

Early Exposure to Arabic and Children's Linguistic Intelligence in Arabic Mastery in Kindergartens in Kalimantan

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Abstract

This study concludes that the three schools, TK Islamic Center Samarinda, RA Bina Islam Paser, and PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, implement early exposure to Arabic through two main approaches: direct and indirect exposure. Direct exposure involves active activities such as daily conversations, storytelling, singing, and role-playing, while indirect exposure is conducted through activities like reciting the Quran (mengaji) and memorizing short prayers. Although most children in these schools demonstrate good linguistic intelligence, some children with lower linguistic abilities require additional support. Children with high linguistic intelligence tend to demonstrate better Arabic language skills, whereas those with lower linguistic intelligence often require intensive support to overcome difficulties in mastering the Arabic language. Early exposure to Arabic and children's linguistic intelligence significantly contributes to Arabic language proficiency, with interactive and contextual approaches proving effective in enhancing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. This approach, based on interactive activities and contextual teaching, not only helps children with high linguistic intelligence strengthen their understanding but also provides opportunities for children with lower linguistic intelligence to develop their language skills more effectively. Therefore, it is essential to adopt activity-based and contextual approaches in all schools, while providing targeted support for children who face

challenges in mastering the Arabic language. This approach is expected to increase children's engagement in learning and support their optimal mastery of the Arabic language.

Keywords: Exposure, Arabic Language, Children's

ملخص

هدف هذه الدراسة هو وصف أشكال التعرض المبكر للغة العربية و الذكاء اللغوي في رياض الأطفال في كاليمانتان، بالإضافة إلى مساهمتها في إتقان اللغة العربية. تستخدم هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي في كل من: روضة الإسلاميك سنتر في ساماريندا، روضة بنا الإسلام في باسر، و روضة IT رباني في بانجاربارو، مع التركيز على صفوف رياض الأطفال الكبيرة في كل مدرسة. تشمل تقنيات جمع البيانات المقابلات المعمقة، والملاحظة التشاركية، والتوثيق، بالإضافة إلى استخدام المعلومات الثانوية من قبل المساعدين مرافقة البحث. تم إجراء تحليل البيانات باستخدام نموذج التحليل التفاعلي لميلز، هوبرمان، وسالدانا، مع التحقق من صحة البيانات من خلال تقنيات التثليث والتحقق من المصادر. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود نوعين من التعرض المبكر للغة العربية: المباشر وغير المباشر. أظهرت الذكاء اللغوي في المدارس الثلاث نتائج إيجابية، حيث أظهر أكثر من 50% من الأطفال ذكاء لغوي مرتفع. وقد ساهم هذا التعرض وذكاء الأطفال اللغوي في مهاراتهم في اللغة العربية، رغم أن الأطفال ذوي الذكاء اللغوي المنخفض يحتاجون إلى دعم مكثف.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التعرض المبكر، اللغة العربية، الأطفال

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk eksposur dini bahasa Arab dan kecerdasan linguistik di taman kanak-kanak di Kalimantan, serta kontribusi keduanya terhadap penguasaan bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif di TK Islamic Center Samarinda, RA Bina Islam Paser, dan PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, dengan fokus pada kelas TK Besar. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi, serta melibatkan second hand informan untuk mendampingi objek penelitian. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model analisis interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana, dengan keabsahan data melalui triangulasi teknik dan informan checking. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya dua jenis eksposur dini bahasa Arab: langsung dan tidak langsung. Kecerdasan linguistik di ketiga sekolah menunjukkan hasil positif, dengan lebih dari 55% anak memiliki kecerdasan linguistik tinggi. Eksposur ini dan kecerdasan linguistik anak terbukti berkontribusi dalam kemampuan bahasa Arab anak-anak, meskipun anak dengan kecerdasan linguistik rendah memerlukan pendampingan intensif.

Kata kunci: Eksposur Dini, Bahasa Arab, Anak Usia Dini

A. Introduction

Early childhood education is widely recognized as a critical foundation for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Andrade & de Carvalho, 2024; Education at a Glance 2023, 2023; Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/2, 2022). During this developmental stage, the human brain experiences rapid growth, making children highly receptive to new information and skill acquisition (Abdul hameed & Salibi, 2023; Black, 2018). This includes language learning, which is one of the most significant domains of early childhood development (Chater & Christiansen, 2018). Early education not only contributes to cognitive growth but also plays a key role in shaping values, habits, and social behavior that influence long-term life outcomes (Lyndon, 2023; Tabroni et al., 2022). Furthermore, high-quality early education enhances children's self-confidence, adaptability, and ability to interact effectively with their environment.

From a theoretical perspective, child language development is strongly influenced by interaction and environmental exposure. Piaget and Vygotsky emphasize that children construct language through active engagement with their surroundings and social interaction (Habsy et al., 2023). In particular, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory highlights the role of social context and guided interaction in shaping cognitive and linguistic development (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective is highly relevant to early Arabic language learning in kindergarten settings, where structured interaction and environmental support can significantly shape language acquisition outcomes. Early exposure to Arabic not only improves communication skills but also enables children to access broader cultural and religious knowledge, thereby strengthening identity formation within multicultural contexts (Bohnacker et al., 2021).

