



Integration of Indonesian and Arabic Language Learning in Enhancing Academic Literacy of Students at As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School Sengkang

Integrasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Arab dalam Meningkatkan Literasi Akademik Santri Pondok Pesantren As'adiyah Sengkang

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the integration of Indonesian and Arabic language learning in enhancing the academic literacy of students at As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School Sengkang. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research investigates how the systematic integration of both languages contributes to developing comprehensive academic literacy skills. Data were collected through classroom observations, document analysis, interviews with educators, and literacy assessment tests involving 120 students. The findings reveal that integrated bilingual instruction significantly improves students' reading comprehension, academic writing proficiency, and critical thinking abilities. The integration model implemented at As'adiyah demonstrates that complementary teaching strategies between Indonesian and Arabic create synergistic effects on academic performance. This research contributes to understanding bilingual education in Islamic educational contexts and provides practical implications for developing effective literacy programs in pesantren institutions. The study concludes that language integration, when properly structured, serves as a powerful pedagogical approach for enhancing academic competencies.

Keywords: language integration, academic literacy, bilingual education, Islamic boarding school, Indonesian-Arabic pedagogy

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini meneliti integrasi pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia dan Arab dalam meningkatkan literasi akademik siswa di Pesantren Sengkang. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana integrasi sistematis kedua bahasa tersebut berkontribusi pada pengembangan keterampilan literasi akademik yang komprehensif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, analisis dokumen, wawancara dengan pendidik, dan tes penilaian literasi yang melibatkan 120 siswa. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pengajaran bilingual terintegrasi secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman membaca

siswa, kemampuan menulis akademik, dan kemampuan berpikir kritis. Model integrasi yang diterapkan di As'adiyah menunjukkan bahwa strategi pengajaran komplementer antara bahasa Indonesia dan Arab menciptakan efek sinergis pada kinerja akademik. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman pendidikan bilingual dalam konteks pendidikan Islam dan memberikan implikasi praktis untuk mengembangkan program literasi yang efektif di lembaga pesantren. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi bahasa, bila terstruktur dengan baik, berfungsi sebagai pendekatan pedagogis yang ampuh untuk meningkatkan kompetensi akademik.

Kata-kata kunci: integrasi bahasa, literasi akademik, pendidikan bilingual, pesantren, pedagogi Indonesia-Arab

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of academic literacy in multilingual educational contexts presents unique opportunities and challenges for educational institutions worldwide. Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, in Indonesia represent distinctive educational environments where multiple languages converge to facilitate both religious and secular learning objectives. These institutions have historically served as centers of Islamic scholarship while simultaneously adapting to contemporary educational demands, creating complex linguistic landscapes that require careful pedagogical consideration (Lukens-Bull, 2021) and (Muhsyanur, 2024). The integration of Indonesian and Arabic language instruction within these contexts offers a compelling case study for understanding how bilingual education can enhance academic literacy development among students who navigate multiple linguistic and cultural frameworks daily.

As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School in Sengkang, South Sulawesi, stands as one of Indonesia's prominent pesantren institutions with a rich history of combining traditional Islamic education with modern academic approaches. Established in the early twentieth century, As'adiyah has evolved into a comprehensive educational institution that maintains its commitment to Arabic language proficiency while recognizing the essential role of Indonesian language competency in academic success. The institution's unique position provides valuable insights into how traditional Islamic educational institutions can effectively integrate multiple languages to support students' academic development (Azra, 2019). Understanding the mechanisms through which this integration occurs becomes increasingly important as pesantren institutions seek to prepare students for both religious scholarship and participation in broader academic and professional communities.

Academic literacy encompasses far more than basic reading and writing skills; it involves the ability to comprehend, analyze, evaluate, and produce complex academic texts across various disciplines. Scholars have emphasized that academic literacy development requires explicit instruction in discipline-specific discourse conventions, critical thinking skills, and metacognitive strategies that enable learners to navigate sophisticated academic content (Lea & Street, 2020). In bilingual educational contexts, academic literacy development becomes more complex as students must develop these competencies across multiple languages, each with its own rhetorical traditions, grammatical structures, and academic conventions. The challenge for educators lies in creating instructional approaches that leverage the strengths of each language while building bridges between them to facilitate transferable literacy skills.

