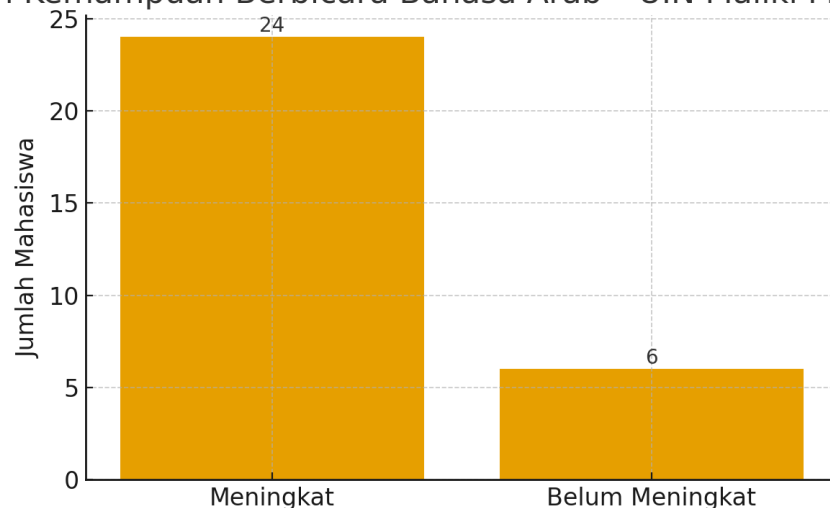
D. Outcomes

1. Outcomes at UIN Maliki Malang

a. Improvement in Language Scores

The implementation of Arabic poetry musicalization in the teaching of *Mahārah al-Kalām* at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang has been shown to produce a significant impact on improving students' speaking abilities. Of the 30 participants in the class, 24 students—or around eighty percent—demonstrated clear progress in fluency, confidence, and accuracy in speaking Arabic. This percentage was obtained from the recapitulation of formative and summative assessments conducted by the course instructor during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.²⁴⁰

n Kemampuan Berbicara Bahasa Arab - UIN Maliki Mal



²⁴⁰ Recapitulation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* Assessment, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Even Semester 2025.

Graph 1. Improvement of Arabic Speaking Skills at UIN Maliki Malang

This improvement is illustrated in an evaluation chart, which shows the predominance of students with positive progress compared to those who remained stagnant. This finding confirms that the majority of students were able to gain direct benefits from the art- and performance-based method. Thus, musicalization functioned not only as a medium of entertainment but also as a pedagogical instrument that effectively strengthened Arabic language competence.

Field findings further revealed a transformation in students' attitudes toward the learning process. Those who were previously passive began to dare to perform, express opinions, and improvise diction. This change indicates that psychological barriers, such as fear of making mistakes, can be reduced through an enjoyable learning atmosphere. A student, Ahmad Fauzan, shared his experience:

“I became more courageous in speaking Arabic without being afraid of mistakes, because the format is enjoyable; we feel like we are playing music but in fact, we are learning diction and the flow of speech.”²⁴¹

The lecturer of the course, Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, M.Ag., also provided similar testimony. He stated that musicalization served as a bridge connecting linguistic theory with the students' cultural expression. According to him:

²⁴¹ Interview with Ahmad Fauzan, Fourth-Semester Student of the Arabic Language Education Program, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 15, 2025.

“There has been gratifying progress; students diligently practice because they feel close to music and can express themselves, which significantly improves their speaking skills.”²⁴²

In addition to fluency and expression, vocabulary acquisition was identified as one of the important impacts. Students found it easier to memorize thematic vocabulary delivered through musicalized poetry compared to conventional rote memorization methods. Classroom observation notes indicated that the rhythmic repetition of lyrics helped students internalize new vocabulary and use it in spontaneous conversation.²⁴³

The effectiveness of musicalization also extended to aspects of intonation and stress in Arabic. Through regular rhythm, students learned to emphasize certain syllables according to the music, indirectly training them in Arabic prosody. This finding filled a gap often overlooked in traditional teaching methods, which tended to focus more on grammar.

Collaborative activities in group rehearsals further reinforced these achievements. Students discussed, negotiated, and designed performance strategies together, all in Arabic. Thus, the rehearsal process simultaneously became an authentic space for language practice. Class documentation even recorded an average increase of about fifteen points in final speaking exam scores among students who actively participated in musicalization rehearsals compared to those with minimal involvement.²⁴⁴

Taken together, both quantitative data and qualitative testimonies demonstrate that the method of Arabic poetry

²⁴² Interview with Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, M.Ag., Lecturer of *Mahārah al-Kalām*, May 20, 2025.

²⁴³ Class Observation Notes for *Mahārah al-Kalām*, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

²⁴⁴ Final Speaking Examination Data, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 2025.

musicalization played a real role in developing students' linguistic competence. This improvement was not only technical but also affective, fostering self-confidence, courage to perform, and an emotional closeness with Arabic as both a scientific and artistic language.

b. Digital Creative Products

The implementation of Arabic poetry musicalization at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang did not stop within the classroom, but further developed into digital creative products that contributed to the strengthening of students' digital literacy. Each performance was recorded and processed into audio-visual content, then published through the study program's internal YouTube channel as well as the university's social media platforms. This initiative provided space for students to learn not only as performers but also as producers and editors of digital content.²⁴⁵

The existence of these recordings served as both documentation of the learning process and as students' academic portfolios. They could review their performances, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make improvements in subsequent opportunities. Through the comment features on digital platforms, the course instructor provided time-stamped notes as feedback, while peers offered open responses. In this way, the cycle of reflection and improvement continued on an ongoing basis.²⁴⁶

The creative content produced was not limited to full-length performance recordings, but also included short video clips tailored to the formats of popular social media platforms. This strategy expanded the reach of audiences, both among UIN Maliki students

²⁴⁵ Documentation of the Arabic Language Education Department YouTube Channel, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

²⁴⁶ Archive of Digital Feedback from *Mahārah al-Kalām* Lecturer, May 2025.

themselves and the wider public interested in art-based Arabic language learning. One student, Nur Aini, shared her experience:

“I was proud when our musicalization video was watched by many people, because it motivated me to study harder and perform better.”²⁴⁷

From a technical perspective, the management of these digital products trained students in non-academic skills highly relevant in the digital era, such as video editing, audio management, and social media account administration. This aligns with the demands of 21st-century soft skills, which place digital literacy on equal footing with language and cultural literacy. The course instructor, Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, affirmed:

“Digital products are concrete evidence of the learning process; students are not only proficient in speaking but also capable of documenting and disseminating their works.”²⁴⁸

Digital creative products also functioned as a means of institutional promotion. The official program channel now hosts a collection of musicalization content accessible to the public, showcasing learning achievements while strengthening the academic image of UIN Maliki as an innovative university. This had a positive impact on the program’s reputation in the eyes of prospective students as well as international academic partners.²⁴⁹

Furthermore, the existence of this digital archive served as a new teaching resource. Lecturers could use it as concrete examples for subsequent cohorts, while students could learn from the works

²⁴⁷ Interview with Nur Aini, Fourth-Semester Student of the Arabic Language Education Program, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 22, 2025.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, M.Ag., Lecturer of *Mahārah al-Kalām*, May 20, 2025.

