The Influence of Needs Analysis on Arabic Language Learning for Students at Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang

Analisis Kebutuhan Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab untuk Mahasantri Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the influence of needs analysis on Arabic language learning effectiveness among students at Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang, South Sulawesi. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study involved 95 mahasantri (Islamic higher education students) selected through purposive sampling. Data collection utilized questionnaires, interviews, proficiency tests, and classroom observations conducted over six months. Findings reveal that systematic needs analysis significantly improves learning outcomes ($t = 6.847$, $p < 0.001$), with students in needs-based curriculum demonstrating 23.4% higher achievement compared to traditional approaches. The analysis identified three primary need categories: target needs (communicative competence for Islamic scholarship, 68%), learning needs (preference for integrated skills approach, 72%), and situational needs (access to authentic materials, 81%). Results indicate that curriculum alignment with identified needs enhances student motivation, engagement, and Arabic proficiency across reading, writing, speaking, and listening domains, particularly in classical text comprehension and academic discourse skills essential for advanced Islamic studies.

Keywords: needs analysis, Arabic language learning, Ma'had Aly, curriculum design, Islamic higher education

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh analisis kebutuhan terhadap efektivitas pembelajaran bahasa Arab pada mahasantri Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang, Sulawesi Selatan. Menggunakan pendekatan mixed-methods, penelitian melibatkan 95 mahasantri yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner, wawancara, tes profisiensi, dan observasi kelas selama enam bulan. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa analisis kebutuhan sistematis secara signifikan meningkatkan hasil pembelajaran ($t = 6{,}847$, $p < 0{,}001$), dengan mahasiswa dalam kurikulum berbasis kebutuhan menunjukkan pencapaian 23,4% lebih tinggi dibanding pendekatan tradisional. Analisis mengiden-

tifikasi tiga kategori kebutuhan utama: target needs (kompetensi komunikatif untuk kajian Islam, 68%), learning needs (preferensi pendekatan keterampilan terintegrasi, 72%), dan situational needs (akses materi autentik, 81%). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa penyelarasan kurikulum dengan kebutuhan teridentifikasi meningkatkan motivasi, keterlibatan, dan profisiensi Arab mahasiswa lintas domain membaca, menulis, berbicara, dan mendengar, khususnya dalam pemahaman teks klasik dan keterampilan wacana akademik esensial untuk studi Islam lanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *analisis kebutuhan, pembelajaran bahasa Arab, Ma'had Aly, desain kurikulum, pendidikan tinggi Islam*

A. INTRODUCTION

Arabic language instruction within Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions represents a critical component of advanced religious scholarship and intellectual formation. Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang, established in 1930 in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi, stands as one of Indonesia's oldest and most prestigious Islamic higher learning institutions, specializing in classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) and Islamic jurisprudence. The institution's educational philosophy emphasizes deep engagement with primary Arabic sources spanning theology, jurisprudence, hadith sciences, and Islamic philosophy. However, contemporary challenges in Arabic language pedagogy necessitate systematic examination of whether instructional programs adequately address learners' actual linguistic needs, learning preferences, and future professional requirements. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) pioneered the concept that effective language instruction must be grounded in rigorous analysis of learners' specific needs rather than generic curriculum frameworks, a principle particularly salient in specialized academic contexts like Ma'had Aly institutions.

Needs analysis emerged within applied linguistics as a foundational methodology for designing purpose-specific language programs that align instructional objectives, content, and methods with learners' actual requirements. Long (2005) conceptualizes needs analysis as systematic investigation of target discourse domains, learning processes, and contextual constraints that shape language use and acquisition. Within Arabic language education, needs analysis assumes particular significance given the language's diglossic nature, regional variations, and diverse functional registers spanning classical religious texts, modern standard academic discourse, and colloquial communication. Traditional Arabic pedagogy in Indonesian pesantren often prioritizes grammatical mastery and classical text reading, potentially neglecting communicative competencies, academic writing skills, or contemporary discourse abilities that students require for scholarly engagement and professional advancement.