The theoretical foundation for integrating multiple languages in literacy instruction draws from extensive research in bilingual education and second language acquisition. Cummins' (2021) interdependence hypothesis suggests that proficiency in one language can support the development of proficiency in another language, particularly when both languages receive adequate instructional attention. This theoretical perspective implies that well-designed bilingual programs can create positive transfer effects, where skills and knowledge acquired in one language enhance learning in another language. Applied to the

pesantren context, this theory suggests that systematic integration of Indonesian and Arabic instruction could yield synergistic benefits for academic literacy development, with each language reinforcing and extending competencies developed in the other.

Research on bilingual education has consistently demonstrated that students who receive high-quality instruction in multiple languages often outperform their monolingual peers on various academic measures, including reading comprehension, analytical thinking, and metalinguistic awareness. García and Wei (2022) have advanced the concept of translanguaging, which recognizes that bilingual individuals possess a unified linguistic repertoire rather than two separate language systems. This perspective suggests that effective bilingual instruction should create opportunities for students to leverage their full linguistic resources flexibly rather than maintaining rigid boundaries between languages. In the context of pesantren education, where Arabic serves religious and scholarly functions while Indonesian functions as the national language and medium of secular instruction, translanguaging approaches could provide valuable frameworks for integration.

The specific context of Arabic language learning within Indonesian pesantren institutions presents particular considerations for literacy development. Arabic holds special status as the language of Islamic scripture and classical Islamic scholarship, creating strong motivational and cultural factors that influence students' engagement with the language. However, Arabic represents a significant linguistic challenge for Indonesian speakers due to fundamental differences in phonology, morphology, syntax, and writing systems (Ryding, 2020). Effective Arabic instruction in pesantren contexts must address these linguistic differences while building connections to students' existing Indonesian language proficiency. Research suggests that explicit attention to cross-linguistic comparisons and contrastive analysis can help students develop metalinguistic awareness that supports literacy development in both languages.

Despite the theoretical promise of integrated bilingual instruction, practical implementation in pesantren settings faces numerous challenges. Teachers must possess proficiency in both languages along with pedagogical knowledge about bilingual instruction, curriculum developers must create materials that facilitate meaningful integration, and institutional structures must support coordination between language programs. Additionally, assessment practices must be designed to capture the complex, multidimensional nature of bilingual academic literacy rather than treating language proficiencies as separate competencies (Shohamy, 2019). Understanding how successful pesantren institutions like As'adiyah navigate these challenges can provide valuable insights for improving bilingual education practices in similar contexts.

The significance of this research extends beyond the specific context of As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School to broader questions about bilingual education in Islamic educational institutions and multilingual societies more generally. As globalization increases linguistic diversity in educational contexts worldwide, understanding effective approaches to integrating multiple languages in literacy instruction becomes increasingly important. Furthermore, as pesantren institutions seek to maintain their traditional missions while preparing students for success in contemporary contexts, research on effective bilingual pedagogy in these settings can inform educational policy and practice. This study aims to examine the specific mechanisms through which integrated Indonesian and Arabic instruction contributes to academic literacy development and to identify factors that facilitate or constrain effective integration in pesantren contexts (Hefner, 2021).

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bilingual education research has established that language integration approaches can significantly enhance academic literacy when implemented systematically with appropriate pedagogical support. The theoretical foundations for language integration draw from cogni-

tive psychology, sociolinguistics, and educational research, converging on the understanding that bilingualism represents a cognitive resource rather than a deficit. Bialystok (2022) has documented cognitive advantages associated with bilingualism, including enhanced executive function, metalinguistic awareness, and cognitive flexibility, all of which contribute to academic literacy development. These cognitive benefits appear most pronounced when both languages receive sustained, high-quality instructional attention rather than when one language dominates educational experiences. In the context of pesantren education, where students engage deeply with both Indonesian and Arabic, these findings suggest potential cognitive advantages that could be leveraged to enhance academic literacy outcomes.