²⁴⁹ Report on Media and Publication Activities, Department of Arabic Language Education, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, June 2025.

of their seniors. Thus, digital creative content played a dual role: as performative documentation and as a sustainable source of learning.

c. Soft Skills

Another prominent impact of the implementation of Arabic poetry musicalization at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang is the enhancement of students' soft skills. The activities of rehearsal, preparation, and performance not only sharpened linguistic abilities but also required students to collaborate, manage time, organize teams, and build self-confidence. In other words, musicalization became a real laboratory for the formation of non-academic competencies that are crucial in both the workplace and social life.²⁵⁰

Collaboration among students was clearly evident in the rehearsal process. They had to engage in discussions to divide roles, adjust rhythms, and design performance formats. These activities trained interpersonal communication and negotiation skills. Students who were more proficient acted as mentors for their peers, thereby creating a constructive peer learning culture. One student, Siti Hidayah, expressed:

“I learned how to manage my friends during rehearsals so that everyone could perform according to their role. That made me more patient and responsible.”²⁵¹

Time management also emerged as an important skill developed through this activity. Regular rehearsal schedules required students to balance academic tasks, organizational commitments, and performance preparation. They learned

²⁵⁰ Observation Notes of Music Training Rehearsals, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

²⁵¹ Interview with Siti Hidayah, Fourth-Semester Student of the Arabic Language Education Program, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 23, 2025.

discipline by being punctual, completing their parts, and adhering to deadlines before the performance. The course instructor, Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, emphasized:

“Musicalization fosters discipline; there is a timeline and a target that must be achieved, so students learn to prepare themselves seriously.”²⁵²

In addition, students’ self-confidence increased significantly. Public speaking skills were developed through repeated rehearsals and performances. Several students acknowledged that the experience of performing in musicalization made them more prepared to deliver academic presentations in other courses. A student, Fathur Rahman, stated:

“Now I am more confident when presenting, because I am already accustomed to performing in front of many people.”²⁵³

Teamwork skills were also honed. Students learned to understand group dynamics, respect differences in ability, and unify their vision in a shared project. This process cultivated leadership as well as collective responsibility. Such competencies align with the graduate attributes expected by the university, namely graduates who are not only academically intelligent but also mature in social skills.

Furthermore, additional technical skills were developed, such as the ability to operate simple musical instruments, manage stage settings, and coordinate body movements with rhythm. All of these enriched the students’ experience and prepared them to face various collaborative situations in the future.

²⁵² Interview with Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, M.Ag., Lecturer of *Mahārah al-Kalām*, May 20, 2025.

²⁵³ Interview with Fathur Rahman, Fourth-Semester Student of the Arabic Language Education Program, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 25, 2025.

Thus, Arabic poetry musicalization not only improved linguistic competence but also shaped graduate profiles with a balance between academic ability and soft skills. This learning model proves that art can serve as an effective medium for developing 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, and leadership.

2. Outcomes/Impacts at UII Dalwa Pasuruan

a. Strengthening of Religious Identity

The Arabic poetry musicalization implemented at UII Dalwa Pasuruan has had a profound impact on strengthening the students' religious identity. Unlike the context of general universities, the pesantren atmosphere makes this activity not only understood as a language exercise but also as a form of worship and *syi'ar* (religious expression). The rhythm and recitation of Arabic verses are perceived as a means of drawing closer to Allah while reinforcing a sense of belonging to the pesantren tradition.²⁵⁴

For the *santri*, musicalization functions as a medium of internalizing values. The poems recited generally contain prayers, praises for the Prophet, or excerpts of wisdom from Islamic scholars, thereby directly enhancing spiritual awareness. A student, Abdul Karim, shared his experience:

“I feel more spiritually absorbed when memorizing and reciting Arabic verses with melody. It feels as though I am performing *dhikr*, not merely studying language.”²⁵⁵

This activity also fostered pride and a sense of ownership toward pesantren heritage. The students viewed musicalization as a

²⁵⁴ Field Notes of Music Performance Activities, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Abdul Karim, Senior High School Level Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 18, 2025.

contemporary form of long-standing traditions such as *qasidah* and *hadrah*, making them feel part of an enduring cultural lineage. One senior student, Nurul Huda, remarked:

“We feel like part of the pesantren legacy when chanting Arabic verses in a format we enjoy. It feels like continuing the deeds of our *kiai*, but in a fresher way.”²⁵⁶

Beyond spiritual reinforcement, musicalization also shaped a collective identity among the *santri*. The process of rehearsal and performance was carried out collaboratively, nurturing solidarity and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). Islamic identity was thus experienced not only as an individual trait but as a communal experience felt collectively. Photo documentation of activities shows the involvement of students across levels—from juniors to seniors—sharing the same stage.²⁵⁷

From the perspective of the *pengasuh* (caretakers), musicalization is regarded as a medium compatible with pesantren culture, as long as it maintains *adab* and Sharia-based values. KH. Hasan Abdul Wahid, one of Dalwa’s caretakers, emphasized:

“Art can be a means to strengthen *adab*, as long as it is properly guided. Through musicalization, students learn language while also learning stage manners and togetherness.”²⁵⁸

These statements demonstrate that religious identity at Dalwa is strengthened not only through *kitab* study but also through meaningful creative activities. Through musicalization, the process of learning Arabic does not lose its spiritual essence—on the

²⁵⁶ Interview with Nurul Huda, Senior Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 20, 2025.