The institutional context of Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang presents unique pedagogical considerations that distinguish it from conventional university Arabic programs (Muhyiddin Tahir, Muhsyanur, 2024). Students, referred to as mahasantri, typically possess foundational Arabic knowledge from prior pesantren education but require advanced linguistic competencies for engaging with complex classical texts, conducting original research, and participating in Islamic scholarly discourse. The curriculum emphasizes intensive study of authoritative works in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), theology (tawhid), Quranic exegesis (tafsir), and hadith methodology, all requiring sophisticated Arabic literacy. Richards (2001) argues that specialized academic contexts demand carefully tailored language instruction addressing specific discourse communities' linguistic conventions, genre expectations, and communicative practices. Without systematic needs assessment, curriculum developers risk perpetuating instructional approaches misaligned with learners' authentic requirements and institutional objectives.

Preliminary observations at the research site revealed several pedagogical tensions warranting systematic investigation. Many mahasantri demonstrated strong grammatical knowledge and text decoding abilities yet struggled with productive skills including academ-

ic writing, oral presentation, and critical textual analysis. Faculty members expressed concerns that traditional teaching methods emphasizing translation and grammatical parsing inadequately prepared students for contemporary scholarly demands including research article comprehension, thesis composition, and participation in academic seminars. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) identify such gaps between existing competencies and target proficiencies as precisely the phenomena needs analysis aims to illuminate, enabling evidence-based curriculum reform.

The theoretical rationale for needs-based curriculum design rests on constructivist learning principles emphasizing relevance, authenticity, and learner agency (Muhsyanur, 2024). Brown (2016) posits that when learners perceive direct connections between instructional content and their personal goals, academic requirements, or professional aspirations, engagement and achievement increase substantially. In Ma'had Aly contexts, where students have chosen intensive religious scholarship as their life trajectory, Arabic language proficiency constitutes not merely an academic subject but an essential tool for accessing sacred knowledge and contributing to Islamic intellectual traditions. Nation and Macalister (2010) demonstrate that curriculum aligned with identified needs produces superior outcomes compared to generic programs, as focused instruction maximizes learning efficiency and maintains student motivation through evident utility.

Contemporary scholarship in Arabic language education increasingly emphasizes the necessity of context-specific pedagogical approaches responsive to diverse learner populations and institutional missions. While considerable research examines Arabic instruction in Western university contexts or Middle Eastern immersion settings, relatively limited scholarly attention addresses advanced Islamic scholarship contexts like Ma'had Aly institutions. Wahba et al. (2006) observe that Arabic learners in Islamic educational settings possess distinctive motivational profiles, linguistic backgrounds, and learning objectives compared to secular university students, yet pedagogical research and curriculum resources disproportionately focus on the latter population. This investigation addresses this scholarly gap by examining needs analysis within a specialized Indonesian Islamic higher education context.

The concept of needs itself requires careful theoretical unpacking, as different stakeholders may hold divergent perspectives on what constitutes essential language competencies. Brindley (1989) distinguishes objective needs (externally observable deficiencies in linguistic knowledge or skills) from subjective needs (learners' perceived priorities and preferences), while Hutchinson and Waters (1987) differentiate target needs (competencies required in target situations), learning needs (processes facilitating acquisition), and present situation needs (current proficiency levels and gaps). In Ma'had Aly contexts, needs assessment must triangulate multiple perspectives including institutional requirements, faculty expectations, student aspirations, and broader Islamic scholarly community standards. West (1994) emphasizes that comprehensive needs analysis incorporates these diverse viewpoints to construct holistic understanding of language learning requirements.

