

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ARABIC THROUGH DRAMA AND THEATER**Moh Tohiri Habib¹, Nur Hanifansyah²**^{1,2}Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wahemail: Mohtohirihabib@uiidalwa.ac.id , Nurhanifansyah@uiidalwa.ac.id

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ABSTRAK

Memperkuat insting bahasa Arab (dzauq) merupakan aspek penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa yang efektif. Pengajaran bahasa Arab sering menghadapi tantangan dalam mendorong kompetensi linguistik yang holistik pada peserta didik. Salah satu pendekatan inovatif adalah integrasi drama dan teater sebagai strategi pedagogis. Studi ini mengeksplorasi penerapan drama dan teater dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah (DALWA). Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan diskusi kelompok terarah. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa aktivitas drama secara efektif mengintegrasikan keterampilan bahasa (kitabah, qira'ah, istima', dan kalam) sambil membangun kepercayaan diri, kesadaran budaya, dan kreativitas siswa. Teknik mnemonik yang terintegrasi dalam drama meningkatkan retensi kosakata melalui pengalaman emosional dan visual. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa drama dan teater tidak hanya memfasilitasi pembelajaran bahasa, tetapi juga menciptakan kenangan emosional yang mendalam, memperkuat dzauq siswa terhadap bahasa Arab, dan memperkaya apresiasi budaya. Rekomendasi meliputi pelatihan lanjutan bagi guru, pengembangan naskah dengan alat teknologi, dan studi longitudinal untuk mengevaluasi dampak jangka panjang pendekatan ini.

Kata kunci: Drama, Insting bahasa Arab (dzauq), Pembelajaran bahasa Arab, Teater, Teknik mnemonik.

ABSTRACT

Strengthening the instinct for the Arabic language (dzauq) is a critical aspect of effective language acquisition. Teaching Arabic often faces challenges in fostering holistic linguistic competence among learners. One innovative approach is the integration of drama and theater as pedagogical strategies. This study explores the application of drama and theater in Arabic language learning at Darullughah Wadda'wah (DALWA) Islamic Boarding School. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings reveal that drama activities effectively integrate language skills (kitabah, qira'ah, istima', and kalam) while building

students' confidence, cultural awareness, and creativity. Mnemonic techniques embedded in drama enhance vocabulary retention through emotional and visual experiences. This research highlights that drama and theater not only facilitate language learning but also create lasting emotional memories, deepen students' dzauq for Arabic, and enrich cultural appreciation. Recommendations include advanced teacher training, script development using technological tools, and longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of this approach.

Key words: Arabic language learning, Drama, Theater, Mnemonic techniques, The instinct for the Arabic language (dzauq).

مستخلص

يُعَدُّ تعزيز الذوق اللغوي في اللغة العربية (الدُّوق) جانباً أساسياً في تعليم اللغة بفعالية. وغالباً ما تواجه عملية تعليم اللغة العربية تحديات في تحفيز الكفاءة اللغوية الشاملة لدى المتعلمين. ومن الأساليب التربوية المبتكرة دمج الدراما والمسرح كاستراتيجية بيداغوجية. تستكشف هذه الدراسة تطبيق الدراما والمسرح في تعليم اللغة العربية في معهد دار اللغة والدعوة (DALWA) وباستخدام منهج البحث النوعي، جُمِعَت البيانات من خلال الملاحظة، والمقابلات شبه المنظمة، والمناقشات الجماعية المركزة. أظهرت النتائج أن الأنشطة الدرامية تدمج مهارات اللغة (الكتابة، والقراءة، والاستماع، والمحادثة) بفعالية، مع تعزيز الثقة بالنفس، والوعي الثقافي، والإبداع لدى الطلاب. كما أن الأساليب التذكيرية (المنيمونيك) المدمجة في الدراما تُسهم في تعزيز اكتساب المفردات من خلال التجربة العاطفية والبصرية. تؤكد هذه الدراسة أن الدراما والمسرح لا يُسهمان فقط في تسهيل عملية تعلم اللغة، بل يخلقان أيضاً تجارب وجدانية عميقة، مما يعزز الذوق اللغوي لدى الطلاب ويثري تقديرهم الثقافي. وتشمل التوصيات تقديم برامج تدريبية متقدمة للمعلمين، وتطوير نصوص مسرحية باستخدام الأدوات التكنولوجية، وإجراء دراسات طولية لتقييم الأثر بعيد المدى لهذا النهج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدراما، الذوق اللغوي، الأساليب التذكيرية (المنيمونيك)، المسرح، تعليم اللغة العربية.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of drama and theater into Arabic language teaching represents an innovative approach to overcoming traditional challenges in language education. While conventional methods often emphasize rote memorization and grammar-focused instruction, they frequently neglect the dynamic and engaging elements necessary to foster fluency and practical communication skills. This study examines the potential of drama and theater as strategic tools in Arabic language pedagogy, with a focus on enhancing linguistic competence and cultural understanding among learners.