The application of bilingual education principles to Islamic educational contexts requires consideration of the unique roles that different languages play in religious and secular learning. Zein (2020) examined language policies in Indonesian Islamic schools and found that successful institutions strategically allocate languages to different domains while creating intentional connections between them. Arabic typically serves as the primary medium for religious studies, Quranic recitation, and engagement with classical Islamic texts, while Indonesian functions as the language of instruction for secular subjects and contemporary academic discourse. However, rigid compartmentalization of languages can limit opportunities for linguistic transfer and may fail to leverage the full potential of students' bilingual competencies. Research suggests that creating spaces for translanguaging and explicit cross-linguistic connections can enhance both religious and secular learning outcomes (Rahman, 2021).

Empirical studies of literacy development in multilingual contexts have identified several key factors that influence the effectiveness of integrated bilingual instruction. First, the linguistic distance between languages affects the ease of transfer, with greater linguistic similarity generally facilitating positive transfer effects. However, even typologically distant languages like Indonesian and Arabic can support mutual development when instruction explicitly highlights both similarities and differences, building students' metalinguistic awareness (Cenoz & Gorter, 2023). Second, the quality and quantity of input in each language matters significantly; students need sufficient exposure to academic language use in both languages to develop sophisticated literacy skills. Third, students' attitudes toward each language and their perceived utility influence motivation and engagement, which in turn affect learning outcomes. In pesantren contexts, the religious significance of Arabic often creates strong intrinsic motivation, which can be channeled to support academic literacy development in both languages (Abduh et al., 2021).

Recent research on academic literacy in Indonesian educational contexts has revealed persistent challenges in developing advanced reading and writing skills across student populations. Internationally comparative assessments have shown that Indonesian students often struggle with tasks requiring deep comprehension, critical evaluation, and synthesis of complex texts (Rahmawati & Fitria, 2022). These challenges appear even more pronounced in contexts where students must develop academic literacy across multiple languages. However, research also suggests that bilingual students who receive high-quality integrated instruction can develop sophisticated metalinguistic and metacognitive strategies that actually advantage them in academic literacy tasks. For pesantren students, who navigate multiple languages, scripts, and textual traditions, developing these strategic competencies becomes particularly important for academic success.

The pedagogical approaches employed in language integration significantly influence learning outcomes. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) represents one widely studied approach that uses content subjects as contexts for language learning while using language as a medium for learning content. Coyle et al. (2020) demonstrated that CLIL approaches can enhance both content knowledge and language proficiency when carefully implemented with attention to cognitive demands and language scaffolding. In pesantren contexts, religious content provides rich opportunities for integrated language learning, as students engage with sophisticated Arabic texts while developing Indonesian language

skills to discuss, analyze, and apply religious concepts. However, effective integration requires explicit instructional attention to language features rather than assuming that content engagement alone will develop language proficiency.

Research on writing development in bilingual contexts reveals complex patterns of cross-linguistic influence that have important implications for integrated literacy instruction. Manchón (2021) found that bilingual writers often draw on their full linguistic repertoire when composing texts, even when writing in a single language, and that writing instruction that explicitly addresses cross-linguistic connections can enhance writing quality in both languages. For pesantren students who must develop academic writing skills in both Indonesian and Arabic, understanding these cross-linguistic dynamics becomes crucial. Effective writing instruction should help students recognize how rhetorical conventions, organizational patterns, and stylistic features differ across languages while identifying transferable strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing academic texts.

Assessment of academic literacy in bilingual contexts presents methodological challenges that require careful attention. Traditional assessment approaches that treat languages as separate entities may fail to capture the integrated nature of bilingual competence and may underestimate students' actual capabilities (Solano-Flores, 2020). Alternative assessment approaches that permit students to demonstrate knowledge and skills across languages, that value translanguaging practices, and that assess transferable literacy competencies rather than language-specific knowledge may provide more valid measures of academic literacy in bilingual contexts. For research in pesantren settings, developing culturally appropriate and linguistically sensitive assessment tools becomes essential for accurately documenting literacy development and evaluating instructional effectiveness (Madsen & Hajar, 2021).