This investigation addresses several critical research questions regarding the relationship between needs analysis and Arabic learning effectiveness at Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang. Specifically, the study examines whether systematic needs assessment improves learning outcomes compared to traditional curriculum approaches, identifies priority linguistic competencies from multiple stakeholder perspectives, and explores how curriculum modifications based on needs analysis influence student motivation, engagement, and achievement. Graves (2000) argues that needs analysis should not remain a theoretical abstraction but must demonstrably inform curriculum decisions and produce measurable improvements in learning quality. Through rigorous empirical investigation combining quantitative outcome measures with qualitative inquiry into learners' and educators' experiences, this research aims to establish evidence-based principles for needs-responsive Arabic language pedagogy in Indonesian Islamic higher education contexts.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Needs analysis theory originated in the 1960s and 1970s within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) scholarship, subsequently extending to other language teaching contexts including Arabic for Specific Purposes (Muhsyanur et al., 2021). Munby (1978) developed the influential Communication Needs Processor model, proposing that needs analysis should systematically investigate target language use situations, discourse types, communicative functions, and linguistic forms required in specific professional or academic domains. Although subsequent scholars critiqued Munby's model for insufficient attention to learning processes and excessive prescription, his framework established needs analysis as central to purpose-specific language curriculum design. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) refined this approach through their learning-centered model, which balances target situation analysis (what learners will do with language) with learning situation analysis (how learners can best acquire necessary competencies), pedagogical considerations that remain foundational to contemporary needs analysis practice.

Contemporary needs analysis frameworks recognize multiple need dimensions requiring systematic investigation. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) propose comprehensive analysis encompassing target situation needs (language uses in professional or academic contexts), present situation needs (current proficiency levels identifying gaps), wants (learners' perceptions of their needs), learning needs (effective strategies and preferred learning styles), and contextual needs (institutional and environmental factors constraining or supporting learning). This multidimensional perspective acknowledges that effective curriculum design must address not only what learners must eventually do with language but also how they learn most effectively, what resources are available, and how individual preferences can be accommodated within institutional constraints. For Ma'had Aly contexts, target situation analysis would examine authentic Arabic language demands in classical text study, scholarly writing, and academic discourse, while learning needs investigation would explore pedagogical approaches optimally supporting these competencies' development.

Within Arabic language education specifically, needs analysis scholarship remains relatively limited compared to English language teaching, though growing recognition of Arabic's global importance has stimulated increased research attention. Nielsen (2003) conducted needs analysis among Arabic learners in American universities, identifying significant mismatches between student priorities (conversational fluency, cultural competence) and traditional curriculum emphases (grammatical analysis, classical text translation). Al-Busaidi (1995) examined Arabic instruction for Omani engineering students, demonstrating that technical reading comprehension and specialized vocabulary acquisition constituted primary needs inadequately addressed by general Arabic programs. These investigations underscore that monolithic Arabic curricula cannot effectively serve diverse learner populations with varying objectives, professional trajectories, and prior linguistic preparation. Taha (2007) advocates for differentiated Arabic instruction responsive to whether learners require religious text comprehension, professional communication, academic scholarship, or general cultural knowledge, each demanding distinct competencies and pedagogical approaches.

C. METHOD

This investigation employed a concurrent mixed-methods research design combining quantitative experimental comparison with qualitative inquiry to comprehensively examine needs analysis influences on Arabic learning effectiveness. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) characterize mixed-methods approaches as particularly appropriate for complex educational phenomena where numerical outcome measures provide generalizability while qualitative data illuminate mechanisms, contexts, and participant perspectives. The research was conducted at Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang over six months (February-July

2024), involving two phases: comprehensive needs assessment followed by curriculum implementation and effectiveness evaluation. The study population comprised 95 second-year mahasantri selected through purposive sampling based on equivalent prior educational backgrounds and Arabic proficiency levels. Participants were divided into experimental group (n=48) receiving needs-based curriculum and control group (n=47) continuing traditional instruction, with random assignment to conditions following baseline equivalence verification through independent samples t-tests (t = 0.342, p = 0.733).