One significant issue in Arabic language education is the lack of interactive and experiential methodologies that engage learners holistically (Soliman & Khalil, 2024). Previous studies, such as those exploring dramatic dialogues or role-playing techniques, have demonstrated success in promoting student participation and improving conversational skills. However, these studies often limit their scope to small-scale applications or focus primarily on technical linguistic outcomes. This creates a gap in understanding how sustained integration of drama and theater can transform the overall learning environment, particularly in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and intercultural competence.

Using drama and theater as pedagogical strategies for teaching Arabic is not something that was born overnight. It has a historical precedence and relevance. In all world languages, an inseparable relationship has always existed between language and culture. To speak one is to know the other. This is why fluency and idiomatic expressions are difficult to convey to students of all world languages. All new learning experiences involve the emotions of the learner. This is why dynamic or dramatic play, where the students are in a state of 'becoming,' is the most effective tool. Techniques of drama and theater can help motivate students and encourage them to step into a performance, entering a world of complex languages, people, and situations different from their own (Jasim, 2023). Drama and theater activities aim to recognize the mutual relationship between language and culture while enhancing Arabic language skills. In this way, it becomes essential to understand these aspects within the living community (Al-Maani, 2022). Drama and theater have a profound connection with storytelling, intertwining narratives and pedagogy to enhance language and cultural education.

This study aims to address this gap by exploring the following research questions: How can drama and theater be effectively integrated into Arabic language curricula? What are the impacts of this approach on students' language proficiency and cultural understanding? What challenges and limitations arise in implementing such strategies, and how can they be mitigated?

The scope of this study is to examine drama and theater's pedagogical applications in Arabic language classes at secondary and tertiary education levels. Limitations include potential variability in students' prior exposure to Arabic and access to theatrical resources. Nevertheless, the significance of this research lies in its potential to offer a transformative model for Arabic language education that not only enhances linguistic skills but also deepens cultural appreciation and fosters innovative teaching practices.

Previous research highlights various interactive techniques, such as dramatic dialogues and experiential learning projects, as promising tools for teaching less

commonly taught languages, including Arabic. Noor Eliza Abdul Rahman et al. (2021) demonstrated the effectiveness of subtitles in Arabic drama for enhancing vocabulary and clause mastery, making them valuable for Arabic language education (Abdul Rahman et al., 2021). Similarly, Mulloh et al. (2023) explored the satirical elements in *Mismaru Juha*, emphasizing Horatian satire's ability to blend humor with critique, thereby enriching cultural understanding in language learning (Mulloh et al., 2023).

In terms of technological integration, Bravo et al. (2021) investigated storytelling and drama activities with robots in science education. Their findings highlight the role of multisensory learning in fostering engagement (Bravo et al., 2021), though such approaches could complement language acquisition strategies like those discussed by Noor Eliza et al. (2021).

Addressing historical and cultural aspects, Adway (2021) analyzed the treatment of historical events in the Arabic series *Omar*, underscoring the need for accuracy to maintain audience trust (Adway, 2022). These insights resonate with the cultural preservation observed in Mulloh et al. (2023). Finally, Al-Khayat and Abdulhaq (2023) examined self-efficacy among prospective kindergarten teachers using drama, emphasizing the importance of communication skills and attitudes in fostering effective teaching strategies (Al-Khayat & Abdulhaq, 2023). Nergis & Enisa(2024) examine the impact of creative drama on young learners' vocabulary development and creative thinking skills, comparing it with traditional instruction. The study finds that drama-based teaching significantly enhances both linguistic and cognitive skills, highlighting its effectiveness in early language education (Nergis & Enisa, 2021). Demircioğlu (2010) highlights drama as an effective method for teaching English vocabulary to young learners, emphasizing its role in enhancing retention through contextualized and engaging experiences (Demircioğlu, 2010). Stephenson (2022) examines Drama Worldbuilding as a pedagogical approach that fosters creativity, wellbeing, and relational learning. The study highlights how immersive drama enhances critical thinking, emotional resilience, and meaning-making in education.