The institutional context of pesantren education creates both affordances and constraints for integrated bilingual literacy instruction. Unlike conventional schools where language programs may operate independently, pesantren environments typically feature intensive language learning embedded within residential educational communities. This immersive context provides extensive opportunities for both formal instruction and informal language use across diverse contexts. However, the traditional pedagogical approaches common in many pesantren institutions, which often emphasize memorization and recitation over critical analysis and creative production, may not fully capitalize on these affordances (Hefner & Zaman, 2022). Research suggests that modernizing pedagogical approaches while maintaining respect for traditional values requires careful change management that involves all stakeholders in the educational community.

C. METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide comprehensive understanding of how integrated Indonesian and Arabic language instruction affects academic literacy development at As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School Sengkang. Mixed-methods designs are particularly appropriate for educational research questions that require both measurement of outcomes and deep understanding of processes and contexts. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2020), convergent parallel mixed-methods designs allow researchers to collect quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, analyze them separately, and then merge the findings to develop comprehensive insights. This approach enables the study to measure literacy outcomes quantitatively while simultaneously exploring the instructional practices, student experiences, and contextual factors that shape those outcomes through qualitative inquiry. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides richer, more nuanced understanding than either approach alone could achieve (Muhsyanur et al., 2021).

The research participants consisted of 120 students from intermediate level classes at As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure

representation across gender, prior educational background, and duration of enrollment. Participants ranged in age from 13 to 16 years and had studied at As'adiyah for at least one year, ensuring sufficient exposure to the integrated language instruction program. Additionally, 12 teachers who instruct in Indonesian, Arabic, or integrated courses participated in semi-structured interviews to provide insights into pedagogical practices and challenges. Quantitative data collection involved pre-test and post-test administration of academic literacy assessments measuring reading comprehension, academic writing quality, and vocabulary knowledge in both Indonesian and Arabic. These assessments were designed based on established literacy frameworks and adapted to the pesantren context with input from experienced educators. Qualitative data were collected through classroom observations (40 hours across different subject areas), document analysis of curriculum materials and student work samples, and in-depth interviews with teachers and students. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2021), this triangulation of multiple data sources enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative findings.

Data analysis proceeded through parallel quantitative and qualitative processes before integration of findings. Quantitative data from literacy assessments were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-samples t-tests to examine changes in literacy performance from pre-test to post-test. Additionally, correlation analyses explored relationships between Indonesian and Arabic language proficiencies to identify potential transfer effects. Qualitative data analysis followed an iterative process of coding, categorization, and theme development. Initial coding applied both deductive codes derived from the research questions and theoretical framework, and inductive codes that emerged from the data. Following procedures described by Saldaña (2022), second-cycle coding grouped initial codes into broader categories and identified patterns across data sources. Classroom observation field notes were analyzed to identify instructional practices that facilitate language integration, while interview transcripts were coded to capture participants' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of integrated instruction. Document analysis examined how curriculum materials structure opportunities for cross-linguistic connections and academic literacy development. Finally, findings from quantitative and qualitative analyses were integrated through joint display tables and narrative synthesis to develop comprehensive understanding of language integration effects.

Several methodological considerations enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of this research. To address potential researcher bias, member checking procedures involved sharing preliminary findings with teacher participants to verify accurate interpretation of their perspectives and practices. Triangulation across multiple data sources (assessments, observations, interviews, documents) provided convergent evidence for key findings. Detailed documentation of data collection and analysis procedures enables transparency and potential replication. Limitations of the research design include the focus on a single institution, which limits generalizability, and the relatively short timeframe of the study, which cannot capture longer-term literacy development trajectories. However, the intensive, multi-method investigation of As'adiyah provides valuable insights into the processes through which language integration affects academic literacy development in pesantren contexts (Cohen et al., 2023).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of integrated Indonesian and Arabic language instruction at As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School has yielded significant improvements in multiple dimensions of academic literacy, revealing complex patterns of cross-linguistic transfer and pedagogical effectiveness. Analysis of pre-test and post-test data demonstrates measurable gains in reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and academic vocabulary across both languages, with effect sizes indicating educationally meaningful changes. Beyond these quan-

titative outcomes, qualitative findings illuminate the instructional practices, student strategies, and institutional factors that contribute to successful language integration. The following sections examine four key dimensions of literacy development facilitated through integrated instruction: reading comprehension and critical analysis, academic writing development, vocabulary expansion and metalinguistic awareness, and transfer effects across languages.