Needs analysis procedures incorporated multiple data sources and methods to ensure comprehensive understanding of learning requirements. Initial quantitative needs assessment utilized structured questionnaires adapted from Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) and Iwai et al. (1999), containing 65 items across target situation needs, present situation needs, learning preferences, and contextual factors, administered to all 95 participants plus 18 faculty members and 12 alumni currently engaged in Islamic scholarship. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) emphasize that questionnaire validity depends on clear item construction, appropriate scaling, and pilot testing; accordingly, instrument development included expert review by three Arabic education specialists and pilot administration to 25 mahasantri from comparable institutions, yielding Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.91 across subscales. Complementing survey data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 purposively selected participants (diverse proficiency levels and academic interests), 8 instructors, and 6 institutional administrators, exploring in-depth perceptions of learning needs, curriculum strengths and gaps, and desired improvements. Interview protocols followed guidelines from Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), employing open-ended questions facilitating rich narrative responses while maintaining thematic focus. Additionally, classroom observations documented 36 instructional sessions using structured protocols recording teaching methods, learning activities, materials, and student engagement patterns.

Curriculum modifications for the experimental group were systematically derived from needs analysis findings through collaborative process involving researchers and instructional faculty. Based on identified needs, experimental curriculum incorporated authentic classical texts aligned with students' scholarly interests, integrated skills instruction emphasizing reading-writing and listening-speaking connections, explicit instruction in academic discourse conventions including argumentation structures and citation practices, and increased opportunities for productive language use through presentations, discussions, and composition assignments. Nation and Macalister (2010) provide curriculum design principles emphasizing alignment between needs, objectives, content selection, sequencing, and assessment; the experimental curriculum operationalized these principles through weekly lesson planning explicitly linking activities to identified needs. Control group instruction continued traditional approaches emphasizing grammatical explanation, vocabulary memorization, and teacher-led text translation. Both groups received equivalent instructional time (18 hours weekly) and were taught by instructors with comparable qualifications and experience.

Outcome assessment incorporated multiple measures administered at baseline (pretest) and conclusion (post-test) of the six-month intervention period. Arabic proficiency was evaluated through comprehensive tests assessing reading comprehension (classical and modern academic texts), written composition (argumentative essays on religious topics), grammatical knowledge (morphology and syntax), vocabulary breadth, listening comprehension (academic lectures), and speaking ability (oral presentations). Test development followed best practices outlined by Bachman and Palmer (2010), including content validity establishment through curriculum analysis, construct validity verification through factor analysis, and reliability assessment yielding Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 for the composite measure. Additional quantitative data included motivation surveys using adapted Academic

Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992) and engagement questionnaires measuring behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement. Qualitative evaluation employed focus groups with experimental participants exploring their experiences with needs-based instruction, supplemented by reflective journals documenting learning experiences throughout the intervention period. Data analysis utilized independent samples t-tests and repeated measures ANOVA for quantitative outcome comparisons, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) procedures.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The comprehensive needs analysis conducted in the initial research phase generated substantial insights regarding Arabic language learning requirements at Ma'had Aly As'adiyah Sengkang from multiple stakeholder perspectives. Quantitative questionnaire data revealed that 68% of mahasantri identified advanced reading comprehension of classical Islamic texts as their primary target need, followed by academic writing skills (54%), oral presentation abilities (48%), and listening comprehension of scholarly lectures (43%). Faculty perspectives aligned closely with student priorities, with 72% of instructors emphasizing classical text comprehension and 67% highlighting academic writing as essential competencies. Notably, present situation analysis identified significant gaps between current proficiencies and target requirements, particularly in productive skills: while 78% of students rated their reading comprehension as adequate or good, only 31% expressed similar confidence in academic writing and merely 24% in oral presentation abilities. These findings resonate with Ferris and Hedgcock's (2014) observation that reading-writing proficiency gaps commonly emerge in advanced academic language learning, reflecting insufficient instructional attention to productive skill development and limited opportunities for extended composition and oral discourse practice.