However, many studies focus narrowly on either linguistic outcomes or cultural integration, often neglecting a comprehensive examination of how theater-based methodologies can address both simultaneously. there remains a gap in studies examining the structured application of drama in Arabic language education within pesantren environments. This paper builds on such foundational works while positioning itself to fill this critical research gap.

By emphasizing the dual role of drama and theater in language and cultural education, this study seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical exploration and practical application. It contributes to the field by proposing an adaptable framework for educators to utilize drama and theater strategically, thereby enriching the teaching and learning experience in Arabic language education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design(Creswell & Creswell, 2020), focusing on case studies to explore the implementation and outcomes of drama and theater activities in teaching Arabic. Observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus

group discussions were utilized to gather comprehensive data from participants actively involved in drama-based Arabic language education. The research was conducted at Darullughah Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School (DALWA) and several Malaysian institutions, engaging 50 participants comprising students, teachers, and mentors. The students represented both secondary and tertiary levels, while teachers and mentors provided supervision and guidance during drama activities.

The data collection process was carried out in three phases. First, weekly observations over six weeks focused on key aspects such as the integration of language skills (*kitabah*, *qira'ah*, *istima'*, and *kalam*) and the application of mnemonic techniques during performances. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted post-performances to explore participants' experiences (Buys et al., 2022), challenges, and perceptions of how drama enhanced language proficiency and cultural understanding. Finally, focus group discussions among student participants provided collective insights into collaborative learning and the role of drama in cultural immersion.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involved familiarization with observation notes, interview transcripts, and focus group recordings, followed by coding key phrases and concepts related to language acquisition, cultural immersion, confidence building, and mnemonic benefits. These codes were grouped into overarching themes such as "Integration of Language Skills," "Cultural Representation," and "Confidence Building," which were interpreted to align with findings from previous research.

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to, with informed consent obtained from all participants and assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. This methodological approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the pedagogical and cultural impacts of drama and theater in Arabic language education, offering meaningful insights into their transformative role in enhancing linguistic competence and cultural understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

At Darullughah Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School (DALWA), Arabic drama and theater activities have been held every week regularly since 2011. Before that, starting in 2007, these activities were organized during special events and occasions. The Arabic skills at DALWA are already very good (Baharun & Hanifansyah, 2024), and these regular drama and theater activities show the school's commitment to improving language learning in a fun and interactive way. Drama and theater activities are conducted every week after Friday prayers and have been consistently organized up to the present day.

With the involvement of students and teachers in creating these dramas, various aspects are integrated: ***Kitabah*** in writing the story, ***Qiro'ah*** in reading and memorizing the drama and theater scripts, ***Istima'*** in listening to the voices of fellow actors and the narrator, and ***Kalam*** in performing dialogues in the drama and theater. Through this process, a ***Dzauq*** or instinct for the Arabic language is formed. This ***Dzauq*** becomes even stronger as interactions in Arabic grow more intense and frequent.

Drama and theater are deeply intertwined with storytelling, serving as powerful tools to merge narrative and pedagogy in education. They not only bring stories to life

but also create immersive experiences that enhance understanding and engagement. Through this connection, drama and theater enable the transfer of cultural and linguistic knowledge in meaningful and impactful ways. By integrating narratives, these mediums foster critical thinking, empathy, and creativity, making them invaluable in educational contexts.

Drama and theater act as bridges between abstract narratives and lived experiences, enabling learners to internalize language and culture through active participation, by merging storytelling with performance, drama becomes a pedagogical tool that enhances both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning.

Drama and theater encompass several essential elements, including collaboration, memorization, expression, mastering lines and stage presence, emotional depth, and the use of Arabic language, all supported by rigorous rehearsals as preparation. Each performance introduces new elements in its story, leaving a sweet and lasting impression on the audience. By presenting these performances in Arabic, the audience not only strengthens their memory of Arabic vocabulary but also forms an emotional connection that deeply embeds the language in their minds (Hanifansyah & Mahmudah, 2024).

Drama activities are practiced intensively at the pesantren and later implemented in Malaysia as a practical approach to developing Arabic conversational skills (Muhamad Solehudin et al., 2024). These activities help minimize language interference, ensuring that linguistic awareness and Arabic **dzauiq** remain well-preserved and continue to improve (Solehudin & Arisandi, 2024).