²⁵⁷ Photo Documentation of Musicalization Activities, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁵⁸ Interview with KH. Hasan Abdul Wahid, Caretaker of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 21, 2025.

contrary, it becomes more deeply rooted as it is directly connected to the students' daily spiritual practices.

b. Regular Performances

One of the distinctive features of the implementation of Arabic poetry musicalization at UII Dalwa Pasuruan is the sustainability of the activity through regular performances. These are not limited to classroom events but are also carried out in internal pesantren forums such as *malam khidmat* (devotional evenings), *haul* commemorations, and celebrations of Islamic holidays. This consistent pattern has transformed musicalization from a mere methodological experiment into an integral part of the pesantren's learning ecosystem and cultural life.²⁵⁹

The scheduled performances instill discipline and consistency among the *santri*. Each group is given the opportunity to perform in turns, ensuring that every student gains equal experience in practicing, preparing, and showcasing their abilities before an audience. Intensive rehearsals are conducted several times prior to the event, with clear divisions of roles among vocalists, rhythm arrangers, and poetry readers. Photographic documentation of these activities depicts an atmosphere filled with both enthusiasm and reverence.²⁶⁰

For the *santri*, performance moments serve as a medium of self-actualization as well as collective evaluation. They not only learn to speak Arabic fluently but also to present themselves on stage with confidence. One student, Muhammad Ridwan, shared his experience:

²⁵⁹ Schedule of Musicalization Performances, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁶⁰ Photo Documentation of Music Rehearsals, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

“When performing on stage, I felt extremely nervous. But after frequent rehearsals, I got used to it, and now I feel more confident when I have to speak in front of many people.”²⁶¹

In addition to serving as a learning tool, regular performances also reinforce the sense of togetherness within the pesantren. These events, which involve all levels of *santri*, become spaces for fellowship and cooperation. Junior students learn from their seniors, while senior students have the opportunity to practice leadership by coordinating the flow of the performances. This pattern aligns with the pesantren tradition of *ta'dīb*, a form of education grounded in example and mentorship.²⁶²

Musicalization performances have also brought a new nuance to official pesantren events. The combination of simple musical accompaniment with Arabic poetry creates a spiritual yet refreshing atmosphere that captures the audience's attention. Several *kiai* have even expressed that such performances make pesantren events livelier without diminishing their solemnity. This indicates strong acceptance from the caretakers toward the innovation of art-based language learning methods.²⁶³

Thus, the regular performances at UII Dalwa Pasuruan function not merely as entertainment but also as a medium for character education, language skill development, and the reinforcement of pesantren tradition. The integration of disciplined rehearsal, performance evaluation, and cultural appreciation establishes musicalization as an essential and inseparable component of the pesantren's educational process.

²⁶¹ Interview with Muhammad Ridwan, Senior High School Level Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 19, 2025.

²⁶² Field Observation Notes on Performance, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁶³ Interview with KH. Ahmad Mubarak, Caretaker of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 22, 2025.

c. Integration of Pesantren Culture

The Arabic poetry musicalization at UII Dalwa Pasuruan did not emerge as something foreign but was instead integrated with the long-established pesantren culture. Each activity was always preceded by prayer, greetings, and *tawasul*, in accordance with Dalwa's distinctive traditions. Thus, musicalization functioned not only as a language learning method but also as a means to strengthen the *santri*'s manners (*adab*) and spirituality.²⁶⁴

This integration was evident in every performance. The *santri* adjusted their rehearsal schedules so as not to interfere with the main religious activities such as *pengajian kitab*, *halaqah*, or congregational prayers. This demonstrated harmony between creative activities and the religious commitments that form the core of pesantren life. One student, Zainal Abidin, shared:

“Musicalization rehearsals never reduce our obligations. In fact, we become even more motivated because this activity is directed toward adding blessings to our Arabic learning.”²⁶⁵

The pesantren caretakers viewed this integration positively. KH. Hasan Abdul Wahid, one of Dalwa's *kiai*, emphasized that art can serve as a medium of moral education if properly guided. According to him:

“Art can be a way to strengthen *adab*. Through musicalization, the students learn Arabic while also learning how to maintain proper manners when appearing before others.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Field Notes on the Integration of Musicalization, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Zainal Abidin, Senior High School Level Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 20, 2025.

²⁶⁶ Interview with KH. Hasan Abdul Wahid, Caretaker of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 21, 2025.

The students also felt that musicalization deepened their connection with pesantren tradition. The melodies used often adopted patterns from classical *qasidah* or *syi'ir*, creating continuity between old heritage and new innovation. This made them feel part of a long cultural lineage. One student, M. Fikri, stated:

“We feel closer to pesantren tradition because this musicalization continues the *qasidah*, but in a form that fits our generation better.”²⁶⁷

The integration of pesantren culture was also evident in the mentoring pattern. Senior students acted as guides for their juniors, teaching not only musicalization techniques but also proper manners when performing. This model aligns with the principle of *ta'dib*, in which the transfer of knowledge is always accompanied by the transfer of ethics. In this way, musicalization became a practical medium for character education within Dalwa's environment.²⁶⁸

Thus, Arabic poetry musicalization has successfully merged with pesantren life—preserving Islamic values while providing space for innovation among the *santri*. It not only strengthened linguistic skills but also reinforced the cultural and religious identity of Dalwa as a pesantren community.

²⁶⁷ Interview with M. Fikri, Senior Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 23, 2025.

²⁶⁸ Observation of Music Rehearsal and Senior–Junior Mentoring, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

E. Futuristic Key Findings

1. Islamic Edutainment

An important finding of this research is the emergence of an *Islamic edutainment* model—learning that integrates education with religiously inspired entertainment. Both at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan, the musicalization of Arabic poetry has proven effective in enhancing students’ and *santri*’s emotional, spiritual, and cognitive engagement. In this way, language learning is no longer perceived as a rigid activity but as an enjoyable and meaningful experience.²⁶⁹

The concept of Islamic edutainment aligns with the needs of the younger generation, who are more responsive to creative approaches. The rhythm, poetic recitation, and stage performance bring vitality to both classroom and pesantren environments. Yet, unlike profane entertainment, Islamic edutainment preserves the spirit of religiosity. A lecturer at UIN Maliki, Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, emphasized:

“Students study more diligently because they feel as though they are playing music, while in fact they are enriching their Arabic vocabulary.”²⁷⁰

The *santri* at Dalwa experienced the same effect. Nurul Huda, one of the senior students, noted:

“We feel more spiritually focused and joyful because the rhythm of musicalization creates a *dhikr*-like atmosphere, not mere entertainment.”²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Classroom and Boarding School Observation Notes, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang & Dalwa Islamic Boarding School Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁷⁰ Interview with Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, M.Ag., Lecturer of *Mahārah al-Kalām*, May 20, 2025.

²⁷¹ Interview with Nurul Huda, Senior Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 20, 2025.

Thus, Islamic edutainment bridges the affective needs of the younger generation with the value orientations of Islamic universities and pesantren. It embodies a balance between creativity and spirituality, positioning art as a meaningful pedagogical tool within the framework of Islamic education.