Reading Comprehension and Critical Analysis Skills

Students demonstrated substantial improvement in reading comprehension abilities in both Indonesian and Arabic, with the most significant gains appearing in tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills such as inference-making, evaluation, and synthesis. Pre-test results revealed that students could generally decode texts and identify explicitly stated information but struggled with implicit meanings, rhetorical analysis, and critical evaluation. Post-test results showed marked improvement particularly in these higher-order comprehension skills, suggesting that the integrated instructional approach successfully developed strategic reading capabilities that transcend basic decoding. Students' mean scores on Indonesian reading comprehension tasks increased from 68.4% to 82.7%, while Arabic reading comprehension scores rose from 61.2% to 76.8%, both representing statistically significant improvements with medium to large effect sizes.

Classroom observations revealed that teachers employed several pedagogical practices that contributed to these comprehension gains. Explicit instruction in reading strategies occurred regularly, with teachers modeling cognitive and metacognitive processes such as activating prior knowledge, making predictions, monitoring comprehension, and identifying text structures. Importantly, this strategy instruction occurred across both languages and explicitly highlighted how strategies learned in one language could be applied when reading in the other language. For example, teachers demonstrated how understanding argument structures in Indonesian expository texts could inform approaches to analyzing Arabic religious commentaries, despite differences in rhetorical conventions. This explicit attention to transferable reading strategies appeared to develop students' metacognitive awareness, enabling them to approach challenging texts more strategically regardless of language.

Collaborative reading activities that incorporated both languages created particularly rich opportunities for developing critical analysis skills. Teachers frequently organized small-group discussions where students read related texts in Indonesian and Arabic, then worked together to compare perspectives, identify connections, and evaluate arguments. These activities required students to operate at high cognitive levels while navigating linguistic complexity, pushing them to develop sophisticated comprehension strategies. Interview data indicated that students found these multilingual discussions challenging but valuable, reporting that engaging with content across languages deepened their understanding and revealed nuances they might have missed when working in a single language. One student explained, "When we read the Arabic text and then discuss it in Indonesian, we have to really understand deeply, not just translate words but explain the meaning and why it matters."

The development of critical analysis skills appeared particularly evident in students' engagement with religious texts, which constitute a significant portion of the reading curriculum. Students progressed from passive reception of textual content to active questioning, evaluation, and connection-making. Post-test assessment tasks that required students to evaluate arguments, identify assumptions, and consider alternative interpretations showed substantial improvement compared to pre-test performance. Qualitative analysis of student work samples revealed increasingly sophisticated analytical commentary, with students drawing on textual evidence, considering contextual factors, and articulating reasoned judgments. Teachers attributed this development partly to instructional practices that con-

sistently prompted critical thinking across both languages, creating expectations that students would engage analytically with texts rather than merely memorizing content.

Academic Writing Development

Students' academic writing abilities showed significant development across multiple dimensions, including organizational coherence, argumentative effectiveness, linguistic sophistication, and discipline-appropriate conventions. Pre-test writing samples typically exhibited limited organizational structure, relied heavily on personal opinion without substantial evidence, and demonstrated restricted vocabulary and syntactic complexity. Post-test samples revealed notable improvement in all these areas, with students producing better-organized texts that advanced clear arguments supported by evidence, employed more sophisticated language, and adhered more closely to academic writing conventions. Holistic scoring of writing quality (on a 6-point scale) showed mean increases from 3.2 to 4.6 for Indonesian writing and from 2.8 to 4.1 for Arabic writing.

The writing instruction at As'adiyah employed a process-oriented approach that emphasized planning, drafting, revising, and editing, with explicit attention to how these processes operate across both languages. Teachers regularly engaged students in contrastive rhetoric activities that examined how organizational patterns, argumentation styles, and stylistic conventions differ between Indonesian and Arabic academic writing. For instance, students analyzed how Indonesian academic essays typically state thesis statements explicitly early in texts, while Arabic academic writing may develop arguments more inductively. This explicit attention to rhetorical differences helped students develop genre awareness and adapt their writing to language-specific expectations while recognizing transferable principles of effective communication.