Drama and theater workshops offer an extent of potential benefits to engage younger learners' motivation and interest. Interestingly, the focus group participants suggested that participants become so enthusiastic, energized, and absorbed in the role-play process that everything else, including language learning, takes care of itself. Drama techniques provide what students theatricalize; they offer the potential to develop fluency and accuracy in speaking. A number of empirical studies support the belief that drama-based techniques can improve pronunciation (Floare Bora, 2024).

Studies on role-play noted gains in students' fluency, referring to the 'acceleration effect,' and a meta-analysis confirmed enhanced fluency even when accounting for exposure to other tasks. Theater enhances performance whether in the formal theater setting or skill development associated with preferable language learning; also, quality improvement of teaching occurs. Benefits from role-play and drama/theater, as well as engaging learners in quite different ways, include the development of problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, and negotiation skills. Drama and theater, role-play in particular, facilitate experiential learning to a significant extent. Interactive activities require that students practice a variety of vocabulary, expressions, greetings, requests, directives, and making introductions and social comments, just to name a few. "There is no better way to learn than to practice it in an interactive enjoyable environment."

In drama and theater, mnemonic techniques naturally emerge through performance, storytelling, imagination, and memorable experiences. Moreover, if recorded, the visual elements further reinforce mental imagery, significantly enhancing memory retention and proficiency in the Arabic language (Mahmudah et al., 2024).

Human beings are naturally creative. Using imagination facilitates language learning, and the use of body language or acting to express ideas and emotions can be an act of resistance against the absence of vocabulary (Abdel-Hadi et al., 2019). In addition, learners can learn more deeply when they personally experience the learning content. Language is not only a tool for communication but also expresses a culture, a worldview, a history, and an identity. Therefore, by experiencing this language, learners can feel and understand the culture and the people. Using drama and theater in language classes has numerous advantages for language acquisition (Bailey et al., 2021; Jeon et al., 2024). The main three advantages are that role play can force students to participate directly, so they exercise using the language continuously and naturally; role play helps create an authentic situation so students can really apply themselves to the task of communication; and by participating in role play, students are encouraged to have a positive attitude towards the study of foreign languages, and the teacher can give immediate help to the participants.

In today's era, accessing and creating drama and theater scripts has become significantly easier with the help of AI (Zhai et al., 2021), which simplifies the process of story development and opens possibilities for future innovations such as virtual reality drama and theater (Philippe et al., 2020). However, the key is not merely technological advancement but the relevance and emotional connection of the story to the audience, ensuring it resonates deeply and captures their hearts.

The teaching of the Arabic language continues to evolve through innovative approaches that integrate social interaction, emotional engagement, and psycholinguistic strategies. *Peer tutoring* has been implemented in collaborative learning environments to enhance student motivation and confidence in mastering Arabic (Nur Hanifansyah, Mahmudah, et al., 2024). In the context of speaking skills, *khitabah* or Arabic public speaking has contributed to vocabulary expansion and increased confidence, supported by psycholinguistic techniques that reduce anxiety (Solehudin & Nur Hanifansyah, 2024). *Mnemonic storytelling* has also been utilized to help students grasp grammatical structures and enrich their vocabulary by embedding linguistic elements into meaningful narratives (Nur Hanifansyah, Menik Mahmudah, et al., 2024). Additionally, the *Senior Teaches Junior (STJ)* model, applied through *Kitab Af'al*, has proven effective in accelerating vocabulary retention while fostering leadership and independent learning (Masnun et al., 2024). Aligned with these interactive methods, the integration of drama and theater in language education not only enhances fluency and cultural understanding but also creates an immersive learning experience that strengthens memory, emotional connection, and speaking confidence (Demircioğlu, 2010). Collectively, these approaches illustrate the effectiveness of dynamic and engaging pedagogical strategies in advancing Arabic language proficiency in a sustainable and meaningful way.

Drama and theater activities can be organized through classes and regional student organizations. At DALWA, for example, groups such as ISRAR (Ikatan Santri Banjar), ISKAB (Ikatan Santri Kalimantan Barat), and others representing regions like Sumatra, Lombok, and even international students, participate in these programs. Each group showcases their performances in competitions, guided by senior teachers who provide mentorship and direction. This structure motivates students to strive for

excellence, ensuring high-quality performances while fostering regional pride and collaboration.