2. Virtual Performance

Another futuristic impact is the emergence of the *virtual performance* concept. The documentation of musicalization activities in audio-visual form has opened opportunities for online performances. By utilizing YouTube channels or streaming platforms, the works of students and *santri* can be disseminated more widely and enjoyed by audiences across universities and even across countries.²⁷²

This model enables collaborative learning in a virtual format. Students can provide time-stamped comments, lecturers can offer feedback through digital platforms, while *santri* from other pesantren can watch and learn simultaneously. Dr. Syahrul explained:

“If students’ musicalization works are published virtually, we can create cross-class and even cross-country discussion forums.”²⁷³

Through virtual performances, the potential of Islamic edutainment can be developed further. *Santri* from Dalwa can present religious verses in online forums, while students from UIN Maliki can upload Arabic-language performative works with higher production quality. This approach aligns with the evolution of global digital culture, which promotes technological literacy while expanding the reach of *da‘wah* through art.

²⁷² Video Documentation of Musicalization Project, Arabic Language Education Department, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

²⁷³ Interview with Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, M.Ag., Lecturer of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 22, 2025.

3. International Module

The final futuristic finding is the plan to develop an *International Arabic Poetry Musicalization Module*. This module is designed to facilitate Arabic language learning through a performative approach that can be used across universities and even across countries. The module structure consists of six to eight units, covering themes from classical Arabic poetry, *shalawat*, to modern Arabic poems, complete with prosody guidelines, performance techniques, and assessment rubrics.²⁷⁴

The strength of this module lies in its integration of linguistic, cultural, and technological dimensions. Students are not only learning the language but also mastering performance organization, digital content production, and spiritual reflection. According to field notes, the teaching team at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang has already begun drafting the module, while Dalwa has opened opportunities for a pilot collaboration project through a virtual *santri–student exchange* program.²⁷⁵

In the long term, this module has the potential to become an international learning reference, particularly in Southeast Asia, which hosts a large community of Arabic language studies. The module will integrate Islamic values, pesantren traditions, and modern technology—showcasing a new face of Arabic language education that is both innovative and deeply rooted in religious values.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Draft Plan for the Arabic Poetry Musicalization Module, Faculty Team of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

²⁷⁵ Minutes of Virtual Collaboration Meeting between UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, June 2025.

²⁷⁶ Analytical Report on the Potential for International Module Development, Arabic Language Development Center, 2025.

F. Data Findings

The implementation of Arabic poetry musicalization at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan demonstrates a significant impact on both linguistic competence and the strengthening of religious identity. Academically, students at UIN Maliki showed notable improvement in fluency, confidence, and accuracy in speaking Arabic, with data indicating that eighty percent of participants achieved positive progress.²⁷⁷ This finding confirms the relevance of creative methods in Arabic language teaching, particularly in developing speaking skills.

Beyond linguistic achievement, musicalization activities also produced digital creative products that enhanced students' technological literacy. The video content published through the study program's YouTube channel served simultaneously as documentation, reflection media, and academic promotion.²⁷⁸ This signifies that Arabic language learning can transform into a process that also equips students with essential twenty-first-century skills.

Another equally important impact is the development of soft skills. Collaborative activities, rehearsals, and performances cultivated interpersonal communication, time management, leadership, and self-confidence among students. Arabic poetry musicalization has proven to be a laboratory for shaping graduate profiles that balance academic competence with social and emotional intelligence.²⁷⁹

At Dalwa Pasuruan, musicalization provided a new dimension in strengthening *santri's* religious identity. The activity was perceived as part of the pesantren tradition, where Arabic verses sung in melodic form were not only tools for language learning but also media for *dhikr* and *syi'ar*.

²⁷⁷ Recapitulation of *Mahārah al-Kalām* Assessment, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Even Semester 2025.

²⁷⁸ Documentation of the Arabic Language Education Department YouTube Channel, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

²⁷⁹ Interview with Siti Hidayah, Fourth-Semester Student of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, May 23, 2025.

The *santri* experienced deeper emotional and spiritual attachment when learning Arabic through the musicalization format.²⁸⁰

Furthermore, regular performances made musicalization an integral component of the pesantren ecosystem. Structured rehearsals, scheduled performances, and collective evaluations fostered discipline and togetherness. Junior students learned from their seniors, while senior students practiced leadership through organizing events. Thus, musicalization not only enhanced language skills but also nurtured social and spiritual character.²⁸¹

The integration with pesantren culture further strengthened acceptance of the method. Musicalization was conducted without disrupting core religious activities, always began with prayer, and was directed in alignment with *adab* values. The support of the *kiai* affirmed that art can serve as a medium of moral education when properly guided. This reflects an adaptive educational model—one that accommodates modern creativity while remaining rooted in tradition.²⁸²

Overall, this research affirms the emergence of an *Islamic edutainment* concept, in which Arabic language learning is harmonized with spiritually inspired entertainment. Musicalization is not merely a methodological variation but a new pedagogical paradigm that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions into a unified learning experience.²⁸³

Future development potential can be seen in the form of *virtual performances*—the online publication of musicalization works to expand audience reach and strengthen inter-campus and inter-pesantren

²⁸⁰ Interview with Abdul Karim, Senior High School Level Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 18, 2025.

²⁸¹ Observation of Musicalization Performance, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁸² Interview with KH. Hasan Abdul Wahid, Caretaker of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 21, 2025.

²⁸³ Interview with Nurul Huda, Senior Student of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, May 20, 2025.

collaboration networks. In addition, the plan to develop an international module opens the possibility for this method to be adopted globally, particularly within Southeast Asia's Arabic language education community.²⁸⁴

Thus, Arabic poetry musicalization can be viewed as a core strategy for teaching Arabic speaking skills in both university and pesantren contexts. Its impacts encompass linguistic enhancement, character formation, reinforcement of religiosity, and mastery of twenty-first-century competencies.

The final conclusion of this chapter is that Arabic poetry musicalization holds great potential to be more widely adopted as an innovative learning model. As long as its implementation remains aligned with *adab* and Islamic spirituality, this method will continue to make a meaningful and sustainable contribution to the development of Arabic language education in Indonesia and the international academic community.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Draft Plan for the Arabic Poetry Musicalization Module, Faculty Team of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

²⁸⁵ Analytical Report on the Potential for International Module Development, Arabic Language Development Center, 2025.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The previous chapter presented the research findings that illustrated the various impacts of implementing Arabic poetry musicalization in two different contexts—UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan. Chapter IV showed that musicalization was effective in enhancing linguistic skills, generating digital creative products, developing soft skills, strengthening religious identity, revitalizing pesantren traditions, and opening the possibility for the emergence of a futuristic model of Islamic *edutainment*. These results constitute empirical data that provide a concrete picture of the effectiveness of the musicalization method in Arabic language learning.