Peer review activities that incorporated both languages provided valuable opportunities for developing critical evaluation skills and metalinguistic awareness. Teachers structured peer review sessions where students worked in mixed-ability pairs or small groups to read each other's drafts in both languages, providing feedback on content, organization, and language use. These activities required students to articulate their understanding of effective writing criteria and to consider how different linguistic resources might be deployed to achieve communicative goals. Students reported that providing feedback on peers' writing helped them become more aware of their own writing strengths and weaknesses and that working across languages deepened their understanding of what makes writing effective.

The integration of writing instruction with content learning created authentic purposes for academic writing that motivated students and developed discipline-specific literacy skills. Rather than treating writing as a separate skill practiced in isolation, teachers regularly assigned writing tasks that required students to engage with content from Islamic studies, social sciences, and other curriculum areas. Students wrote comparative analyses of different Quranic interpretations, argumentative essays on contemporary social issues informed by Islamic principles, and research reports on historical topics, all requiring synthesis of information from sources in both Indonesian and Arabic. These content-integrated writing assignments developed students' abilities to use writing as a tool for learning while building their competence with discipline-specific discourse conventions.

Vocabulary Expansion and Metalinguistic Awareness

Vocabulary knowledge expanded substantially in both languages, with particularly notable growth in academic vocabulary that supports understanding and production of complex texts across disciplines. Pre-test vocabulary assessments measuring knowledge of academic words revealed significant gaps, with students averaging 58.3% accuracy in Indonesian and 51.7% in Arabic. Post-test results showed improvement to 79.6% in Indonesian and 72.4% in Arabic, indicating that intentional vocabulary instruction embedded within

the integrated language program effectively developed students' academic lexicons. Beyond quantitative expansion, qualitative evidence suggested that students developed richer, more nuanced understanding of word meanings, including connotative dimensions, register appropriateness, and collocational patterns.

The vocabulary instruction at As'adiyah systematically addressed both language-specific items and cross-linguistic connections, helping students build conceptual knowledge that transcended individual languages. Teachers regularly highlighted cognates, loan words, and shared semantic fields across Indonesian and Arabic, helping students recognize that vocabulary knowledge in one language could facilitate learning in the other. For example, many Indonesian academic and religious terms derive from Arabic, and explicit attention to these etymological connections deepened students' understanding in both languages. Teachers also addressed "false friends"—words that appear similar across languages but have different meanings—to prevent negative transfer and develop students' awareness of cross-linguistic differences as well as similarities.

Metalinguistic awareness—conscious knowledge about language structures, functions, and uses—developed significantly through the integrated instructional approach. Interview data revealed that students increasingly thought analytically about how languages work, comparing grammatical structures, discussing word formation processes, and reflecting on how language choices affect meaning and impact. This metalinguistic awareness appeared to support both language learning and literacy development, as students could draw on explicit knowledge to decode unfamiliar texts, make strategic language choices in writing, and monitor their own language use. Teachers reported that students who developed strong metalinguistic awareness tended to progress more rapidly in literacy development and demonstrated greater independence in tackling challenging linguistic tasks.

Classroom observations revealed several instructional practices that fostered metalinguistic awareness development. Teachers frequently engaged students in contrastive analysis activities that explicitly compared grammatical structures, text organization patterns, or discourse features across Indonesian and Arabic. For example, lessons might examine how verb tense and aspect are expressed differently in each language or how politeness is linguistically encoded through different means. These activities required students to analyze language structures consciously rather than simply using language intuitively. Additionally, teachers encouraged metalinguistic reflection by asking students to explain their language choices in writing or translation tasks, articulating the reasoning behind decisions to use particular vocabulary, structures, or stylistic features. This consistent expectation that students would think and talk analytically about language appeared to develop habits of metalinguistic reflection.

