



ANALYZING ARABIC LANGUAGE ERRORS IN MADRASAH ALIYAH STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF MA ASSAKINAH, WEST BANDUNG

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze Arabic language errors made by students at Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah in West Bandung. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research examines students' language production, both written and oral, sourced from tests, assignments, and exercises conducted during Arabic language learning. Data collection methods include Arabic language tests, observations, interviews, and documentation. The analysis involves error identification, classification, investigation of error causes, interpretation, and formulation of conclusions and recommendations. The findings reveal that Arabic language errors among students at MA Assakinah encompass phonological, morphological, syntactical, and semantic aspects. Key factors contributing to these errors include interference from the students' mother tongue, insufficient understanding of Arabic grammar, and teaching methods that are predominantly theoretical with limited practical application. To address these challenges, the study recommends adopting communicative and contextual, practice-oriented teaching strategies to improve students' Arabic language proficiency and reduce the occurrence of errors.

Keywords: Arabic language, communicative teaching, syntactical errors

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1. | INTRODUCTION

Arabic is one of the languages that has an important role in the world of Islamic education, especially in Indonesia. Arabic language teaching in various educational institutions, including Madrasah Aliyah, aims to equip students with the ability to understand Islamic literature and access Arabic primary sources. However, learning Arabic at the Madrasah Aliyah level often faces various challenges, including the emergence of language errors committed by students.

Arabic is a language that has a high level of complexity, both in the structure of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Phonology is a branch of linguistics that studies the sound system of language, including how these sounds are produced, distributed and function in a language. Kridalaksana (2008:75) explains that phonology studies language sounds in the abstract, including their function and distribution in the linguistic system. Morphology is the study of word structure, including its form, pattern and formation process. Katamba (1993:20) explains that morphology studies the internal structure of words and how they are produced through various morphological processes. Syntax is the study of the structure and rules for constructing sentences in a language. Carnie (2007:5) explains that syntax is a system of rules that govern the way words are combined to form phrases, clauses and sentences. Meanwhile, semantics is the study of meaning in language. Lyons (1977:1) states that semantics studies meaning as an integral part of the linguistic system.

In second language learning, such as Arabic in Indonesia, language errors often occur as a reflection of the students' internalization process of the new language rules. This is relevant to the *interlanguage* theory proposed by Selinker (1972) that second language learners create a temporary language system that is between the mother tongue (L1) and the target language (L2).

Analysis of language errors is an approach that serves to identify, classify and understand errors that occur in the process of learning a second language. This study refers to the theory of language error analysis introduced by Corder (1967) in his book *The Significance of Learners' Errors*. In this theory, errors are not only considered as obstacles, but also as indicators of language learning development. Errors

reflect learners' hypotheses about the language system being learned, so they are important to analyze in order to provide more effective feedback. Corder asserts that error analysis plays a role in three main ways: [1] As a diagnostic tool that reveals areas that learners need to improve; [2] As a learning resource that gives educators insight into emerging error patterns; and [3] As an evaluative measure to assess the effectiveness of the learning methods used.

As a complement, this study also integrates the transfer theory proposed by Lado (1957) in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers*. In this theory, Lado explains that language errors often arise due to system differences between the mother tongue (L1) and the target language (L2). Transfer can be positive, i.e. when elements from the mother tongue aid learning of the target language. Or it can be negative, which is when elements of the mother tongue interfere with the understanding and application of target language rules. This negative transfer is often a source of error in language learning.

Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah Bandung is one of the educational institutions that places Arabic language learning as one of the main subjects. Although students have received formal Arabic language learning, many of them still experience difficulties in mastering the rules of Arabic language properly. This is reflected in the various errors found in the aspects of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These errors can affect students' ability to understand classical and contemporary Arabic texts, as well as hinder the development of their communicative competence.

In that context, this study aims to identify and analyze Arabic language errors made by students of Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah West Bandung. The focus of the research lies on four main aspects of linguistics: phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. This study utilizes Corder's (1967) theory of language error analysis, Lado's (1957) transfer theory and Ellis' (1997) framework in his book *Second Language Acquisition* which includes stages: namely: [1] Identification of errors based on students' production; [2] Classification of errors based on linguistic categories, based on linguistic aspects (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics); and [3] Analysis of the causes of errors, both linguistic (mother tongue interference) and non-linguistic factors (students' interest and motivation and learning methods).