Language itself is central to early childhood development because it serves as the primary tool for communication, expression, and understanding of the world (Finders et al., 2023; Prima, 2024). In Indonesia, Arabic occupies a distinctive position as both a communicative and religious language closely associated with Islamic practices and education (Al Husna et al., 2023; Hidayat, Nukman, et al., 2024). Therefore, Arabic is often introduced early in Islamic-based educational institutions to support both linguistic development and religious literacy. This dual function makes Arabic language learning particularly significant in Indonesian early childhood education contexts.

Early exposure theory suggests that introducing a second language at an early age can significantly enhance long-term language acquisition outcomes (Hakuta & August, 1998). In kindergarten settings, early Arabic exposure is expected to build a strong foundation for later language proficiency while also

supporting cognitive and social development (Agbaria, 2024). However, the implementation of Arabic instruction in Indonesian kindergartens varies significantly. Some institutions integrate Arabic within religious instruction, while others embed it into daily activities such as games, songs, and creative learning experiences (Warnis et al., 2019). These variations reflect different pedagogical approaches aimed at making language learning more engaging and developmentally appropriate.

Social learning theory by Bandura further explains that children acquire language through observation, imitation, and interaction with their environment (Bandura, 1977). In this context, early exposure to Arabic in kindergarten can support language development when children are actively engaged in social learning processes. Empirical studies show that early Arabic exposure can enhance later language acquisition and deepen understanding of Islamic values (Abu Ahmad et al., 2014; Shoukry et al., 2012; Windiastuti, 2022). However, the effectiveness of such exposure depends heavily on the appropriateness of teaching methods and alignment with children's developmental stages.

In addition, motivational theories provide further explanation of how children engage in language learning. According to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are shaped by the learning environment and social support systems (Deci & Ryan, 2013). In Arabic language learning, the use of interactive methods such as games, storytelling, and collaborative activities can significantly enhance engagement and enjoyment. Parental involvement also plays an important role in reinforcing motivation and supporting consistent learning experiences outside the classroom.

It is also essential to recognize that young learners differ significantly from older learners in their cognitive and learning processes. Children tend to learn more effectively through play-based, experiential, and socially interactive approaches (Giannoukos et al., n.d.; Mickeviciene et al., 2019). Therefore, Arabic language instruction in kindergarten must be designed to be engaging, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate. A creative and interactive learning environment ensures that children not only recognize Arabic vocabulary and structures but also develop positive attitudes toward language learning.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (2011) further explains individual differences in language learning ability, particularly linguistic intelligence, which refers to the capacity to use language effectively for communication, thinking, and problem-solving (Gardner, 2000; Miller, 1993). Children with high linguistic intelligence tend to acquire language more easily, demonstrate stronger vocabulary development, and show greater interest in reading, storytelling, and verbal expression. This intelligence can be nurtured through structured yet enjoyable learning activities such as group discussions,

educational games, and language-based projects. Such approaches not only improve linguistic competence but also foster collaboration and social skills.

Creating a supportive and interactive learning environment is essential for developing linguistic intelligence in early learners. Meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences contribute significantly to the development of language abilities (Saleh & Aljaam, 2014). Previous research also highlights that linguistic intelligence serves as an important foundation for language mastery and academic achievement (Hernández Pérez et al., 2021). Thus, fostering linguistic intelligence is not only about language acquisition but also about cognitive and social development.

Linguistic intelligence itself refers to the ability to effectively use language in both oral and written forms, including reading comprehension, writing fluency, and verbal communication (Gardner, 2000; Miller, 1993). Individuals with strong linguistic intelligence typically possess a rich vocabulary, strong grammatical awareness, and the ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively. This capacity is often associated with activities such as reading, writing stories, debating, and engaging in verbal problem-solving (Musyadad & Ingrum, 2018; Zahro & Kusriani, 2018). In early childhood education, nurturing this ability can significantly enhance academic performance and communication skills.

In Indonesia, particularly in the Kalimantan region, kindergartens vary in their educational approaches. Some institutions emphasize religious instruction, while others adopt more holistic and inclusive pedagogical models. This diversity raises important questions regarding how Arabic is introduced, what materials are used, and how teaching methods are implemented in daily classroom activities. Despite its importance, research on Arabic language instruction in early childhood education remains limited, especially in the context of early exposure in kindergarten settings.

Most existing studies focus on Arabic language learning at higher educational levels such as elementary schools or madrasahs. Therefore, there is a clear research gap in understanding how Arabic is introduced at the kindergarten level, particularly in relation to teaching methods, learning materials, and effectiveness of early exposure strategies. This study aims to address this gap by examining Arabic language instruction in kindergartens in Kalimantan, with a focus on pedagogical approaches and their impact on early language development.

Effective Arabic language learning requires mastery of three core linguistic components: phonology (ashwat), syntax (tarkib), and vocabulary (mufrodāt) (Hidayat, Rahman, et al., 2024). Phonological awareness supports correct pronunciation, syntax provides the structure for meaningful sentence formation, and vocabulary forms the foundation of communication and comprehension. In addition, Arabic language proficiency involves the development of four integrated

skills: listening (istima'), speaking (kalam), reading (qira'ah), and writing (kitabah) (Hidayat, Nukman, et al., 2024). These skills collectively support comprehensive language competence.