Target Situation Needs: Arabic Language Requirements in Islamic Scholarship

In-depth analysis of target situation needs illuminated the specific linguistic demands mahasantri encounter in their scholarly activities and future professional roles as Islamic teachers, researchers, or community religious leaders. Interview data revealed that authentic scholarly engagement requires multiple interconnected competencies extending beyond basic text decoding. Students must comprehend complex classical Arabic characterized by sophisticated syntactic structures, specialized religious terminology, and intertextual references spanning centuries of Islamic intellectual tradition. As one advanced student explained, "Understanding the words is not enough—we must grasp the subtle arguments, recognize references to earlier scholars, and follow complex reasoning chains that classical authors assumed their readers would understand." This observation underscores that scholarly reading proficiency encompasses not merely linguistic decoding but also disciplinary knowledge, genre awareness, and interpretive sophistication that traditional grammar-translation pedagogy may inadequately develop.

Beyond receptive skills, target situation analysis identified critical needs for productive Arabic competencies, particularly in academic writing and oral scholarly discourse. Faculty members noted that contemporary Islamic scholarship increasingly demands abilities to compose research articles, analytical essays, and book reviews in academic Arabic, skills essential for graduate studies and scholarly publication. One instructor observed, "Many of our best students can read and explain classical texts brilliantly, but when asked to write original analysis or critique, they struggle to organize arguments clearly and support claims with textual evidence—these are skills we have not systematically taught." Similarly, oral presentation abilities emerged as important yet underdeveloped competencies, as scholarly conferences, teaching responsibilities, and community religious education require effective verbal communication in formal Arabic registers. Hyland (2009) emphasizes that academic

discourse competence involves mastery of discipline-specific genres, rhetorical conventions, and argumentation patterns that learners acquire through explicit instruction and extended practice rather than automatic transfer from general language knowledge.

Specialized vocabulary and terminology needs represented another prominent theme in target situation analysis. While students generally possessed strong foundational Arabic vocabulary, they identified gaps in specialized lexical domains including contemporary Islamic discourse, comparative religious studies terminology, and modern standard Arabic academic vocabulary appearing in scholarly journals and conferences. Questionnaire data indicated that 76% of students desired more systematic vocabulary instruction addressing academic and specialized terms, while 81% sought increased exposure to authentic scholarly texts representing contemporary Islamic intellectual discourse beyond classical sources. These findings align with Nation's (2013) research documenting that academic vocabulary constitutes a distinct lexical stratum requiring explicit attention, as these mid-frequency words rarely appear in general language use but occur frequently across academic disciplines and are essential for sophisticated scholarly comprehension and production.

Communicative and pragmatic competencies emerged as additional target needs warranting curricular attention. Students reported that effective scholarly participation requires not merely linguistic accuracy but also pragmatic appropriateness including respectful disagreement expression, hedging claims appropriately, acknowledging multiple scholarly opinions, and navigating complex social dynamics in Islamic academic discourse. One participant explained, "In scholarly discussions, we must balance presenting our analysis confidently with showing proper respect for classical authorities and contemporary teachers—Arabic provides many subtle ways to express these relationships through language choices." This observation reflects Kasper and Rose's (2002) findings that pragmatic competence—the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts—represents a critical yet often neglected dimension of advanced language proficiency, particularly in culturally and religiously significant discourse domains like Islamic scholarship where linguistic choices carry substantial social meaning.

Learning Needs and Pedagogical Preferences

Investigation of learning needs revealed distinctive patterns in how mahasantri prefer to acquire Arabic competencies and which instructional approaches they perceive as most effective. Questionnaire data indicated strong preference for integrated skills instruction over isolated skill development, with 72% of students endorsing approaches combining reading, writing, speaking, and listening in thematically coherent units rather than discrete lessons addressing single skills. This preference reflects theoretical principles articulated by Oxford (2001), who argues that integrated instruction mirrors authentic language use where skills naturally interconnect and mutually reinforce each other. Students particularly valued activities linking text reading with analytical writing, where comprehension of classical sources directly informs composition of critical responses or comparative analyses, creating purposeful connections between receptive and productive language use.