However, empirical data alone are incomplete without critical analysis. Therefore, this chapter serves as a discussion space to examine the research findings more deeply using the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter II. This analysis connects the field results with the conceptual framework, allowing us to see to what extent the findings align with, complement, or even extend existing theories.

This discussion is organized into several subsections. The first compares the implementation of musicalization at UIN Maliki and Dalwa to identify differences in orientation, method, and outcomes. The second analyzes both the strengths and weaknesses of the musicalization model as a learning approach. The third presents a synthesis of a holistic learning model that integrates linguistic, religious, cultural, and digital dimensions. The fourth discusses the practical implications of these research findings for curriculum development in universities, the preservation of pesantren traditions, government policy support, and community engagement.

Thus, Chapter V does not merely summarize the research findings but also provides a broader understanding of the position of Arabic poetry musicalization

within the landscape of Arabic language education in Indonesia. This discussion is expected to offer a solid foundation for designing learning models that are both innovative and contextually relevant, while also paving the way for further research development in the future.

In this chapter, the researcher will analyze: a) A comparison between UIN Maliki and UII Dalwa, b) The strengths and weaknesses of the model, c) The synthesis of a holistic learning model, and d) The implications for universities, government, and society.

A. Comparison between UIN Maliki and UII Dalwa

The implementation of Arabic poetry musicalization at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan reveals two distinct yet complementary forms of application. At UIN Maliki, the primary focus lies in improving students' linguistic competence, particularly *mahārah al-kalām* (speaking skills). Meanwhile, at Dalwa, greater emphasis is placed on strengthening religious identity and integrating pesantren traditions with artistic practice. These differences in orientation stem from the institutions' backgrounds—one being a university with a formal academic vision, and the other a pesantren with a deeply rooted religious character.

²⁸⁶

From a linguistic perspective, UIN Maliki demonstrates significant improvement. Eighty percent of students showed progress in fluency, confidence, and accuracy. This finding aligns with the theory of *Communicative Language Teaching*, which emphasizes that language learning should focus on authentic use in communicative contexts.²⁸⁷

Musicalization provides a natural space for spoken practice, thereby supporting this pedagogical goal.

²⁸⁶ Field Research Notes on the Arabic Poetry Musicalization Project, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and Dalwa Islamic Boarding School Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁸⁷ Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 66.

In contrast, the *santri* at Dalwa tend to emphasize *intonation* and *memorization of verses*. Musicalization assists them in internalizing Arabic prosody more effectively, consistent with the *Prosodic Approach* in second-language acquisition, which underscores the importance of rhythm and intonation in strengthening oral competence.²⁸⁸ In other words, while musicalization at UIN Maliki functions as a medium for *fluency*, at Dalwa it serves as a medium for *prosody* and *retention*.

From an affective perspective, students at UIN Maliki benefit through enhanced self-confidence and soft skills. This can be analyzed through Krashen's *Affective Filter Hypothesis*, which posits that enjoyable learning conditions lower emotional barriers and facilitate greater language input.²⁸⁹ Musicalization—with its artistic rhythm and playful atmosphere—successfully creates a psychologically safe environment in which students can practice without fear of making mistakes.

At Dalwa, the affective dimension extends beyond self-confidence to encompass spirituality. Musicalization is perceived as a collective *dhikr* (remembrance of God), so *santri* experience it as an act of worship rather than merely a linguistic exercise. This corresponds to *pesantren* educational theory, which situates spirituality as the core of all learning activities. Thus, musicalization at Dalwa reinforces the *santri's* religious identity while simultaneously enhancing their Arabic competence.²⁹⁰

The cultural aspect further distinguishes the two institutions. At UIN Maliki, musicalization has evolved into a form of digital creative production—performance recordings uploaded to YouTube and repurposed for reflection and feedback. This practice aligns with Gilster's (1997) concept of *digital literacy*, where learners are not merely

²⁸⁸ Marianne Celce-Murcia, Donna M. Brinton, and Janet M. Goodwin, *Teaching Pronunciation: A Course Book and Reference Guide*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 212.

²⁸⁹ Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), 32

²⁹⁰ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 45.

consumers but also producers of digital content.²⁹¹ Conversely, Dalwa situates musicalization within the framework of routine performances rooted in *pesantrén* traditions, resembling *qasidah* and *hadrah*. This reflects the principle of *culturally responsive pedagogy*, which emphasizes integrating local culture into education.²⁹²

In terms of outcomes, UIN Maliki demonstrates measurable quantitative improvement through increased speaking test scores. Meanwhile, Dalwa's outcomes are more qualitative: enhanced sense of belonging to tradition, deepened devotion in learning, and the formation of collective religious identity. These differences indicate that musicalization possesses goal flexibility that adapts to the institutional context.²⁹³

From an institutional standpoint, UIN Maliki employs musicalization to enhance academic competitiveness and student portfolios. Students gain both soft skills and digital documentation that can support their academic or professional careers. Dalwa, on the other hand, uses musicalization to strengthen *ukhuwah* (communal solidarity) and preserve *pesantrén* continuity. In other words, UIN Maliki emphasizes *professionalization*, whereas Dalwa prioritizes *value conservation*.²⁹⁴

Both approaches converge in their collaborative dimension. Students and *santri* alike must work together, rehearse collectively, and build shared performances. This corresponds to *Experiential Learning Theory*, which asserts that knowledge is constructed through direct experience. Through musicalization, learners engage with the language not merely

²⁹¹ Paul Gilster, *Digital Literacy* (New York: Wiley, 1997), 1–3.

²⁹² James A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 7th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2009), 23

²⁹³ Field Observation Documentation, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan, 2025.

²⁹⁴ Analysis of interview results with Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, lecturer at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, and KH. Hasan Abdul Wahid, caretaker of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School Pasuruan, May 2025.

from textbooks but through the lived experience of performing and interacting.²⁹⁵

From a pedagogical perspective, this comparison confirms that musicalization is a flexible model adaptable to diverse educational settings. In the university, it operates as a digital-based strategy for linguistic enhancement. In the pesantren, it serves as a spiritual and cultural medium that reinforces tradition. This flexibility exemplifies *contextual pedagogy*—a method capable of adapting to institutional backgrounds without losing its effectiveness.²⁹⁶

In conclusion, the comparison between UIN Maliki and Dalwa reveals two complementary faces of Arabic poetry musicalization: the *academic-digital* and the *religious-traditional*. Both are equally effective yet differ in orientation and outcomes. This analysis strengthens the finding that musicalization is not merely a language-teaching method, but also a medium for identity formation, cultural continuity, and the cultivation of new literacies relevant to the demands of the contemporary era.²⁹⁷

B. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Musicalization Model

The Arabic poetry musicalization model implemented at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan possesses a number of strengths that make it both innovative and relevant within the context of Arabic language education.