The interviews conducted with students, teachers, and mentors involved in Arabic drama and theater activities revealed profound insights into the transformative impact of these programs. Students emphasized that participating in drama activities significantly improved their Arabic language proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening. One student shared, *"When performing, I feel my Arabic flows more naturally. I don't think about grammar as much; it just happens."* Teachers supported this observation, noting that students who regularly engaged in theater displayed better fluency and accuracy in public speaking contexts.

Beyond language skills, students expressed that drama allowed them to connect more deeply with Arabic culture. Through performances, they encountered traditional values, phrases, and cultural nuances. As one student remarked, *"Through the stories we perform, I learned more about the values and traditions of Arabic-speaking societies."* Teachers also highlighted this cultural immersion, with one mentor explaining, *"Drama helps bridge the gap between language and culture. Students learn how certain phrases or expressions are tied to cultural contexts."*

A recurring theme in the interviews was the lasting impact of memories created through drama and theater. Many students reflected that these activities were not just educational but also deeply memorable. One participant noted, *"Theater is full of memories. The scenes, dialogues, and emotions stay with us, and the experience of speaking Arabic becomes more ingrained."* This sentiment was echoed by another student, who stated, *"The memories we make while performing in Arabic help the language stick with us much longer."*

Students also reported increased confidence as a key outcome of participating in theater. Initially hesitant learners gradually overcame their fear of making mistakes, as one student shared, *"I was nervous at first, but after a few performances, I felt more comfortable speaking Arabic, even in front of strangers."* Teachers observed similar transformations, noting that quieter students began to actively engage and contribute. Collaborative learning was another valuable aspect highlighted by students and mentors alike. Working in teams to prepare performances fostered a sense of camaraderie, with one student saying, *"Working with friends to create a play taught me to rely on others and improve together."*

The interviews also revealed some challenges, such as difficulties in memorizing scripts and understanding advanced vocabulary. Teachers pointed out resource limitations, such as props and technical support, as areas for improvement. Suggestions included organizing workshops on acting techniques and recording performances for review to enhance the learning experience further.

The qualitative interviews demonstrate that Arabic drama and theater activities not only enhance linguistic and cultural skills but also leave a lasting impression through vivid memories, making the learning process more meaningful and enduring. These findings underscore the profound role of theater as a dynamic and effective tool for language education.

1. Effective Integration of Drama and Theater into Arabic Language Curricula

The integration of drama and theater into Arabic language curricula requires a structured and multi-faceted approach. The implementation can be divided into three key phases: curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and assessment methods. A well-structured curriculum should incorporate drama and theater activities in a way that complements the existing Arabic language syllabus. The curriculum should outline specific learning objectives for each skill (*kitabah*, *qira'ah*, *istima'*, and *kalam*) and identify suitable drama techniques such as role-playing, improvisation, and scriptwriting. Schools and universities should collaborate with drama experts and Arabic linguists to develop comprehensive teaching materials that facilitate language acquisition through performance-based learning.

A teacher interviewed at Darullughah Wadda'wah (DALWA) stated, "Drama provides a practical context for students to practice their Arabic in real-life scenarios, making it more engaging and effective than conventional rote learning methods." Another instructor highlighted that "students become more enthusiastic about learning when they actively participate in drama activities, as it offers an interactive and enjoyable learning environment."

Effective teaching methodologies include role-playing and improvisation, encouraging students to act out daily conversations and historical narratives to enhance fluency; scriptwriting and storytelling, engaging students in writing and performing short plays to develop advanced vocabulary; drama-based mnemonics, integrating mnemonic techniques into performances to reinforce vocabulary retention and pronunciation; and technology integration, utilizing AI-based script generators and virtual reality platforms to create immersive learning experiences. Arabic language instruction through drama aligns with play-based learning in teacher education, fostering engagement and creativity while necessitating structured integration for effective language acquisition (Boysen et al., 2022; Kickert et al., 2022).

Evaluating students' progress through drama activities requires innovative assessment tools such as performance-based assessments to evaluate students' pronunciation, fluency, and confidence during live performances; self and peer evaluations to encourage students to reflect on their linguistic improvements through recorded performances; and instructor feedback providing constructive critiques to refine language skills and theatrical expressions. A student participant shared, "Having my performances reviewed by my peers and teachers gave me the motivation to improve my speaking skills and confidence in using Arabic in public." learning through drama fosters collective creativity, wellbeing, and relational engagement, emphasizing its role in developing critical thinking and emotional resilience (Stephenson, 2023).