A holistic approach that integrates linguistic components and language skills provides a strong foundation for Arabic language learning (Hidayat et al., 2023). This approach ensures that learners are not only able to understand grammatical structures but also communicate effectively in various social and cultural contexts.

This study aims to analyze Arabic language learning materials and teaching methods in kindergartens in Kalimantan, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of early exposure in supporting language development. It also seeks to examine children's linguistic intelligence in Arabic learning and its contribution to language mastery. The findings are expected to contribute to curriculum development in early childhood education and provide practical recommendations for educators and policymakers to improve Arabic language instruction at the kindergarten level.

Ultimately, the objectives of this study are to describe forms of early Arabic exposure in kindergartens in Kalimantan, examine children's linguistic intelligence, and analyze the contribution of both factors to Arabic language mastery in early childhood education contexts.

B. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of early Arabic language exposure and children's linguistic intelligence in Arabic language mastery at kindergarten (TK) in Kalimantan (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Planing & Planing, 2014; Saldana, 2023). The research focuses on the upper kindergarten level (TK B / senior kindergarten group) in three schools of the same level, despite having different institutional names: TK Islamic Center Samarinda with 22 children, RA Bina Islam Paser with 24 children, and PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru with 22 children. Although the schools have different names, they all provide early childhood education.

Data collection techniques were employed through in-depth interviews with teachers, non-participant observation to directly monitor Arabic language learning activities in the classroom without the researcher taking part in the teaching process, and document analysis, which included examination of teaching materials and the curriculum used. The researcher acted solely as an external observer and did not participate as a teacher or instructional assistant during classroom activities. The involvement of second-hand informants or secondary observers was also applied in this study to ensure that the data collected accurately reflects the everyday practices in the classroom (Bungin, 2007). The data analysis process followed an interactive model that included data reduction,

data presentation, and conclusion drawing, ensuring that the research results provide a comprehensive and valid picture of children's Arabic language mastery (Miles et al., 2020). To maintain data validity, triangulation and member checking techniques were used to ensure that the data obtained is reliable and accountable (Rahardjo, 2023).

C. Results and Discussion

Early Arabic Language Exposure in Kindergartens in Kalimantan

1. TK Islamic Center Samarinda

At the Islamic Center Kindergarten in Samarinda, Arabic is introduced to children not as a specific subject, but through immersion in daily activities that integrate Arabic in a more natural and enjoyable context. Although there is no separate Arabic language class, exposure to the Arabic language is implemented both directly and indirectly through various activities that involve the use of Arabic.

Direct Exposure

The introduction of the Arabic language is carried out efficiently, primarily through conversations and greetings in Arabic. Children at this kindergarten are introduced to basic Arabic vocabulary, such as names of fruits, colors, and daily commands. Every day, children are encouraged to interact in Arabic through greetings like "Assalamu'alaikum," "Silakan duduk" (Please sit), and "Silakan makan" (Please eat), as well as other instructions used in their daily activities. These activities are aligned with the weekly themes that have been agreed upon, enabling the children to more easily understand and use Arabic in contexts relevant to their lives. According to Teacher W:

"We do not teach Arabic as a separate subject, but rather focus on its direct application in daily activities. Every greeting or command, such as 'Assalamu'alaikum' or 'Silakan duduk,' is part of their routine, so they become accustomed to hearing and using Arabic in a natural context."

This explanation suggests that the Islamic Center Kindergarten in Samarinda does not treat Arabic as a separate subject, but instead integrates it into daily activities more naturally and contextually. This approach enables children to recall and apply Arabic vocabulary more easily in everyday situations, such as when interacting with teachers and peers.

Indirect Exposure

Additionally, the Arabic language is introduced through various indirect activities conducted outside of formal teaching hours. One of the main activities is mengaji (Quran recitation), which takes place daily. This provides children with the opportunity to listen to and memorize short prayers and surahs in Arabic. The process of repetition (murojaah) is also carried out using visual aids, such as large Qiroati books and Hijaiyah letter cards, which help children recognize Arabic letters in a fun and easy-to-understand manner. In the classroom, posters of

Hijaiyah letters are displayed on the walls, serving as visual aids to introduce the Arabic alphabet to the children. Additionally, the teacher prepares various play-based activities as transitions before and after mengaji, such as assembling Hijaiyah letter puzzles, stringing Hijaiyah letters, or writing Arabic letters using playdough, stones, or other media. These activities allow children to directly engage with the Arabic letters in a creative and enjoyable environment. Teacher W explained:

“Mengaji is the main activity we do every day. Besides memorizing prayers and short surahs, we also use learning aids such as the large Qiroati book and Hijaiyah letter cards to help children more easily recognize and remember the Arabic letters. We also prepare creative activities, like assembling puzzles or writing Hijaiyah letters with playdough, to provide them with a fun learning experience.”

Teacher W highlights that the Islamic Center Kindergarten Samarinda combines Arabic language learning through the daily mengaji activities. Mengaji is not only about reading but also about introducing Hijaiyah letters and short prayers engagingly and interactively. Educational tools, such as the large Qiroati books and Hijaiyah letter cards, play a crucial role in helping children recognize Arabic letters. Meanwhile, creative activities like assembling letter puzzles or writing with playdough offer a more hands-on and enjoyable learning experience. This approach ensures that children not only memorize but also apply Arabic letters and vocabulary in a developmentally appropriate way.