The first strength lies in its ability to enhance linguistic competence. Musicalization provides opportunities for students to practice *fluency*, *accuracy*, and *prosody* in Arabic. This finding aligns with Hymes' (1972)

²⁹⁵ David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 41.

²⁹⁶ James A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 7th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2009), 23.

²⁹⁷ Synthesis of Field Research Findings on the Arab Poetry Musicalization Project, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan, 2025

Communicative Competence Theory, which asserts that language mastery extends beyond grammatical knowledge to include the ability to use language appropriately in real communicative contexts.²⁹⁸

The second strength concerns the reduction of affective barriers in language learning. The joyful atmosphere created through music and art allows students and *santri* to speak more freely without fear of making mistakes. This supports Krashen's *Affective Filter Hypothesis*, which suggests that positive emotional states lower the affective filter and facilitate language input.²⁹⁹ Through musicalization, the learning environment becomes more relaxed, interactive, and conducive to intrinsic motivation.

From the perspective of character education, musicalization effectively strengthens *soft skills*. At UIN Maliki, students develop time management, leadership, teamwork, and public-speaking abilities. At Dalwa, *santri* cultivate discipline, obedience to pesantren regulations, and group solidarity. These outcomes correspond to Kolb's (1984) *Experiential Learning Theory*, which emphasizes that social and practical skills are developed through direct experience.³⁰⁰

Another key strength lies in the integration of culture and religiosity. At Dalwa, musicalization is regarded as part of pesantren tradition, consistent with the practices of *qasidah* and *hadrah*. *Santri* perceive the activity as both worship and learning, thereby reinforcing their religious identity. This aligns with Azra's (2019) perspective that pesantren education is deeply rooted in religious and local cultural values.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Dell Hymes, *On Communicative Competence*, in *Sociolinguistics*, ed. J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 269.

²⁹⁹ Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), 32.

³⁰⁰ David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 41.

³⁰¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru* (Jakarta: Logos, 2019), 115.

At UIN Maliki, musicalization also led to the production of digital creative outputs—video recordings published on the program’s YouTube channel. This activity fosters digital literacy, a crucial competence in the twenty-first century. The finding supports *Digital Literacy Theory* (Gilster, 1997), which emphasizes the importance of learners becoming active producers, not merely consumers, of digital content.³⁰²

Despite these numerous strengths, the model is not without weaknesses. One major limitation is the time-intensive nature of rehearsals. At UIN Maliki, students often sacrifice extracurricular hours to prepare for performances. At Dalwa, rehearsal schedules occasionally conflict with core pesantren obligations such as *halaqah* or regular worship sessions. This challenge aligns with *Time Management in Learning Theory*, which stresses the importance of balancing academic and non-academic activities.³⁰³

Another weakness concerns technical limitations. At UIN Maliki, digital content production still relies on modest equipment, which restricts recording quality. At Dalwa, the use of musical instruments is limited to comply with pesantren norms regarding artistic expression. These conditions exemplify the concept of *resource-based learning limitation*, in which inadequate facilities constrain learning outcomes.³⁰⁴

Cultural resistance also emerges as a challenge. Some traditionalist circles within pesantren communities still perceive musicalization as potentially distracting or diminishing the solemnity of worship. Although most *kiai* support the practice, this resistance reveals the inherent tension between innovation and tradition. According to *Innovation Resistance*

³⁰² Paul Gilster, *Digital Literacy* (New York: Wiley, 1997), 1–3.

³⁰³ Brigitte Claessens, Wendelien van Eerde, Christel Rutte, and Robert Roe, “A Review of the Time Management Literature,” *Personnel Review* 36, no. 2 (2007): 255.

³⁰⁴ Peggy A. Ertmer, “Addressing First- and Second-Order Barriers to Change: Strategies for Technology Integration,” *Educational Technology Research and Development* 47, no. 4 (1999): 48.

Theory, the adoption of new methods often encounters barriers from established value systems.³⁰⁵

Additionally, there is a risk of artistic overemphasis. When students or *santri* focus excessively on musical harmony, the linguistic learning objectives may be overshadowed. Therefore, instructors and *kiai* must ensure a balanced integration between artistic performance and pedagogical goals.

Another limitation is the lack of systematic documentation and evaluation. Although video recordings exist, quantitative assessment mechanisms are still underdeveloped, particularly within pesantren settings. Without clear evaluation rubrics, it is difficult to measure language improvement objectively. This underscores the need for standardized performance assessment tools, as recommended in *Performance Assessment Theory*.³⁰⁶

In summary, the main strengths of the musicalization model lie in its capacity to improve linguistic competence, reduce affective barriers, develop soft skills, and strengthen cultural-religious identity. Its weaknesses include time constraints, limited technical resources, cultural resistance, potential neglect of linguistic focus, and the absence of systematic evaluation.

Overall, the strengths of this model far outweigh its weaknesses. The existing challenges can be addressed through effective time management, better resource allocation, continuous dialogue with traditionalist communities, and the development of objective evaluation instruments. Therefore, the musicalization model remains a highly viable and innovative approach for Arabic language instruction across various Islamic educational contexts in Indonesia.

³⁰⁵ Shailendra Rajendra Ram and Jagdish N. Sheth, "Consumer Resistance to Innovations: The Marketing Problem and its Solutions," *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 6, no. 2 (1989): 6–7.

³⁰⁶ H. Douglas Brown and Priyanvada Abeywickrama, *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices* (White Plains, NY: Pearson Education, 2010), 67.