Through this research, it is expected to find the most dominant patterns of language errors along with the factors that cause them, both internal such as weak grammatical understanding, and external such as less than optimal learning methods. The results of this analysis are expected to contribute to the development of Arabic learning methods that are more effective, communicative, and practice-based, so as to improve the quality of learning at Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah West Bandung.

2. | RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to describe and analyze the phenomenon of Arabic language errors made by students in depth. The descriptive-analytical type is used to describe the language errors found, then analyze them based on relevant theories.

The data source used in this research is the students' language production, both in written and oral forms. This data is obtained from the results of tests, assignments, or exercises given during the Arabic language learning process at Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah West Bandung. The data collection techniques used are Arabic tests, observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis techniques used are error identification, error classification, analysis of the causes of errors, data interpretation and conclusions and recommendations.

3. | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of data obtained from written tests, oral tests, observations, interviews and documentation, various Arabic language errors made by students of Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah West Bandung were found. The errors are categorized into four main aspects, namely: phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.

Phonological Errors

Phonological errors occur in the pronunciation of certain consonants (*shawāmit*) that are considered difficult by students, including:

1. The letters 'ع' (*ain*) and 'ح' (*ha*)

- In Indonesian, there are no phonemes like 'ع' and 'ح'. These phonemes have unique and specific articulations in Arabic.

- Students tend to replace them with consonant sounds that are closer and more familiar in Indonesian, such as 'a' for 'ع' or 'h' for 'ح'.
- The letter 'ع' is pronounced with a heavy throat sound (*pharyngeal voiced phoneme*), while the letter 'ح' is pronounced with a sound that comes out of the throat without vocal cord vibration (*pharyngeal voiceless phoneme*). This pronunciation requires throat muscle coordination which is not commonly used by Indonesian speakers, making it difficult to produce correctly.

2. The letters 'ق' (*qaf*) and 'ك' (*kaf*)

- The word قلب (*qalb* - heart) is pronounced as كلب (*kalb* - dog), so the meaning changes significantly.
- There are no uvular consonants in Indonesian, so 'ق' is often replaced with 'ك'.

3. The letters 'ث' (*tsa*) and 'س' (*sin*)

- The word ثلاثة (*tsalātsah* - three) is pronounced as سلاسة (*salāsah* - which has no meaning in Arabic).
- Lack of mastery of the typical interdental articulation technique on the letter 'ث', so students replace it with letters that are easier to pronounce.

Phonological errors occur in the pronunciation of certain vowels (*shawāit*) that students find difficult, including:

1. Errors in the distinction of short and long vowels, such as the word قَال (*qāla* - said) pronounced as قَل (*qala* - meaningless). In Indonesian, the difference between short and long vowels has no significant effect on meaning. Therefore, students often do not realize that in Arabic, the length and shortness of vowels (*mad*) are important phonological features and serve to distinguish meaning. Students lack understanding that *mad letters* (*alif*, *wawu* and *ya*) lengthen vowels by two harakat, while short vowels (*fathah*, *kasrah* and *dhammah*) are pronounced by only one harakat.
2. Errors in the proper placement of the harakat, such as the word كِتَاب (*kitābun* - a book) pronounced as كَتَب (*kataba* - he has written).

These errors usually occur due to ignorance of the harakat rules in Arabic words or the habit of reading without paying attention to vowel marks.

3. Errors in unclear vowels, such as the word 'قَدَّ' (*qad* - has) pronounced as 'قَدَا' (*qada* - has decided).

This error usually occurs because Indonesian tends to have simpler vocalization patterns compared to Arabic.

Phonological errors in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah often occur due to mother tongue interference, lack of articulation practice and students' lack of understanding of the importance of phoneme differences in Arabic. This shows that students need to understand that Arabic phonology is distinctive and affects meaning.

Solutions to address these errors involve a more targeted approach, such as intensive pronunciation practice with *drilling* techniques, the use of minimal pairs as well as visual and audio aids from native speakers. Teachers also need to provide context of meaning to clarify the importance of phonological differences, for example by pointing out changes in meaning caused by sound errors. In addition, technology applications and tajweed-based teaching can be used to help students recognize and master difficult sounds in Arabic. This approach not only improves pronunciation skills but also helps students understand the phonological system of Arabic as a whole.