2. RA Bina Islam Paser

At RA Bina Islam Paser, Arabic is introduced to children through various approaches that are integrated into daily activities, both directly and indirectly. Although there is no specific subject for Arabic, the introduction to the Arabic language is carried out in a fun and age-appropriate manner, aligned with the developmental stages of the children.

Direct Exposure

Direct exposure to the Arabic language at RA Bina Islam Paser is carried out by introducing Arabic vocabulary related to the children's everyday life. Arabic is introduced through basic vocabulary commonly used in daily conversations, such as body parts, positions, and Arabic numbers. This vocabulary introduction is done using an interactive method, specifically through singing. The children are invited to sing songs containing Arabic vocabulary, enabling them to remember and understand these words in a fun and easily comprehensible way. The introduction of Arabic vocabulary is not limited to specific themes but is also applied contextually according to the theme being studied. For example, when the theme of school covers school supplies, the children are introduced to Arabic words such as "qolamun" for pen. This allows the children to associate Arabic words with objects around them. Teacher TS explained:

“At RA Bina Islam, we teach Arabic to the children through singing. The songs we choose contain basic vocabulary, such as the names of body parts, numbers, and objects they encounter every day. This makes it easier for them to remember the words in a fun way. When the school theme discusses school supplies, we introduce words like ‘qolamun’ for pen, so they can directly associate Arabic with the objects around them.”

Teacher TS’s explanation shows that RA Bina Islam Paser prioritizes a fun and contextual approach in teaching Arabic. By using songs that contain essential vocabulary, children not only learn Arabic within specific themes but also expand their vocabulary with words they encounter in daily life. This approach enables the children to more easily remember and understand Arabic in a pleasant and engaging environment.

Indirect Exposure

The introduction of the Arabic language at RA Bina Islam Paser is primarily carried out through daily *mengaji* (Quran recitation) activities. *Mengaji* here is done using IQRO books, which contain Arabic script. This activity not only helps children memorize short prayers and surahs but also introduces them to Arabic writing in a more in-depth manner. Additionally, Arabic is introduced through visual media and learning tools, such as Arabic language posters displayed in the classroom and Arabic language toys that children can use to interact with the language more creatively. These posters feature essential Arabic vocabulary, helping to introduce children to the Hijaiyah letters and other vocabulary in a visual format. Teacher TS explained:

“Every day, the children are invited to *mengaji* using IQRO books that contain Arabic script. In addition to memorizing prayers and surahs, they are also introduced to the Arabic letters through repetition. We also use various visual media, such as Hijaiyah letter posters, to introduce new vocabulary to the children. This provides them with a visual representation of the Arabic letters and words, which greatly aids their memory.”

Teacher TS emphasizes that at RA Bina Islam Paser, the introduction to Arabic is not only carried out through oral instruction but also through the use of teaching aids and visual media. The use of IQRO books in *mengaji* introduces children to Arabic writing, while posters and learning tools featuring Hijaiyah letters and Arabic vocabulary provide a more interactive learning experience. This approach strengthens children’s understanding of Arabic, both orally and in writing, in a fun and easily comprehensible way.

3. PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru

At PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, the introduction of the Arabic language to children is integrated into daily activities through a simple yet effective approach. Although there is no specific Arabic language subject at this school, Arabic is still introduced to the children in a fun and relevant way that connects to their daily lives.

Direct Exposure

PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru introduces the Arabic language to children directly by teaching Arabic vocabulary related to the theme of the lessons being taught. Each theme covered in the curriculum is accompanied by the introduction of approximately five Arabic vocabulary words relevant to that theme. For instance, in a daily life theme, children are introduced to Arabic vocabulary related to objects they encounter, such as “qolam” for pen or “maktabah” for library. This approach allows children to learn Arabic in contexts that are relevant to their everyday experiences. Teacher SW explained:

“We introduce Arabic in a simple way that is relevant to the children’s daily lives. For each theme taught, we ensure that about five Arabic vocabulary words are directly related to objects or concepts they encounter. For example, in the school theme, they learn the words ‘qolam’ for ‘pen’ and ‘maktabah’ for ‘library’. This way, children can immediately connect the vocabulary with objects around them.”

Teacher SW’s explanation demonstrates that PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru prioritizes relevance and simplicity in teaching Arabic. This thematic approach not only makes learning more comprehensible but also allows children to connect Arabic vocabulary with their daily experiences, reinforcing their understanding of the language in real and practical contexts.

Indirect Exposure

In addition to vocabulary introduction, PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru also employs an indirect approach through *mengaji* (Quran recitation) using the Wafa method. Through this method, children are introduced to the Arabic script, which aims not only to teach reading but also to familiarize them with the visual shapes of Arabic letters. The use of Arabic letters in *mengaji* activities provides children with the opportunity to become familiar with the Arabic language and develop a basic understanding of how these letters are used in reading and writing.

Teacher SW explained:

“We teach children to recognize Arabic letters through the Wafa method, which combines reading instruction with the introduction of the shapes of Arabic letters. Additionally, we also teach short prayers written in Arabic, allowing children to memorize prayers from an early age. This is part of a deeper learning process regarding the Arabic language in the context of their religious education.”

Furthermore, children are also taught short prayers written in Arabic, enabling them to memorize these prayers in Arabic from an early age. This *mengaji* process provides a deeper introduction to the Arabic language, particularly in the religious context, which is an important part of their lives.