C. Synthesis of a Holistic Learning Model

The research findings from UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan reveal that the musicalization of Arabic poetry functions not only as a strategy for improving language skills but also as a medium for character formation, the strengthening of religious identity, and the development of digital literacy. Thus, the musicalization model can be regarded as a holistic learning approach, integrating the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, religious, cultural, and digital domains within a unified learning experience.³⁰⁷

From a cognitive perspective, musicalization trains students and *santri* in vocabulary acquisition, grammar mastery, and speaking skills. The rhythm of music serves as a mnemonic device that facilitates memory retention and accelerates language internalization. This finding aligns with *holistic learning theory*, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of thought and emotion in the learning process.³⁰⁸

In the affective domain, musicalization fosters intrinsic motivation, reduces anxiety, and builds confidence in using Arabic. Such positive psychological conditions represent a crucial element of the holistic approach, as language learning success depends not only on cognitive factors but also on emotional and social dynamics.³⁰⁹

The psychomotor dimension also occupies a significant role. Musicalization requires bodily engagement through gestures, intonation, facial expression, and stage performance. This transforms language learning into a multisensory experience that involves sound, movement,

³⁰⁷ Field Research Notes on the Arab Poetry Musicalization Project, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan, 2025.

³⁰⁸ John P. Miller, *The Holistic Curriculum*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 15.

³⁰⁹ Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), 32.

and emotion simultaneously. As a result, learning becomes active, creative, and performative rather than passive and mechanical.³¹⁰

The religious dimension distinguishes the Indonesian musicalization model from Western artistic approaches to language learning. At Dalwa, musicalization is associated with *dhikr*, *shalawat*, and *adab*—the ethical conduct central to pesantren life. It thereby serves not merely as a method, but as a means of nurturing *faith* and *akhlaq* (moral character). In this sense, musicalization embodies the essence of Islamic edutainment—a form of entertainment integrated with spiritual value formation.³¹¹

The cultural dimension is also highly significant, particularly at Dalwa. Musicalization is perceived as a continuation of *qasidah* and *hadrah* traditions, while at UIN Maliki it appears through students' creativity in adapting modern Arabic poetry into contemporary performance formats. This cultural integration aligns with the principles of *culturally responsive pedagogy*, which emphasizes the importance of cultural relevance in learning success.³¹²

The digital aspect represents a major innovation, particularly at UIN Maliki. Performance documentation in the form of videos and publication through YouTube channels transforms musicalization into both a learning medium and a digital portfolio. Students not only learn the language but also acquire technological literacy relevant to the demands of the Industry 4.0 era. This demonstrates the adaptability of the musicalization model to modern developments without losing its essential pedagogical values.³¹³

From the comparative analysis of both institutions, a synthetic holistic model of Arabic poetry musicalization can be formulated. The

³¹⁰ David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 41.

³¹¹ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 45.

³¹² James A. Banks, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, 7th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2009), 23.

³¹³ Paul Gilster, *Digital Literacy* (New York: Wiley, 1997), 1–3.

model integrates five interrelated dimensions: (1) linguistic, (2) affective, (3) psychomotor, (4) religious-cultural, and (5) digital. Through these five dimensions, musicalization fosters not only linguistic proficiency but also holistic personal development—academically intelligent, emotionally mature, socially skilled, spiritually grounded, and technologically literate individuals.³¹⁴

This synthesized model may be visualized as a bridge between the academic and pesantren worlds. From the university side, musicalization contributes professionalism, digital documentation, and curriculum innovation. From the pesantren side, it contributes tradition, *adab*, and spirituality. The combination of these elements produces a contextually adaptive learning model relevant for both higher education institutions and faith-based schools.³¹⁵

The theoretical implication of this synthesis is the strengthening of *holistic learning theory* within an Islamic framework. While Miller's holistic theory emphasizes the integration of mind, body, and emotion, the Indonesian model of Arabic poetry musicalization extends the concept by incorporating religious and cultural dimensions. Hence, this model represents an Indonesian contribution to the global discourse on educational theory.³¹⁶

Practically, the model offers a fresh and integrative curricular alternative. It can be implemented as part of the *signature pedagogy* within Arabic language education programs or as a co-curricular activity in pesantren. With its multidimensional nature, musicalization responds

³¹⁴ Synthesis of Field Research Results on the Arab Poetry Musicalization Project, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan, 2025.

³¹⁵ Interview with Dr. Muhammad Syahrul, Lecturer at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, and KH. Hasan Abdul Wahid, Caretaker of Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, May 2025.

³¹⁶ Miller, *The Holistic Curriculum*, 17.

effectively to the needs of students and *santri* as a generation that is simultaneously religious, creative, and digitally oriented.³¹⁷

In conclusion, the holistic learning synthesis of Arabic poetry musicalization represents an integration of theory and practice, of tradition and modernity, and of religiosity and digitalization. This model demonstrates that Arabic language education can be designed not only for academic purposes but also for the formation of the whole person—intellectually, morally, spiritually, and culturally.³¹⁸

D. Implications for Universities, Government, and Society

The research findings on the Arabic poetry musicalization implemented at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan carry broad implications—not only for the academic world but also for pesantren, the government, and society at large. Musicalization, as a model of Arabic language learning, has proven to be effective, and therefore, practical measures are needed to amplify its impact.

1. Implications for Universities

For Islamic higher education institutions, particularly Arabic Language Education programs, musicalization can serve as a signature pedagogy—a distinctive instructional method that defines the identity of the discipline. This aligns with Shulman’s concept of signature pedagogy, which refers to teaching strategies that embody the essence of a profession or field of study. By adopting musicalization as part of the curriculum, universities can prepare students who are not only linguistically competent but also creative, confident, and digitally literate.

³¹⁷ Documentation of the Curriculum of the Arabic Language Education Study Program, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

³¹⁸ Analytical Report on the Potential of the Arab Poetry Musicalization Model, Center for Arabic Language Development, 2025.

Furthermore, musicalization can be integrated into the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) for courses such as *Mahārah al-Kalām*, *Adab wa Naqd*, or *Tarjamah*. Through this integration, students engage in more contextual learning experiences consistent with *experiential learning theory*, which emphasizes active participation and reflection in the learning process.³¹⁹ Universities can also utilize digital documentation of musicalization as an alternative portfolio-based assessment tool, rather than relying solely on written examinations.

Another implication for universities is the enhancement of academic reputation. Digital creative products in the form of musicalization videos can be published as academic content, showcasing innovation in Arabic language pedagogy to a wider public. This aligns with the trend of higher education internationalization, which encourages institutions to develop distinctive pedagogical innovations that reflect their academic identity.³²⁰

2. Implications for Pesantren

For pesantren such as Dalwa, musicalization offers significant opportunities to integrate tradition with innovation. The activity maintains the continuity of *qasidah* and Arabic poetic traditions but presents them in a more dynamic format. This demonstrates that pesantren can remain adaptive to modern developments without losing their religious authenticity. As Azra (2019) notes, strong pesantren traditions can serve as valuable cultural capital for selectively absorbing modernization.³²¹

Moreover, musicalization strengthens the education-by-example (ta'dib) system. Senior *santri* mentor their juniors during rehearsals, creating a natural process of knowledge and *adab* transmission. This

³¹⁹ David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 41.