This error analysis can be explained through the theories of Corder, Lado and Ellis. According to Corder, errors are part of the learning process that indicate areas that need improvement. Lado's transfer theory explains that students make errors due to negative transfer from the mother tongue, while Ellis emphasizes that errors occur at the *interlanguage* stage, where students try to build new language rules but are still influenced by the home language. By understanding these errors, teachers can design appropriate learning strategies to effectively improve students' phonological competence.

Morphological Errors

Morphological errors include the use of words and morpheme structures that are not in accordance with the rules, including:

1. The expression أَنَا ذَهَبْتُ (*anā dzahabti*) to express 'I (the woman) went', when the correct expression is أَنَا ذَهَبْتُ (*anā dzahabtu*). Students mix verb forms between male (*mudzakkar*) and female (*mu'annats*) due to lack of mastery of the rules of *fi'il madhi*.
2. Students express هُمْ تَكْتُبُونَ (*hum taktubūna*), whereas the correct expression is هُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ (*hum yaktubūna*). Students combine pronouns (*dhamir*) with the *fi'il mudhari'* form without adjusting the subject and the correct structure.
3. The expression بَيْتُهُ (*baytuhu*) means 'her house', whereas the correct expression is بَيْتُهَا (*baytuhā*). In Indonesian, possessive pronouns are not affected by gender, so students do not realize the importance of using the pronoun (*hā*) for women.
4. Students write الْكِتَابَاتُ (*al-kitābāt*), whereas the correct expression is الْكُتُبُ (*al-kutub*) for the plural of 'الْكِتَابُ' (*al-kitāb*). Students choose the wrong plural pattern because they don't understand the difference between *jama' taksir* (*kutub*) and *jama' mu'annats salim* (*kitābāt*).
5. The expression أَنْتِ يَدْرُسُ (*anti yadrusu*) for 'you study (women)', whereas the correct expression is أَنْتِ تَدْرُسِينَ (*anti tadrusīna*). Students do not understand the pattern of *fi'il mudhari'* for females, so they incorrectly combine the subject and predicate.

Morphological errors in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah are generally caused by mother tongue interference, students' lack of understanding of Arabic morphological rules and the low practice of using word forms in the right context. Indonesian does not recognize gender differences in pronouns, *fi'il* change patterns or complex plurals as in Arabic. As a result, students often mix *mudzakkar* and *mu'annats* forms, misuse *dhamir* and choose the wrong plural pattern. This is also exacerbated by teaching methods that are too theoretical without adequate hands-on practice, so students have difficulty applying morphological rules contextually.

To overcome these errors, a more communicative and context-based approach is needed. Teachers can provide intensive practice in the form of repetition of *fi'il* and *dhamir* patterns, as well as conversational

practice involving the use of correct morphological structures. The preparation of tiered question exercises, the use of conjugation tables of *fi'il madhi* and *mudhari'*, as well as visual media and technology such as interactive grammar applications can help students understand gender differences, plural patterns and *fi'il* structures. In addition, dialog simulations or language games can strengthen students' ability to apply morphological rules in real situations.

This error analysis is in accordance with Corder's theory which states that errors indicate areas that students have not mastered in the learning process. This error can be an evaluation material for teachers to improve teaching methods. Lado explains that this error occurs due to negative transfer from the mother tongue (Indonesian) which has a simple morphological structure, so students apply it in Arabic. Ellis' framework emphasizes that these errors occur at the *interlanguage* stage, when students attempt to internalize the target language but still affect the morphological structure with the mother tongue rules. By understanding the causes and context of the errors, teachers can apply more effective and appropriate approaches to students' needs to improve their understanding of Arabic morphology.