Cross-Linguistic Transfer and Synergistic Effects

Analysis of the relationship between Indonesian and Arabic language proficiencies revealed significant positive correlations, providing evidence of cross-linguistic transfer effects that support the integrated instructional approach. Students who performed well on Indonesian literacy measures tended also to score highly on Arabic assessments, and vice versa ($r = 0.68$ for reading comprehension; $r = 0.63$ for writing quality). While correlation does not prove causation, these relationships suggest that literacy competencies developed in one language supported development in the other language. Furthermore, students who demonstrated strong metalinguistic awareness showed particularly robust transfer, indicating that explicit knowledge about language structures and strategies facilitated application across linguistic contexts. The table below presents literacy performance data disaggregated by proficiency level, revealing patterns of cross-linguistic transfer:

Proficiency Level	Indonesian Reading (%)	Arabic Reading (%)	Indonesian Writing	Arabic Writing	Metalinguistic Awareness
Advanced	89.4	84.6	5.3	4.8	High
Intermediate	81.2	74.3	4.5	3.9	Medium
Developing	73.6	67.1	3.8	3.2	Medium-Low
Beginning	64.8	58.4	3.1	2.7	Low

Note: Reading scores represent percentage correct on comprehension assessments; Writing scores represent holistic ratings on 6-point scale; Metalinguistic awareness represents qualitative rating based on interview and observation data.

The data reveal that students at higher proficiency levels demonstrated stronger performance across both languages and higher metalinguistic awareness, supporting the hypothesis that these competencies develop interdependently. Students at advanced levels showed relatively balanced proficiencies, with performance differing by less than 5 percentage points between Indonesian and Arabic reading assessments, suggesting successful development of transferable literacy skills that transcend individual languages. In contrast, beginning-level students showed somewhat larger gaps between languages, though still with positive correlations, indicating that transfer effects become stronger as students develop deeper linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge.

Qualitative data provided insights into the mechanisms through which transfer occurred and how integrated instruction facilitated it. Students reported consciously applying reading strategies learned in Indonesian classes when approaching Arabic texts and vice versa. For example, students described using strategies for identifying main ideas, making inferences, and monitoring comprehension flexibly across both languages. Teachers confirmed observing these strategic behaviors, noting that students who received explicit instruction in transferable strategies were more likely to apply them across linguistic contexts. Additionally, students demonstrated conceptual transfer, drawing on content knowledge gained through one language to understand related content in the other language. The integrated curriculum design intentionally created these opportunities by addressing related concepts across Indonesian and Arabic courses.

Instructional practices that explicitly promoted transfer appeared particularly effective in developing synergistic literacy competencies. Teachers who regularly highlighted cross-linguistic connections, who explicitly taught for transfer by discussing how knowledge and strategies from one language could be applied in another, and who created tasks requiring synthesis across languages appeared most successful in developing students' integrated bilingual literacy. One particularly effective practice involved "bridging activities" that explicitly guided students to connect learning across languages—for example, having students identify similarities and differences between argumentative essays in Indonesian and Arabic, then articulate principles of effective argumentation that transcend language-specific conventions. These activities developed students' awareness of both language-specific features and universal literacy competencies.

E. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that systematic integration of Indonesian and Arabic language instruction significantly enhances academic literacy development among students at As'adiyah Islamic Boarding School Sengkang. The research findings reveal that when both languages receive sustained, high-quality instructional attention within a coherent pedagogical framework, students develop robust literacy competencies that transcend individual languages. Specifically, integrated instruction fostered improvements in reading comprehension, academic writing, vocabulary knowledge, and metalinguistic awareness, with evidence

of positive transfer effects across languages. The pedagogical practices identified as most effective include explicit strategy instruction, contrastive analysis activities, content-integrated language learning, and intentional bridging that highlights cross-linguistic connections. These findings contribute to theoretical understanding of bilingual literacy development while providing practical guidance for pesantren institutions seeking to enhance academic outcomes. The success of As'adiyah's integrated approach demonstrates that traditional Islamic educational institutions can effectively adapt to contemporary academic demands without abandoning their distinctive linguistic and cultural heritage. Future research should examine long-term literacy trajectories, explore implementation factors that facilitate or constrain effective integration in diverse pesantren contexts, and investigate how integrated bilingual literacy supports students' academic and professional success beyond secondary education.

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