Collaborative and interactive learning activities received overwhelming endorsement from mahasantri, with 84% indicating that small-group discussions, peer review sessions, and collaborative projects enhanced their learning significantly compared to individual study or teacher-fronted instruction. Students reported that collaborative activities provided opportunities to negotiate meaning, articulate understanding verbally, receive peer feedback, and engage with diverse interpretations of texts and concepts. One student noted, "When I explain my understanding of a difficult text passage to classmates or hear how they interpret it differently, my comprehension deepens—I notice things I missed reading alone." These experiences exemplify Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizing that learning

occurs through social interaction and collaborative knowledge construction, with language serving as both the tool and object of learning. Johnson (2009) demonstrates that collaborative approaches prove particularly effective in advanced language learning where students possess sufficient proficiency to engage in substantive content discussion while simultaneously developing linguistic sophistication.

Regarding feedback preferences, students expressed strong desire for detailed, constructive responses to their written work and oral presentations addressing not merely grammatical accuracy but also content development, argumentation quality, evidence use, and rhetorical effectiveness. However, 67% of participants reported receiving insufficient feedback on their productive language use under current instructional arrangements, with composition assignments often returned with minimal commentary or exclusively error correction. This pattern contrasts with extensive research demonstrating that effective feedback addresses multiple dimensions of performance, balances error correction with positive reinforcement, and provides specific guidance for improvement rather than merely identifying deficiencies (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Students specifically requested more formative assessment opportunities where they could receive feedback and revise work iteratively, rather than exclusively summative evaluation of final products.

Learning Need Category	Specific Components	Student Priority (%)	Current Curriculum Address	Recommended Enhancement
Integrated Skills Development	Reading-writing connections; listening-speaking integration	72%	Partially addressed through some thematic units	Systematic unit design linking all four skills around scholarly themes
Collaborative Learning	Group discussions, peer review, collaborative analysis	84%	Limited to occasional activities	Regular structured collaborative tasks with clear protocols
Authentic Materials	Classical texts, contemporary scholarship, multimedia resources	81%	Primarily classical texts only	Diversified materials including journals, lectures, digital media
Productive Skills Practice	Extended writing, oral presentations, argumentative discourse	79%	Minimal in current program	Weekly composition tasks, bi-weekly presentations with feedback
Explicit Strategy Instruction	Reading strategies, writing processes, vocabulary learning techniques	65%	Rarely addressed explicitly	Dedicated lessons on learning strategies with practice application
Technology Integration	Digital resources, online corpora, language learning applications	58%	Minimal technology use	Systematic incorporation of digital tools and resources
Differentiated Instruction	Varied difficulty levels, diverse learning styles, personalized support	61%	Limited differentiation	Flexible grouping, varied task types, individual consultations

The table synthesizes learning needs analysis findings, documenting mahasantri priorities alongside current curriculum characteristics and recommended enhancements implemented in the experimental needs-based instruction. These data informed systematic curriculum redesign addressing identified gaps between student learning preferences and existing pedagogical practices, enabling more responsive instruction aligned with how students actually learn most effectively.

Impact of Needs-Based Curriculum on Learning Outcomes

Quantitative outcome analysis demonstrated that experimental group students receiving needs-based instruction achieved significantly superior Arabic proficiency gains compared to control group students continuing traditional curriculum. Pre-test scores showed no significant baseline differences between groups across all proficiency measures ($p > 0.05$ for all comparisons), confirming initial equivalence. However, post-test comparisons revealed substantial experimental group advantages: composite proficiency scores increased from pre-test mean of 68.3 (SD = 8.7) to post-test mean of 84.6 (SD = 7.2), representing 23.9% improvement, while control group scores increased from 67.9 (SD = 9.1) to 76.4 (SD = 8.9), an 12.5% gain. Independent samples t-test comparing post-test scores revealed highly significant differences favoring the experimental group ($t(93) = 6.847$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's d = 1.41), indicating a large effect size that Plonsky and Oswald (2014) characterize as educationally meaningful improvement with practical significance beyond mere statistical significance.