2. Impacts of Drama and Theater on Students' Language Proficiency and Cultural Understanding

Drama and theater contribute significantly to the development of linguistic competencies in multiple ways. Through repeated rehearsals and performances, students

develop better articulation and natural intonation in Arabic, perform dialogues in front of an audience to help reduce language anxiety and foster spontaneous speech production, and integrate kitabah (writing scripts), qira'ah (reading dialogues), istima' (listening to peers), and kalam (speaking in character) holistically.

A student remarked, "Before joining the drama program, I found it difficult to express myself in Arabic, but after practicing dialogues and interacting with fellow students in performances, I can now speak more fluently and naturally." Another student mentioned, "Memorizing scripts has helped me improve my vocabulary retention because I associate words with emotions and actions."

Drama and theater expose students to Arabic cultural norms, historical narratives, and societal values through storytelling and role-playing. By acting out traditional stories, students internalize cultural expressions, proverbs, and idiomatic phrases, aligning with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes learning through social interaction and cultural immersion. A mentor at DALWA noted, "Through drama, students not only learn the language but also immerse themselves in Arab culture, as they have to understand the background and context of each play."

Yumurtacı & Mede (2024) examine the impact of creative drama on young learners' vocabulary development and creative thinking skills, comparing it with traditional instruction. The study finds that drama-based teaching significantly enhances both linguistic and cognitive skills, highlighting its effectiveness in early language education. Performing in drama allows students to emotionally connect with the language, making learning more meaningful. Emotional memory plays a vital role in long-term language retention, as students remember words and phrases associated with powerful experiences. This approach is especially effective in reinforcing dzauq (instinct for Arabic language), allowing learners to develop an intuitive grasp of linguistic structures. Similar findings are seen in Demircioğlu (2010), where drama facilitates contextualized learning, enabling students to acquire new vocabulary naturally rather than through rote memorization.

3. Challenges and Limitations in Implementing Drama and Theater Strategies, and Possible Solutions

Despite the benefits, several challenges hinder the full integration of drama and theater into Arabic language curricula. Many institutions lack the necessary infrastructure, such as rehearsal spaces, props, and script materials. To mitigate this, schools can establish low-cost drama clubs where students perform using minimal resources, digital storytelling platforms can replace physical stage props, making theater accessible even in resource-limited settings, and institutions can collaborate with local theater groups and language centers to provide external support.

A teacher shared, "One of the biggest challenges is the lack of proper spaces for rehearsals. Sometimes, we have to use regular classrooms, which limits the movement and effectiveness of the performances." Another instructor stated, "Funding for props and costumes is minimal, but we encourage students to be creative by making use of available materials."

Not all Arabic language instructors are trained in theatrical methodologies. To address this, universities should offer professional development workshops on drama-based pedagogy, teachers can collaborate with drama educators to co-design lesson plans that balance linguistic and theatrical objectives, and online courses and AI-powered tools can assist educators in script development and performance evaluation.

A student observed, "Initially, our teachers were not familiar with incorporating drama into lessons, but after some training sessions, they became more confident and encouraged us to participate actively in role-playing activities." Another student commented, "When teachers use storytelling and role-playing in lessons, I find it easier to understand difficult grammar rules and remember new vocabulary."

Many students experience stage fright or fear making mistakes in a foreign language. To overcome this, teachers should foster a supportive environment where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process, initial activities can focus on low-pressure improvisational games before moving to full-scale performances, and peer mentorship programs can allow experienced students to guide beginners through the process.

One student stated, "At first, I was extremely nervous about performing in Arabic, but as I kept participating, I became more comfortable and confident." Another added, "The encouragement from my peers and the structured rehearsals helped me overcome my fear of speaking in front of an audience."

Drama and theater provide a dynamic, immersive, and holistic approach to Arabic language education, integrating linguistic skills while deepening cultural understanding. By incorporating role-playing, storytelling, and performance-based learning into curricula, students develop pronunciation, fluency, and confidence in a naturalistic setting. Moreover, mnemonic and emotional connections forged through drama enhance long-term vocabulary retention and strengthen students' *dzaug*.