Syntax Errors

Syntax errors include word order and sentence structure, among others:

1. The expression *المُعَلِّمُ فِي الْفَصْلِ الطُّلَّابِ* (*al-mu'allim fī al-fashl al-thullāb*), when the correct expression is *المُعَلِّمُ فِي الْفَصْلِ مَعَ الطُّلَّابِ* (*al-mu'allim fī al-fashl ma'a al-thullāb*). The missing letter 'مع' is the correct link between the subject and object of the sentence. This happens due to the influence of Indonesian language which allows constructions without certain prepositions.
2. The phrase *الْوَلَدُ يَدْرُسُ الْمَدْرَسَةَ* (*al-waladu yadrusu al-madrasah*), when the correct expression is *الْوَلَدُ يَدْرُسُ فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ* (*al-waladu yadrusu fī al-madrasah*). The missing letter *jar* 'في' to express place. This occurs due to a lack of grammatical understanding of the function of the *letter jar* in the sentence.
3. The expression *أَخُوكَ طَوِيلٌ جَدًّا وَلَكِنْ أُخْتِي قَصِيرَةٌ* (*akhūka thawīlun jiddan walākin ukhti qashīr*), when the correct expression is *أَخُوكَ*

طَوِيلٌ جَدًّا وَلَكِنْ أُخْتِي قَصِيرَةٌ (*akhūka thawīlun jiddan walākin ukhti qashīrah*).

It does not match the gender between the described (*mu'annats*) and the adjective (*mudzakkar*). This happens because students do not understand the rules of *sifat* and *maushūf*.

4. The phrase *الطُّلَّابُ يَقْرَأُونَ دَرْسًا جَدِيدًا فِي مَكْتَبَةٍ* (*al-thullāb yaqra'ūna darsan jadīdan fī maktabah*), whereas the correct expression is *الطُّلَّابُ يَقْرَأُونَ دَرْسًا جَدِيدًا فِي الْمَكْتَبَةِ* (*al-thullāb yaqra'ūna darsan jadīdan fī al-maktabah*). Missing *alif-lam ta'rif* on certain nouns that should be *marifah* (*al-maktabah*).
5. The expression *فِي الْبَيْتِ الطُّلَّابُ يَلْعَبُ* (*fī al-bayt al-thullāb yal'abu*), when the correct expression is *فِي الْبَيْتِ الطُّلَّابُ يَلْعَبُونَ* (*fī al-bayt al-thullāb yal'abūna*). Discrepancy between the plural subject (*al-thullāb*) and the plural *fi'il* (*yal'abūna*).

Syntax errors in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah are generally caused by the influence of the mother tongue (interference), students' limited understanding of Arabic sentence structure and the lack of application of grammar rules in speaking and writing practices. In Indonesian, the sentence structure tends to be simpler and more flexible than Arabic which has strict rules about the use of the *letter jar* (preposition), the match between the *adjective* and *maushūf* and the suitability of the number of subjects with predicates. For example, the omission of *jar letters* such as *fī* or *ma'a* is due to students' habit of thinking in Indonesian constructions that do not always require prepositions. In addition, the mismatch between the form of *fi'il* and the number and type of subjects arises because students have not understood the concept of *i'rab* deeply.

To overcome this problem, the solution that can be applied is to increase the practice of simple and complex sentence structures in Arabic. Teachers can use the *drilling* method to ensure students understand the use of the *letter jar*, the suitability of the *adjective* and *maushūf* as well as the suitability of the subject and predicate. In addition, the practice of composing sentences orally and in writing with teacher guidance can help students internalize the correct syntactic structure. Visual media such as sentence tables or schemes, dialogue simulations as well as *error correction* techniques directly in learning activities will help students realize and correct their mistakes.

This error analysis can be explained through Corder's theory, which states that errors serve as a window to understanding the extent to which students master the target language. Syntax errors indicate that students are still at the *interlanguage* stage and have not yet reached a full understanding of the Arabic language structure. Lado explains that these errors occur due to negative transfer from the mother tongue, namely Indonesian, which has a different syntactic structure from Arabic. Students tend to apply Indonesian patterns into Arabic, resulting in errors such as missing *jar letters* or mismatches between verbs and subjects. Meanwhile, according to Ellis, these errors are part of the natural process of second language learning. Students form *hypotheses* about Arabic grammar based on their prior knowledge and when those *hypotheses* do not match, syntactic errors occur. By understanding the source of these errors, teachers can improve learning methods so that they focus more on students' needs in understanding Arabic sentence structures accurately.

Semantic Error

Semantic errors include the meaning of words or phrases, among others:

1. Errors in using synonyms

The student wrote *بَحَنْتُ عَنِ الْقَلَمِ فِي الْكِتَابِ* (*I looked for a pen in the book*), when he meant *فَقَنَنْتُ عَنِ الْقَلَمِ فِي الْكِتَابِ*.