³²⁰ Documentation of the Curriculum of the Arabic Language Education Study Program, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

³²¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru* (Jakarta: Logos, 2019), 115.

shows that musicalization functions as a leadership laboratory within pesantren, aligning with the principles of Islamic character education.³²²

Pesantren can also utilize musicalization as a medium for cultural da'wah. Regular performances of Arabic poetic compositions can attract public interest while simultaneously conveying moral and religious messages. In this way, pesantren are not only centers of classical Islamic learning but also hubs of Islamic cultural creativity.

3. Implications for Government

For the government, Arabic poetry musicalization can serve as a best practice in innovative language teaching within madrasah and Islamic higher education institutions. This initiative aligns with the *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn) policy, which emphasizes creativity and innovation in education.³²³ The government could promote the replication of this model through Arabic teacher training programs, ensuring broader dissemination and adoption.

In addition, musicalization can enhance religious literacy among young generations. By combining art and language, this method provides an engaging way to internalize spiritual values. Such an approach supports the government's *Religious Moderation Program*, in which art serves as an effective medium for nurturing a tolerant and open-minded religiosity.³²⁴

4. Implications for Society

For the broader community, Arabic poetry musicalization offers a creative model of da'wah that resonates strongly with younger audiences. The digital content published on YouTube and other platforms enables the

³²² Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2011), 83.

³²³ Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, *Kebijakan Merdeka Belajar* (Jakarta: Kemendikbud, 2020), 7.

³²⁴ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Penguatan Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kemenag RI, 2019), 12.

dissemination of Islamic art across communities and even across nations. This strengthens the position of Indonesian Muslims as pioneers of art-based and digitally literate da‘wah innovation.³²⁵

Musicalization also contributes to cultural resilience. Amidst the global flow of secular popular culture, musicalized Arabic poetry provides a positive alternative that reinforces cultural and spiritual identity. In this sense, musicalization is not only relevant within educational contexts but also plays a role in shaping the nation’s cultural and moral identity.³²⁶

³²⁵ Documentation of the YouTube Channel of the Arabic Language Education Study Program, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2025.

³²⁶ Observation Notes on the Musicalization Performance, Dalwa Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan, 2025.

CHAPTER VI

CLOSING

A. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the musicalization of Arabic poetry is an effective and flexible learning model capable of being adapted to two distinct educational contexts: the modern university setting of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and the traditional pesantren environment of UII Dalwa Pasuruan. At UIN Maliki, musicalization has been proven to enhance students' linguistic competence—particularly in *mahārah al-kalām* (speaking skills)—while also generating digital creative products and cultivating soft skills relevant to the needs of the digital era. Meanwhile, at Dalwa, musicalization functions as a medium for strengthening religious identity, preserving pesantren traditions, and fostering communal harmony and spiritual attentiveness in learning.

These differences in orientation reveal the pedagogical flexibility of the model: in the university context, musicalization serves an *academic-digital* role, whereas in the pesantren it assumes a *religious-traditional* role. Nevertheless, both contexts affirm that musicalization is an effective pedagogical medium for enhancing Arabic language competence while simultaneously shaping character. Hence, musicalization may be viewed as a bridge between modern language learning theory and the deeply rooted traditions of Islamic education.

The analysis in Chapter V indicates that the principal strength of musicalization lies in its capacity to integrate the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, religious, cultural, and digital dimensions into a single, unified learning experience. Its limitations—such as time constraints for rehearsal, limited technical facilities, and occasional traditional resistance—do not constitute major obstacles, as they can be addressed

through effective management strategies, institutional support, and the development of more systematic evaluation instruments.

From the resulting synthesis, Arabic poetry musicalization can be categorized as a distinctively Indonesian holistic learning model. It not only supports the enhancement of Arabic language skills but also reinforces religiosity, preserves cultural heritage, and fosters digital literacy. The contribution of this research lies in presenting a pedagogical approach that successfully integrates academia, spirituality, and creativity into one cohesive framework—making it highly relevant for higher education institutions, pesantren, and the broader society.

B. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that Islamic higher education institutions—particularly Arabic Language Education programs—integrate the musicalization of Arabic poetry more systematically into their curricula. This method can be incorporated into language skills courses as well as co-curricular activities. Universities should also provide technical support, such as recording facilities and creative spaces, so that musicalization products can serve as students' digital portfolios, contributing to both academic and professional development.

For pesantren, Arabic poetry musicalization can be developed as a medium of cultural da'wah aligned with traditional *qasidah* and *hadrah* practices. Pesantren leaders (*kiai*) are encouraged to motivate *santri* to use musicalization as a means of strengthening religious identity while also cultivating leadership and teamwork. With appropriate institutional support, pesantren can maintain their traditional character while embracing innovation relevant to the younger generation.

The government—through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education—may adopt Arabic poetry musicalization as a best

practice in innovative language learning. Arabic language teacher training programs could include musicalization as part of their instructional modules, enabling wider implementation in madrasahs and Islamic higher education institutions. In addition, regulatory and financial support should be provided to ensure that this form of religious art-based learning remains sustainable and integrated with national programs such as *Religious Moderation* and *Merdeka Belajar* (“Freedom to Learn”).

In general, this study recommends positioning Arabic poetry musicalization as a creative learning model responsive to the needs of the modern era. Through collaboration among universities, pesantren, and government agencies, this method can evolve not merely as a linguistic teaching technique but also as a strategic medium for cultural preservation and spiritual strengthening within society.

C. Suggestions for Further Research

This study was limited to two research sites—UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang and UII Dalwa Pasuruan—with a focus on the impact of Arabic poetry musicalization on language competence, religious identity, and the creativity of students and *santri*. Therefore, future research is encouraged to involve a wider range of institutions, including universities and pesantren from various regions. Such expansion would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the variations in musicalization practices across different social and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, subsequent studies should aim to develop more systematic evaluation instruments to quantitatively measure language skill improvement. For instance, a performance assessment rubric could be designed to cover aspects such as linguistic accuracy, musicality, expressiveness, and teamwork. Quantitative data-based evaluation would strengthen the existing qualitative findings, allowing the effectiveness of the musicalization method to be demonstrated more objectively.

Future research is also recommended to explore the integration of Arabic poetry musicalization with emerging educational technologies such as virtual reality or metaverse-based learning environments. Such experimentation could pave the way for the development of a more futuristic Islamic edutainment model, positioning musicalization as part of the broader innovation landscape in Arabic language education within the global digital era.

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