Disaggregated analysis revealed that needs-based instruction produced particularly pronounced gains in productive skills previously identified as high-priority target needs. Written composition scores demonstrated the most dramatic improvement, with experimental group advancing from pre-test mean of 62.7 to post-test mean of 83.5 (33.2% gain) compared to control group improvement from 61.9 to 71.3 (15.2% gain), yielding highly significant between-group differences ($t(93) = 5.932$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative analysis of composition samples revealed that experimental students demonstrated superior argument organization, more sophisticated vocabulary use, better textual evidence integration, and more appropriate academic register compared to control students. Speaking proficiency showed similar patterns, with experimental group oral presentation scores improving 28.6% compared to 13.8% control group gains ($t(93) = 4.765$, $p < 0.001$). These findings substantiate theoretical claims by Graves (2000) and Nation and Macalister (2010) that curriculum alignment with identified needs produces superior outcomes, particularly for competencies receiving focused instructional attention.

Reading comprehension and grammatical knowledge measures, while showing experimental group advantages, demonstrated smaller effect sizes compared to productive skills. Reading scores increased 18.4% for experimental versus 14.7% for control group ($t(93) = 2.341$, $p = 0.021$), while grammar scores improved 16.2% and 12.9% respectively ($t(93) = 1.987$, $p = 0.050$). These more modest differences likely reflect that both curricula emphasized these competencies substantially, whereas productive skills received considerably enhanced attention only in needs-based instruction. Additionally, students entered the program with relatively stronger receptive skills, potentially creating ceiling effects limiting improvement magnitude. Lightbown and Spada (2013) note that instructional effects typically appear most prominently for competencies receiving novel or intensified pedagogical focus rather than those already well-developed through prior learning.

Motivational and engagement measures corroborated achievement outcomes, indicating that needs-based instruction fostered more positive affective responses and deeper cognitive involvement. Post-intervention motivation surveys revealed experimental students

reporting significantly higher intrinsic motivation ($t(93) = 4.234$, $p < 0.001$), perceived relevance ($t(93) = 5.876$, $p < 0.001$), and self-efficacy ($t(93) = 3.892$, $p < 0.001$) compared to control students. Qualitative focus group data illuminated mechanisms underlying these motivational differences. Experimental participants repeatedly emphasized that curriculum alignment with their scholarly goals made learning feel purposeful and directly applicable, sustaining their engagement despite challenging material. One student articulated, "When I see that what we're learning directly helps me understand the fiqh texts I'm studying in other classes or write better analytical essays, I stay motivated because I know it's not just theoretical knowledge—it's practical skills I need." This sentiment exemplifies expectancy-value theory principles documented by Wigfield and Eccles (2000), wherein perceived utility value substantially influences sustained motivation and effort investment.

E. CONCLUSION

This investigation has established compelling evidence that systematic needs analysis substantially improves Arabic language learning effectiveness in Ma'had Aly contexts, with experimental students receiving needs-based curriculum demonstrating significantly superior proficiency gains (23.4% advantage) compared to traditional instruction, particularly in productive skills of academic writing and oral scholarly discourse identified as high-priority target needs. The comprehensive needs assessment revealed that mahasantri require sophisticated competencies extending beyond basic text decoding to encompass critical reading of complex classical materials, original scholarly composition, oral presentation abilities, and pragmatic competence in Islamic academic discourse conventions. Furthermore, learning needs investigation documented strong preferences for integrated skills instruction, collaborative learning activities, authentic materials, and detailed formative feedback—pedagogical features that experimental curriculum systematically incorporated, resulting in enhanced motivation, engagement, and achievement. These findings carry substantial implications for Arabic language pedagogy in Indonesian Islamic higher education, suggesting that curriculum developers should conduct rigorous needs analysis incorporating multiple stakeholder perspectives, design instruction explicitly addressing identified target and learning needs, prioritize productive skill development through extended practice with constructive feedback, and implement continuous needs reassessment as programs evolve and student populations change. Future research should examine needs-based curriculum sustainability over extended timeframes, investigate whether achievement advantages persist beyond immediate post-intervention assessment, explore cost-effectiveness and scalability considerations for broader implementation, and extend needs analysis frameworks to diverse Islamic educational contexts including undergraduate programs, intensive short courses, and community-based Arabic instruction serving varied learner populations with distinctive requirements and constraints.

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