Linguistic Intelligence of Children in Kindergartens in Kalimantan

Linguistic intelligence, which refers to the ability to understand, use, and process language effectively, is a crucial aspect of early childhood development, particularly in kindergartens. In Kalimantan, as awareness grows regarding the importance of character and language education in early childhood, children’s

linguistic intelligence has received increasing attention, especially in developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

In the kindergartens in Kalimantan, this linguistic intelligence develops through various teaching methods that prioritize verbal interaction and the use of everyday language. Educators in kindergarten often utilize language-based activities, such as storytelling, singing, role-playing, and small-group discussions, to introduce language concepts to children. These activities provide children with opportunities to learn through direct experiences, enriching their vocabulary and enhancing their communication skills.

However, a significant challenge in enhancing children's linguistic intelligence in Kalimantan is the region's linguistic and cultural diversity. Kalimantan is home to a diverse array of ethnic groups and regional languages, which shape the way children interact with their surroundings. As a result, language teaching in kindergartens not only involves Indonesian as the primary medium of instruction but also includes the teaching of regional languages to preserve the diversity of local cultures and languages. Thus, children in Kalimantan develop their linguistic abilities in both Indonesian and their local languages, gaining a deeper understanding of their regional languages as well.

The development of linguistic intelligence in young children in Kalimantan also requires the active involvement of parents in supporting learning at home. Parents can participate by listening to children tell stories, reading together, or encouraging children to communicate more actively in daily life. Collaboration between educators and parents is essential for creating an environment that optimally supports children's linguistic development.

Overall, children's linguistic intelligence in kindergartens in Kalimantan develops through an approach based on social interaction, rich language use, and appreciation for the linguistic and cultural diversity present in the local community. Despite challenges related to language diversity, with the proper methods and family support, children in Kalimantan can effectively develop their linguistic intelligence, which will serve as a vital foundation for their future educational success.

In this study, the researcher conducted direct observations of children in kindergartens in Kalimantan to assess their linguistic intelligence, focusing on their ability to understand, produce, and apply language in various contexts. In addition to the direct observations, teachers in the kindergartens also served as second-hand informants, providing feedback and assessments regarding the observation instruments used. These teachers, who have daily interactions with the children's language development, offered valuable perspectives that greatly aided in evaluating the children's linguistic growth. The instruments used for this assessment are as follows:

Table 1. Indicators for Observational Assessment of Children's Linguistic Intelligence

No.	Indicator Foundation	Indicator	Score 1 (Low)	Score 2 (Medium)	Score 3 (High)
1	Child's ability to understand and produce language effectively (reading, writing, speaking, listening). (Kurniaman, Hidayat, et al., 2020; Kurniaman, Maharani, et al., 2020)	Ability to Understand and Produce Language	Unable to understand or produce clear sentences	Understands partially, but often unclear in expressing ideas.	Able to understand and produce clear and accurate sentences.
2	High linguistic intelligence predicts academic ability, especially in reading comprehension and writing skills. (Rahmadina & Jufrizal, 2021)	Relationship with Academic Performance	Difficulty understanding reading and writing, often requiring assistance.	Understands reading and writing well, but still faces some difficulties.	Able to understand reading well and write effectively, showing high academic performance.
3	Child's involvement in language-based activities such as storytelling, singing, and language games. (Tanfidiyah & Utama, 2019)	Involvement in Creative and Expressive Activities	Not involved in language-based activities or rarely participates.	Occasionally involved in language-based activities, but inconsistent.	Very active and enthusiastic in various language-based activities such as storytelling and singing.
4	Influence of an interactive learning environment and external factors such as music training in enhancing children's linguistic intelligence. (Kurniaman, Hidayat, et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2017)	Environmental Factors and External Involvement	Frequently engages in communication with the surrounding environment.	Rarely engages in communication with the surrounding environment.	Never engages in communication with the surrounding environment.

In the next phase, I present the research results regarding the linguistic intelligence of children at the Islamic Center Kindergarten in Samarinda. This study involved 22 children from the senior class to assess their linguistic intelligence development through direct observation and input from teachers as second-hand informants. The researcher then presented the final average scores for each child with the following details:

Table 2. Average score for each individual

Very High	2,5 - 3
High	2,1 - 2,4
Moderate	2

Low	1,5 - 1,9
Very Low	1 - 1,4

The study's results showed that, out of the 22 children involved, the majority demonstrated exceptionally high linguistic abilities. Seventeen children were classified as very high in their ability to understand and produce language, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing (77%). These children were able to produce clear and accurate sentences, demonstrating good academic abilities in reading comprehension and writing. They were also highly active in language-based activities, such as storytelling, singing, and role-playing, which demonstrated their enthusiasm and involvement in language development activities. Meanwhile, four other children were classified as having moderate linguistic abilities (18%). These children were able to understand and produce sentences, but still faced some difficulties in understanding reading materials and constructing more complex sentences. Nevertheless, they remained engaged in language-based activities, although they occasionally required more guidance and support from the teachers. The visualization of this data is as follows:

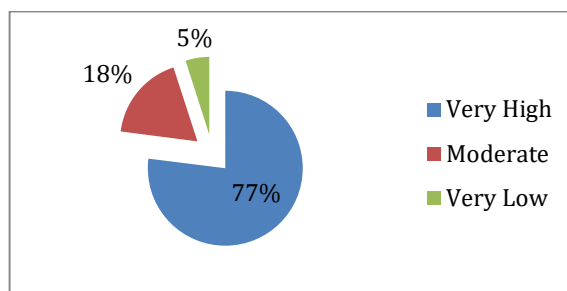


Figure 1. Children's Linguistic Intelligence at TK Islamic Center Samarinda

At RA Bina Islam Paser, I present the research results regarding the linguistic intelligence of children. The study involved 24 children from the senior class to assess their linguistic intelligence development through direct observation and input from teachers as second-hand informants.