The word *بَحَنْتُ* means 'to research' or 'to study in depth' in an academic context, while *فَقَنَنْتُ* is used in the context of looking for physical objects.

2. Errors in using homonyms

Students write *قُمْتُ بِالصَّلَاةِ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ* (*I pray over the prophet in the mosque*), when they mean *صَلَّيْتُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ* (*I recite salawat over the prophet*).

The word *صَلَاة* can mean either 'prayer' (worship) or 'shalawat' (prayer to the Prophet Muhammad). This error occurred because the word was chosen out of context.

3. Idiomatic translation error

Students translate *عَلَيْنَا أَنْ نَعْمَلَ يَدَ بِيَدٍ* (*We must work 'hand in hand'*), when the correct one (*We must work together*).

The idiom *يَدُ بِيَدٍ* in Arabic means 'cooperate' or 'work together', but students translate it literally without understanding its idiomatic meaning.

4. Errors in contextual meaning

Students translate *بَيْتُ الشَّعْرِ* (*House of the poem*), when it is correct (*Verse of the poem*).

Students misunderstand that the word *بَيْتٌ* in the context of the poem means 'stanza', not 'house'.

Semantic errors in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah Assakinah are generally caused by students' limited vocabulary, lack of understanding of the context in which words are used as well as the influence of the mother tongue which often encourages students to translate words or phrases literally. For example, in the case of synonyms (*بَحَنْتُ* and *فَقَنَنْتُ*), students do not yet understand the difference in meaning in specific contexts. Similarly, with homonyms such as *صَلَاة* which has more than one meaning, students often make mistakes because they do not consider the context of the sentence. In idiomatic translation, students tend to use the literal approach instead of idiomatic, which causes the meaning to be wrong or inappropriate. Contextual meaning errors such as *بَيْتُ الشَّعْرِ* occur because students ignore the nuances of meaning in specific contexts.

To overcome this error, teachers need to improve students' understanding of the differences in word meanings based on *context* by using *contextual learning* methods. Context-based approaches such as authentic text reading exercises, discussion of word meanings in various situations and idiomatic translation exercises can help students understand more precise meanings. In addition, the use of Arabic bilingual and monolingual dictionaries can help students distinguish the meaning of synonyms, homonyms and idioms. Teachers can also teach discourse analysis so that students get used to understanding words in the context of a sentence, rather than in isolation. Intensive practice through example sentences and language games such as *matching* or *cloze tests* can improve students' semantic skills.

The analysis of these errors can be linked to Corder's theory, which emphasizes that semantic errors indicate students' *interlanguage* imperfections. These errors show that students are still in the process of gradually building an understanding of the meaning of Arabic words. Lado asserts that errors occur as a result of negative transfer from the mother tongue, where students translate words or phrases directly from Indonesian to Arabic. In the case of idioms or

homonyms, the influence of Indonesian causes students to lose the corresponding contextual meaning in Arabic. Meanwhile, according to Ellis, semantic errors are the result of *hypothesis testing* done by students in learning a second language. Students often make assumptions about the meaning of words based on previous learning experiences and when these assumptions are out of context, errors occur. With a learning approach that focuses on context and meaning and proper error correction, students will more easily understand the correct use of Arabic word meanings and structures.

4. | CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Arabic language errors at MA Assakinah include aspects of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The main causes of these errors are mother tongue interference (negative transfer), lack of understanding of Arabic language rules and teaching methods that tend to be theoretical and minimal practice. Indonesian language interference causes students to mispronounce phonemes, use morphological patterns such as *fi'il* and *dhamir*, sentence structures such as the letter *jar* and the suitability of *i'rab*, as well as the meaning of words which are often translated literally. These factors hinder students' understanding of the complex Arabic language system and impact on their speaking and writing skills.

Based on Corder's theory, such errors are part of the natural process in language learning that indicates areas that students have not yet mastered. Lado's theory emphasizes that errors occur as a result of negative transfer from the mother tongue, while Ellis attributes it to the interlanguage stage, where students are still building the rules of Arabic with the influence of previous language structures. The solution to overcome this problem is a more communicative, context-based approach, and the use of drilling techniques, intensive practice, technological media, and dialog simulations. With the right strategy, students' errors can be minimized, and their Arabic competence will gradually improve.

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