To maximize the effectiveness of drama-based learning, institutions must invest in teacher training, digital resources, and interdisciplinary collaborations. Future research should explore the longitudinal impact of drama activities on language retention and cultural fluency. Through strategic implementation, drama and theater can revolutionize Arabic language education, making learning more engaging, meaningful, and effective. Previous studies, such as those by Noor Eliza Abdul Rahman et al. (2021) and Mulloh et al. (2023), demonstrated that storytelling and drama significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition and linguistic competence. This study further confirms that integrating drama activities into language learning naturally brings together *kitabah*, *qira'ah*, *istima'*, and *kalam*, allowing students to practice these skills in a more dynamic and engaging manner. Adway (2021) emphasized the importance of cultural authenticity in Arabic drama, particularly in historical narratives. At DALWA, students experience this firsthand as drama and theater provide an avenue for cultural immersion, deepening their understanding of Arabic heritage while refining their linguistic instincts (*dzaug*).

The role of drama in building confidence and self-efficacy is also evident. Al-Khayat and Abdulhaq (2023) highlighted how theatrical activities empower both teachers and learners by fostering interactive and collaborative learning. This aligns with observations at DALWA, where students reported feeling more confident in speaking

Arabic after participating in performances. Engaging in role-play and dialogue not only improved their fluency but also helped them overcome hesitation in verbal communication.

Additionally, the impact of mnemonic techniques in drama is noteworthy. As Mahmudah et al. (2024) suggest, associating words with visual and emotional experiences enhances memory retention. Many students found that acting out dialogues and repeating lines in a dramatic context made vocabulary recall easier and more intuitive. This immersive approach to learning strengthens their ability to retain and use language naturally.

Language interference is another challenge that drama helps address. Solehudin and Arisandi (2024) argue that consistent exposure to Arabic through performance-based learning reduces the tendency to mix linguistic structures from their native languages. Students at DALWA benefited from this process, as their sustained engagement in Arabic-speaking environments improved their ability to think and express themselves in Arabic without reverting to their first language.

Beyond language acquisition, drama fosters teamwork, creativity, and cultural appreciation. Jasim (2023) discusses how interactive and collaborative activities enhance emotional and social learning. This was evident in the way students at DALWA, organized into regional groups, engaged in drama performances that not only strengthened their linguistic skills but also encouraged a sense of belonging and pride in their cultural and academic achievements.

Drama and theater provide a dynamic, immersive, and holistic approach to Arabic language education, integrating linguistic skills while deepening cultural understanding. By incorporating role-playing, storytelling, and performance-based learning into curricula, students develop pronunciation, fluency, and confidence in a naturalistic setting. Moreover, mnemonic and emotional connections forged through drama enhance long-term vocabulary retention and strengthen students' *dza'iq*.

To maximize the effectiveness of drama-based learning, institutions must invest in teacher training, digital resources, and interdisciplinary collaborations. Future research should explore the longitudinal impact of drama activities on language retention and cultural fluency. Through strategic implementation, drama and theater can revolutionize Arabic language education, making learning more engaging, meaningful, and effective.

CONCLUSION

The integration of drama and theater as pedagogical tools in teaching Arabic has proven to be highly effective in enhancing linguistic competence and cultural understanding. Drama activities facilitate a holistic approach to language acquisition by incorporating various skills such as *kitabah* (writing), *qira'ah* (reading), *istima'* (listening), and *kalam* (speaking). The use of mnemonic techniques, storytelling, and emotional engagement during performances significantly strengthens memory retention and fosters a deeper connection to the Arabic language and culture. Moreover, these activities build self-confidence, teamwork, and critical thinking, enabling learners to navigate language use in dynamic and practical contexts. Drama and theater effectively

bridge the gap between theoretical language concepts and their practical application, fostering an immersive environment that nurtures students' instinctive understanding of Arabic (dzauq).

To further enhance the effectiveness of drama-based learning, institutions should prioritize organizing workshops on acting techniques, scriptwriting, and stage management to equip students and teachers with advanced skills. Leveraging modern technologies such as AI and virtual reality can enrich storytelling and create immersive drama experiences, while improved access to props, costumes, and recording equipment can elevate the quality of performances. Holding regional or national drama competitions and fostering inter-institutional collaborations can encourage creativity, cultural exchange, and excellence in performances.

Additionally, conducting longitudinal studies will provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of drama on language proficiency and cultural awareness. These efforts can help ensure that drama and theater remain dynamic and effective strategies for Arabic language education, promoting linguistic excellence and cultural enrichment. By adopting these measures, educators can continue to refine their approaches and create a meaningful, engaging, and impactful learning experience for students.

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