Out of the 24 children involved, 9 were classified as having very high linguistic intelligence (38%). These children demonstrated exceptional abilities in understanding and producing language, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. They were able to express ideas clearly and accurately, and actively participated in language-based activities such as storytelling, singing, and role-playing, which indicated high academic performance. A total of 4 children were classified as high (17%), exhibiting good linguistic abilities but still showing some difficulties in sentence complexity or deeper reading comprehension. These children were able to produce clear sentences and demonstrated fairly good academic abilities, although they required additional support to develop their language skills.

Meanwhile, 6 children were at a moderate level, showing less active involvement in language-based activities. They still required more intensive guidance to comprehend more complex sentences and to enhance their writing and speaking abilities. Additionally, 3 children were classified as low in linguistic intelligence (12%), experiencing significant difficulties in understanding more complex sentences and producing clear language. They required specialized guidance to improve their language abilities in speaking, listening, and writing. Finally, 2 children showed very low abilities (8%), facing greater challenges in understanding and producing language. These children required special attention and a more intensive approach to support the development of their linguistic intelligence. The visualization of these results is as follows:

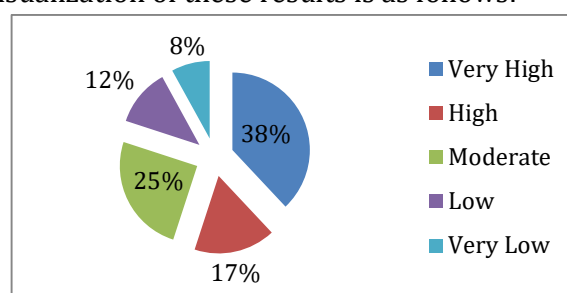


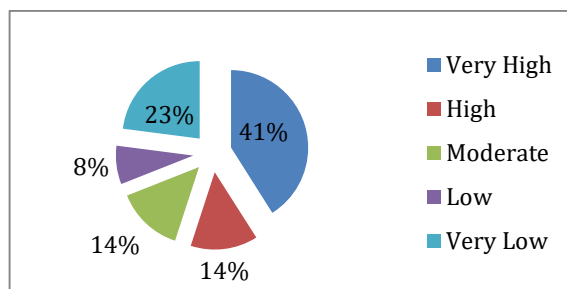
Figure 2. Children's Linguistic Intelligence at RA Bina Islam Paser

At PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, I present the research findings on children's linguistic intelligence. The study involved 22 children from the senior class to assess their linguistic intelligence development through direct observation and input from teachers as second-hand informants.

The results of the observation revealed a diversity of linguistic intelligence among the 22 children involved in this study. Nine children were classified as having very high linguistic intelligence (41%). These children demonstrated exceptional abilities in speaking, listening, and understanding, as well as in producing language clearly and accurately. They were actively engaged in various language-based activities, such as storytelling, singing, and role-playing, and demonstrated high academic skills in reading comprehension and speaking abilities.

Three other children were classified as high (14%), with good linguistic abilities but still facing some difficulties in understanding reading material or speaking fluently. They were able to understand most readings and communicate clearly, but still required some guidance in writing and understanding more complex sentences. Three children were categorized as moderate (14%), with adequate speaking and listening skills. However, they still needed additional support to develop their writing skills and to enrich their vocabulary to communicate more fluently. Two other children were classified as low in linguistic intelligence (8%), with greater difficulty in understanding language and producing

clear sentences. They required a more intensive approach and extra support to develop their linguistic skills, especially in speaking and listening. Finally, five children demonstrated very low linguistic intelligence (23%). These children faced significant challenges in communication, both in speaking and listening. They needed more specific and intensive intervention, either through individual guidance or by using teaching methods better suited to their needs. The visualization of these results is as follows:



**Figure 3. Children's Linguistic Intelligence at PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru
The Contribution of Early Arabic Language Exposure and Children's Linguistic Intelligence in Arabic Language Mastery**

To understand the contribution of early Arabic language exposure and linguistic intelligence in Arabic language mastery, the researcher first presents the Arabic language abilities of the children in the three schools that are the subjects of this study: Islamic Center Kindergarten Samarinda, PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, and RA Bina Islam Paser. Each school has its own characteristics and approaches to teaching Arabic, which naturally provide unique insights into the development of children's linguistic intelligence within each institution. The assessment process relied on observations and the assistance of teachers as second-hand informants, as they are more familiar with everything that occurs in the school concerning the children. The instruments used for this assessment are as follows:

No.	Assessment Aspect	Indicator	Score 1 (Low)	Score 2 (Medium)	Score 3 (High)
1	Kalam (Speech)	Pronunciation of Arabic letters or vocabulary	The child is unable to pronounce Arabic letters or vocabulary well	The child can pronounce Arabic letters or vocabulary well, although there are occasional small mistakes	The child can pronounce Arabic letters or vocabulary well and clearly
2	Qir'ah (Reading)	Reading Arabic letters or vocabulary	The child is unable to read Arabic letters or vocabulary well	The child can read Arabic letters or vocabulary well, although there are occasional small mistakes	The child can read Arabic letters or vocabulary well and correctly
3	Kitabah (Writing)	Writing Arabic letters or vocabulary	The child is unable to write Arabic letters or	The child can write Arabic letters or vocabulary well,	The child can write Arabic letters or

			vocabulary well	although there are occasional small mistakes	vocabulary well and correctly
4	Istima (Listening)	Following or imitating what the teacher says, either Arabic letters or vocabulary	The child is unable to follow or imitate what the teacher says, either Arabic letters or vocabulary	The child can follow or imitate what the teacher says, either Arabic letters or vocabulary well, although there are occasional small mistakes	The child can follow or imitate what the teacher says, either Arabic letters or vocabulary well and clearly

The observations indicate that all three schools demonstrate relatively strong levels of basic Arabic language mastery among early childhood learners. The details are as follows:

No	School	Early Exposure	VH	H	M	L	VL
1	Islamic Center Kindergarten Samarinda	Direct & Indirect	14%	64%	18%	-	4%
2	RA Bina Islam Paser	Direct & Indirect	17%	17%	29%	29%	8%
3	PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru	Direct & Indirect	23%	18%	27%	9%	23%

VL = Very Low, L = Low, M = Moderate, H = High, VH = Very High

At TK Islamic Center Samarinda, 78% of the children fall into the very high and high categories in basic Arabic language proficiency, indicating significant achievement in the early introduction of Arabic. Similarly, at RA Bina Islam Paser, 34% of the children are classified in the high and very high categories, while 29% are in the moderate category, showing good progress. However, there is room for further development. At PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, 41% of the children are in the high and very high categories, with 27% in the moderate category, reflecting the success of early exposure to education. However, some children still require further reinforcement. However, there is also a percentage of children in the low and very low categories at each school, which does not exceed 37% of the total number of children. This indicates that a small number of children do require more intensive support to overcome difficulties in mastering the Arabic language. The visualization of these results is as follows:

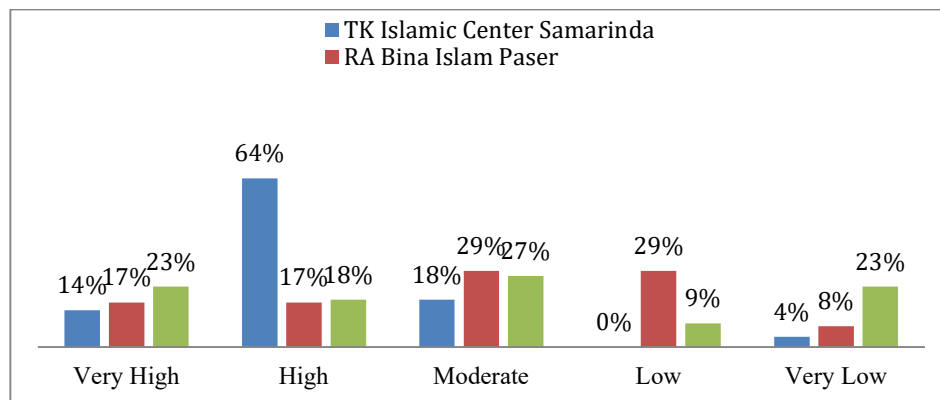


Figure 4. Distribution of Arabic Language Mastery Levels Among Early Childhood Learners

Overall, early exposure to the Arabic language makes a significant contribution to the mastery of Arabic in young children. With the right approach and high frequency of exposure, children can develop their basic Arabic language skills more effectively. Although there are challenges for some children, continuous support from teachers and the family environment is crucial in helping them achieve optimal progress in mastering the Arabic language.

In identifying the contribution of linguistic intelligence to children's mastery of Arabic in three schools, the researcher compared the results of the children's linguistic intelligence observations with their acquired Arabic language skills. The results show that at TK Islamic Center Samarinda, 17 children with high and very high linguistic intelligence demonstrated good Arabic language skills, with a percentage of 100%. Meanwhile, 1 child with very low linguistic intelligence showed poor Arabic language skills, with a percentage of 100%. At RA Bina Islam Paser, 13 children with high and very high linguistic intelligence demonstrated good Arabic language skills, with a percentage of 77%. In contrast, 5 children with very low linguistic intelligence showed poor Arabic language skills, with a percentage of 100%. At PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, 12 children with high and very high linguistic intelligence demonstrated good Arabic language skills, with a 100% success rate, while 7 children with very low linguistic intelligence showed poor Arabic language skills, also with a 100% failure rate.

Based on these findings, linguistic intelligence has a significant contribution to Arabic language mastery in the children at these three schools. Children with high and very high linguistic intelligence demonstrated good Arabic language skills, particularly in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, which supported their more effective mastery of the language. On the other hand, children with low and very low linguistic intelligence tended to struggle with mastering Arabic, especially in listening, reading, sentence construction, and reading comprehension. These results highlight the importance of early development of linguistic

intelligence in facilitating optimal foreign language mastery, including Arabic, through direct exposure and consistent language-based activities within the learning environment.

Discussion

This study examines early exposure to the Arabic language among children in three educational institutions in Kalimantan: TK Islamic Center Samarinda, RA Bina Islam Paser, and PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru. In these schools, Arabic is introduced through direct approaches such as daily conversations and indirect methods, including activities like *mengaji* (Quran recitation) and play that involve Arabic vocabulary. Although there is no specific Arabic language subject at these schools, this approach has proven effective in introducing Arabic by connecting it to the children's everyday life. This is consistent with findings from studies by Wiradnyana et al., (2020), Cychosz et al., (2021), dan Orena et al., (2019), which highlight the effectiveness of both direct and indirect exposure in enhancing language mastery. Furthermore, Sun et al., (2021) and Wood et al., (2018) found that introducing Arabic through enjoyable daily activities can significantly improve children's language skills. This approach suggests that language education need not be limited to formal teaching but can be integrated into interactive activities that link vocabulary to children's direct experiences, as emphasized by Kazu & Kuvvetli, (2024) in their research on game-based learning.

Early exposure to Arabic integrated into daily activities provides children with a natural and enjoyable learning experience. Introducing vocabulary through everyday conversation and interactive activities, such as singing and *mengaji*, allows children to engage with Arabic in a more practical context. This is supported by research from Eka et al., (2020) and Solfiah et al., (2020), which demonstrates that language exposure in daily activities fosters enjoyable learning experiences that enhance language comprehension and use. Additionally, Amalia et al., (2022) and Suryana et al., (2020) suggest that early exposure through social interactions and peer activities can further increase children's engagement in learning. This approach aligns with the practices at the three schools, where children are introduced to Arabic through fun and experience-based teaching methods. Sutrisno et al., (2021), Curran et al., (2015), dan Leyva et al., (2015) also emphasize the effectiveness of contextual and interactive approaches over traditional, formal language instruction. *şahinkaya*, (2024) dan Egert et al., (2020) further stress that direct interaction between teachers and children, along with the relevance of the learning context to everyday life, greatly supports children's language development. Contextual and interactive early exposure is proven to be more effective in shaping children's language abilities than structured and separate learning models.

This study also investigates the linguistic intelligence of children, focusing on their abilities to understand, speak, listen, read, and write in Arabic. In all three schools, children with high and very high linguistic intelligence showed strong Arabic language skills, actively participating in language-based activities such as storytelling and singing, and were able to understand and produce sentences effectively. As Meliana, (2024) states, children with high linguistic intelligence tend to expand their vocabulary and employ complex syntactic structures through exposure to diverse languages. This finding is supported by Turker et al., (2019), who mention that “children with high linguistic intelligence tend to exhibit better foreign language skills,” indicating that children with high linguistic intelligence have greater potential to learn foreign languages, including Arabic, more effectively.

On the other hand, children with low and very low linguistic intelligence face greater difficulties in speaking and understanding reading materials and require more intensive language teaching approaches. Kamykowska et al., (2024) explain that children with low linguistic intelligence face greater challenges in language learning, particularly in terms of reading difficulties. Lin et al., (2022) also emphasize that children with low linguistic intelligence experience significant challenges in language acquisition. These findings underscore the importance of implementing more intensive and tailored approaches to help children with low linguistic intelligence overcome language learning barriers more effectively.

The results of this study indicate that linguistic intelligence makes a significant contribution to children’s mastery of Arabic. Children with high linguistic intelligence can use Arabic more effectively in daily conversations, while children with low linguistic intelligence struggle with understanding and producing Arabic. Participation in language-based activities such as storytelling, singing, and *mengaji* enriches their learning experience and supports overall Arabic language development. The implications of these findings suggest that early Arabic education should consider differences in children’s linguistic intelligence. Arabic language teaching should be designed to accommodate various levels of linguistic intelligence, offering exceptional support to children who face difficulties. For children with low linguistic intelligence, more intensive approaches, such as visual-based activities, teaching aids, and individualized learning, should be implemented to help them develop their language skills optimally.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the three schools, TK Islamic Center Samarinda, RA Bina Islam Paser, and PAUD IT Rabbani Banjarbaru, implement early exposure to Arabic through two main approaches: direct and indirect exposure. Direct exposure involves active activities such as daily conversations, storytelling,

singing, and role-playing, while indirect exposure is conducted through activities like *mengaji* (Quran recitation) and memorizing short prayers. Although most children in these schools demonstrate good linguistic intelligence, some children with lower linguistic abilities require additional support. Children with high linguistic intelligence tend to demonstrate better Arabic language skills, whereas those with lower linguistic intelligence often require intensive support to overcome difficulties in mastering the Arabic language. Early exposure to Arabic and children's linguistic intelligence significantly contributes to Arabic language proficiency, with interactive and contextual approaches proving effective in enhancing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. This approach, based on interactive activities and contextual teaching, not only helps children with high linguistic intelligence strengthen their understanding but also provides opportunities for children with lower linguistic intelligence to develop their language skills more effectively. Therefore, it is essential to adopt activity-based and contextual approaches in all schools, while providing targeted support for children who face challenges in mastering Arabic. This approach is expected to increase children's engagement in learning and support their optimal mastery of the Arabic language.

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